

Soft Plastics Fact Sheet

Australians want to do the right thing to deal with soft plastics pollution. But the recycling schemes that have been on offer have barely touched the surface.

With the failure of REDcycle, tonnes of thousands of soft plastics have gone to landfill. Landfill is the very destination that millions of Australians, by their actions, were hoping to avoid. This leaves many people in the community disappointed, angry and deflated about their efforts to be more environmentally conscious.

This crisis has also highlighted some facts about our national use of soft plastics.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2018-2019, 2.5 million tonnes of plastic waste was generated but only 9% was sent for recycling.

Households were the largest contributor, generating 1.2 million tonnes of plastic waste - that is 50 kilograms for every Australian.

Central to the thinking of recycling schemes is that you, personally, are responsible for pollution and global warming. Yes, it's all your fault. The same with being worried about your individual 'carbon footprint' or being guilt-tripped for taking holidays.

Although this situation ultimately requires the involvement of governments and manufacturers, there is still much we, as individuals, can do to lessen our dependence on plastics.

Options for individuals to take their hard plastics and paper for recycling have been around for many years. Yet these 'acts of consumer power' haven't stopped masses of plastics forming in our oceans; a crisis so bad that the World Economic Forum in 2016 warned that plastics could outweigh fish in our oceans by 2050.

When single-use plastics were removed in Australia, supermarkets adopted 'environmentally conscious' multi-use bags at 15¢ a pop. Many of these bags – worse for the environment than the bags they replaced – are used once and end up in landfill.

One positive step is that Woolworths will discontinue the sale of reusable plastic bags by July 2023, phasing out the 15 cent plastic bags. It will see more than 9,000 tonnes of plastic removed from circulation every year.

But, it is not the packing bags that are the main problem. It is the prepacked food bags eg bread, pasta, potato, nut, seed, dried fruit, legume, tea, coffee and the plastic around products, newspapers, magazines, mail, anything you order online etc - the list goes on.

Follow the Sisters of Saint Joseph on this journey to reduce the use soft plastics, advocate for change and identify ways to recycle better.

Soft Plastics include:

Biscuit packaging (not including trays)

Bread bags

Bubble wrap

Cereal box liners

Confectionary packets and bags

Fresh produce bags, incl. string bags

Frozen food bags

Plastic film

Plastic sachets

Shopping/grocery bags

Silver lined chip bags

Snaplock bags

Squeeze pouches

Sturdy pet food bag



Spiritual Inspiration

The *Eco-Spirituality Team* of the Sisters of Saint Joseph offer you this reflection while you Nurture Evolutionary Consciousness.



Creator God, you walk with us on our journey. Open us to see the revelation of your presence in all of creation that we may safeguard and protect the beauty of Earth. We ask this in the name of your Son, who taught us about the sacredness and interconnectedness of all of life, Jesus Christ. Amen.

2023-International-Earth-Day-Cosmic-Awakening-reflection-sheet.pdf (sosj.org.au)

