

IMPACT REPORT 2021



**We need to shift
so that our environment
can stay healthy...
we have a responsibility
to care for it.**

LUCY AND EMILIA,
PLASTIC FREE JULY PARTICIPANTS



CHAIR'S MESSAGE



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Geoff Donohue	Chair
Rebecca Prince-Ruiz	Founder, Executive Director
Andrea LeGuier	Director
Dan Dragovic	Director
Leigh Grant	Director
Leesa Muirhead	Director

AMBASSADORS & PATRONS

Jack Johnson	Musician
Her Excellency Mrs Linda Hurley	Patron, Plastic Free Schools challenge

As we move towards the end of 2021, and my first year as Chair, I sincerely thank our team and all Plastic Free July® participants for their amazing efforts.

It is an honour to be involved with a Foundation that is leading a global social change movement consisting of millions of people and organisations from 190 countries, that we have united to help end plastic waste.

But our job is not done. Annual global plastic production is around 380 million tonnes (and increasing) with more than 90% of this becoming waste. Governments of all levels, organisations and people of the world want to be part of the solutions to address this problem. As demand for support and desire to make effective change is rapidly growing, Plastic Free Foundation must grow to meet the needs of this exploding social change movement, one that is having significant and measurable positive impact for our planet.

**The global trend is strong:
91% of the population supports
policies and action to reduce
plastic waste.**

This will require substantial funding in the immediate term so we can urgently expand to support participants and amplify their impact and concerns to businesses and governments to turn the tide on plastic waste. The Plastic Free Foundation is actively seeking long term partners to align with the plastic free social movement and make a difference.

I invite you to get involved, as together we continue to inform, support and connect people across the globe and lead the world to be free from plastic waste.

Geoff Donohue
CHAIR

FOUNDER'S MESSAGE

Few people have spent as much time as Rebecca Prince-Ruiz trying to work out how to minimise the plastic in our lives.

CRAIG REUCASSEL, COMEDIAN AND PRESENTER OF ABC TV'S "WAR ON WASTE"



2021 IN ACTION



Millions of participants' "choose to refuse" behaviours are combining to help turn off the supply of plastic waste at the source.

From just 40 people in Perth, Australia in 2011 this award-winning behaviour change campaign is the result of a decade of hard work and I am delighted to share the growing impact.

The Foundation recently commissioned global research company Ipsos to undertake a survey to find out how aware and engaged people around the world were regarding Plastic Free July. The survey identified spectacular global reach. This, combined with other surveys on behaviour change impact (participants and Australian general population), showed significant and measurable reduction of plastic waste.

Modelling of the survey findings by consulting Behavioural Economist Colin Ashton-Graham showed 29% of global consumers (at least 313 million people) were aware of Plastic Free July and 13% (140 million people) participated. Leading countries (in terms of participation) now include the USA, China, India, South Korea, Italy and Brazil. Participants from 190 countries have now signed up.

Globally, participants reduced an incredible 2.1 million tonnes of waste and recycling – that's 15 kg of resources saved per person

per year, protecting the environment from landfill and litter.

Individual behaviour change is the seed of cultural and systems change. Worldwide we saw municipalities making changes from installing drinking water stations (Sydney, London and Florida) to proclamations designating the month officially as "Plastic Free July", such as the State of New York. In Australia dozens of government agencies from the Department of Home Affairs to Melbourne Water and NSW DPI took part. Bans on single-use plastics were implemented and announced by regulators worldwide including the Philippines, the EU and states across the US and Australia.

Leveraging Plastic Free July, many leading global companies and brands also announced changes to eliminate plastic packaging, including the Heineken Company in Europe, Chubb and FujiFilm in SE Asia, Colgate-Palmolive in the USA and the Rogers Group in Mauritius to name a few.

I hope you enjoy these stories of change from just a few of the millions of people of Plastic Free July participants together helping to end plastic waste so we can all enjoy a healthy planet.

Rebecca Prince-Ruiz
FOUNDER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2021 WA LOCAL HERO

Plastic Free July® is recognised globally as an annual month where citizens, businesses and governments come together to take action to reduce plastic waste, creating a social change movement.

By sharing ideas, positive actions and stories of change, Plastic Free July helps people and organisations to "choose to refuse" single-use plastic everyday.

NEW CAMPAIGNS

Launched on World Oceans Day by the Governor-General David Hurley, the Plastic Free Morning Tea initiative has been embraced as a popular way of making and sharing food, fun and conversations about plastic free solutions.

In response to overwhelming interest from students and teachers concerned about plastic pollution, the Plastic Free Schools challenge was developed. Providing free resources to help reduce single-use plastic waste, the 2021 pilot program which commenced in Australia surpassed expectations with 175 schools from 26 countries taking part - from Brazil to Brunei, Cambodia to Canada and India to Italy.

Our "Safe ways to reduce plastic waste" guide provided a helpful tool for participants to safely use reusable items using expert health advice during COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns.

To support the campaign's increasing global audience popular campaign posters were translated into Greek, Arabic, Chinese, Italian and Vietnamese.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Uniting participants across the globe to take action, Plastic Free July provides solutions and inspired change for people and businesses to make a difference, like Filomena in Melbourne who began making reusable produce bags during lockdown to give away, and Ntandokazi in Belgium who pledged to remember her reusable shopping bags. In Croatia a group set up a stall offering visitors free lemonade in reusable cups and an NGO in Kenya distributed reusable sanitary pads, whilst in San Francisco people rallied calling for a national bottle deposit scheme. A cafe in Victoria created an affordable bulk food collective and bakeries switched from plastic to cardboard bread tags. In California, LAX and Van Nuys Airport announced plans to phase out plastic water bottles and medical school staff in New York City committed to using reusable mugs.

Plastic Free July has shown us that small changes can add up.

WILD LIFE SYDNEY ZOO



Weill Cornell Medicine
Anesthesiology,
New York



Chevron's Wheatstone dining hall



FoodStuffs NZ Supermarkets



Governor General of Australia, David Hurley

OUR IMPACT IN 2021

Globally, 29% of consumers surveyed (at least 313 million people), were aware of Plastic Free July® and 13% (140 million) had participated.

The reach and impact of Plastic Free July® combines to deliver significant effects on reducing global waste.

Our impact is measured through comprehensive surveys tracking cumulative behaviour change (amongst participants and the general population in Australia) and engagement (reach) across the globe (Global Surveys commissioned from Ipsos in 2018 and 2021).

Headline results from participants

- An estimated 140 million people took part in Plastic Free July 2021 globally*
- Participants from 190 countries signed up
- Over the eleven years of Plastic Free July, participants have accumulated 301 million behaviour changes (2.2 changes per participant per year) – choosing to refuse single-use plastics
- 87% of participants had made at least one lasting change
- Participants reduced their waste and recycling (across the last three years) by 15kg per person per year (3.5% less waste)

- Globally, in 2021, they reduced their household:
 - > non-recoverable (landfill) waste by 1.2 million tonnes
 - > recyclable waste by 0.9 million tonnes
 - > including plastic consumption by 0.3 million tonnes
- Participants are ahead of the global trend, being 13% more likely to adopt plastic waste avoidance behaviours
- The global trend is strong: 91% of the population supporting policies and action to reduce plastic waste
- 155 events registered including workshops, cleanups, movie screenings and online forums across six continents

We asked participants 'What was the biggest change that you made this year?'

Popular responses included refusing plastic bags, switching from plastic food wrap, avoiding plastic bottled products and packaging. Stories from participants included investing in reusables, simply choosing to refuse, switching products and stores, influencing stores to make change and one participant even setting up their own store in South Africa.

A staff member at GCHQ, the UK's intelligence, security and cyber agency, said "Plastic Free July was welcomed by staff at GCHQ, many of whom made their own pledges. It was a good opportunity to stop and have open conversations about plastic, explore plastic alternatives, and educate ourselves on how to lead more sustainable lifestyles. We will be continuing this conversation internally."

*NOTE: The previously estimated participation in 2020 (of 326 million) was modelled using a sign-up to participation ration based on the global Ipsos survey in 2018 and is likely to be an overestimate based on the 2021 Ipsos survey. This may be due in part to a changed ratio of participants per direct sign-up as well as a decline in media coverage and participation due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Congratulations on all you are doing in the battle against plastic. I wish you continued success.

SIR DAVID ATTENBOROUGH



PLASTIC FREE JULY® AROUND THE GLOBE



Plastic Free Morning Tea

Across the globe, groups from 97 countries were inspired by the Plastic Free Morning Tea.

A popular approach was to transform team meetings into a Plastic Free Morning Tea. Rethink Recycling Co-op in Australia hand wrote pledges such as "I pledge to use a keepcup for all my coffees".

Sofia from Verde Agua Consulting in Spain served a plastic free breakfast with hand-brewed coffee in reusable mugs to her entrepreneurial group.

Staff at Perth Cardiovascular Institute organised plastic free cakes, pastries, coffee and tea for their morning tea, while their team "brainstormed ways to refuse, reuse and reduce at home and in the office such as, reusable sandwich pouches, green silicone wraps, mesh produce bags, silicone bowl covers and beeswax wraps".



Plastic Free Hospitality

BUSINESSES STEPPED UP TO REDUCE PLASTIC WASTE BY ELIMINATING DISPOSABLES AND SWITCHING TO REUSABLE ALTERNATIVES.

- Bars on the Greek Island of Naxos switched to reusable straws and supermarkets in New Zealand switched to reusable produce bags.
- Mt. Barney Lodge in Queensland banned single-use plastic water bottles, reducing associated waste by 95%.
- In the Philippines, food service businesses reduced single-use plastics by eliminating disposables and promoting zero-waste business models such as refill systems, reusable containers, deposit-return schemes and packaging from local plants to prevent litter.
- Investa Property Group in Melbourne switched to an edible and home compostable coffee cup provider.
- Cafes in Tasmania switched to a refillable milk keg system and stores started using the system to sell milk to customers in refillable and returnable glass bottles.



Plastic Free Community

KIKUCHI, JAPAN

Staff at Kikuchi City Library in Japan made an impressive effort to share Plastic Free July with their community and to encourage residents to reduce plastic waste. Their team translated and dubbed the official "Plastic Free July" animated video into Japanese. At the library they hosted beeswax wrap workshops, and used our free online resources to create a full display table in the library with helpful information cards, posters, books and plastic free alternatives including, metal straws, paper and fabric bags and wax wraps.



Plastic Free Schools challenge

PLASTIC FREE JULY WAS A POPULAR CHOICE FOR SCHOOLS, UNIVERSITIES AND CHILDCARE CENTRES WANTING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO PLASTIC POLLUTION.

- Students from the Cook Islands studied plastic pollution before taking pledges and making reusable bags from used t-shirts.
- In Scotland students from Lathallan School cleaned up their local beach and created artwork to spread the message.
- At Osbaston Church School in Wales students made beeswax wraps to replace plastic lunch wrap.
- In Australia, Mary Bailey House switched from plastic wrap to reusable containers to store food and the Samford Valley Steiner School held a lunch time plastic free picnic.
- In Nepal, a village school started upcycling and teaching students to form habits to choose alternatives to plastic.
- In the Congo college students switched from disposables to reusable cups and bottles on campus.
- Moriah Kindergarten in NZ switched plastic toys to ones made of natural materials.



Plastic Free Champion

QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

Iluka Clifton is a remarkable 12-year-old committed to making changes to reduce plastic waste after cleaning her local beach. Together with her mum Bianca, the whole family now tries to buy local produce and from bulk food stores to avoid plastic packaging and use a soda maker to avoid bottled drinks. "There are so many ways we can each help to make a difference and reduce the amount of plastic we consume and waste." says Iluka. Her advocacy was featured on TV news for Plastic Free July, while her local campaigning led to the regional council banning plastic straws at their events. Iluka also makes reusable cutlery wraps and body butter from local ingredients.



There are so many ways we can each help to make a difference and reduce the amount of plastic we consume and waste.



PLASTIC FREE JULY® IN THE MEDIA

Throughout July, news coverage worldwide featured participant's inspiring actions to reduce plastic waste from our growing community with diverse stories of change shared across localised and global media networks. Plastic Free July experienced significant brand awareness on social media with TikTok emerging as an influential platform.

1,300 pieces of media coverage globally

4.1 billion global potential reach

118 million views on TikTok posts using #plasticfreejuly



SPONSORS AND MEMBERS



We work with leading organisations to contribute to a world without plastic waste including Sponsors and Members.

SPONSORSHIPS

Challenge sponsor Brookfield Properties leveraged Plastic Free July to launch its Breaking the Plastic Habit campaign, committing the business to avoid single-use plastics where they can. As a result, the company will avoid over 1 million single-use plastics from common areas at Brookfield Place Perth and Sydney annually, while changes made by café court retailers at Brookfield Place Perth will avoid over 700,000 items being used.

Activities engaged staff, tenants and visitors alike with Brookfield Place Perth installing a water refill station to encourage customers at the cafe court to avoid single-use bottles and a reverse vending machine to collect those that could not be avoided.

We were thrilled to be partnering with Plastic Free July – a truly iconic global platform for change, deeply rooted in the idea that individual effort can and does make a difference.

MATHEW CHANDLER, VICE PRESIDENT MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, BROOKFIELD PROPERTIES

MEMBERSHIPS

While anyone can participate in Plastic Free July for free, organisations that invest in a campaign membership position themselves as leaders engaging their organisations and communities to reduce plastic waste. Members access tailored resources to help them build more effective initiatives and increase their impact.

Council Members

Our 80 Member Councils in Australia helped 393,000 residents participate, contributing to a total reduction in landfill and recycling waste of 14 million kg per annum. NSW member NetWaste produced a series of videos covering topics such as reducing waste at home. Other councils shared our online workshops and held local events and clean-ups. A strong focus on staff engagement inspired staff, councillors and mayors to take part, with many holding a Plastic Free Morning Tea to share ideas and inspire pledges.

Business Members

Participating businesses included corporates from the legal, business, consulting, property, pharmaceutical, retail and mining sectors. Being a part of a global movement and leveraging Plastic Free July to increase staff engagement and the ready to go assets to build the campaign were important factors in joining.

Business member Prologis based in The Netherlands rolled out a Plastic Free July campaign for staff across four regions. At their European Town Hall a video was shared of a UK colleague and his family doing plastic free shopping while the Paris office provided team members with reusable shopping bags. Internal office screens featured notices to raise awareness, weekly emails were sent and staff stories were shared on the intranet.

OUR THANKS

PRINCIPAL PARTNERS



The project is funded by the Waste Authority through the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Account

CHALLENGE SPONSORS



Brookfield Properties

CATEGORY PARTNERS



HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS



SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks to Acute Business Services, ANZ Community Foundation, mwah., Thinkfield, Total Green Recycling and WasteMINZ and our 1% for the Planet Partners (Ecolateral, Onya, Pauline Tarrant, Pick Eco). Thanks also to our donors and volunteers for their invaluable and ongoing support.

BUSINESS MEMBERS



COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ballina Shire Council
Bathurst
Bayside City Council
Berri Barmera Council
Byron Shire Council
Campaspe Shire Council
Central Goldfields Shire Council
Cessnock City Council
City of Ballarat
City of Canada Bay
City of Cockburn
City of Fremantle
City of Joondalup
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Cobar Shire Council
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Gilgandra Shire Council
Golden Plains Shire Council
Goulburn Valley Waste and Resource Recovery Group
Grampians Central West Waste and Resource Recovery Group
Greater Shepparton City Council
Hepburn Shire Council
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Lismore City Council
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Macedon Ranges Shire Council
Maribyrnong City Council
Maroondah Council
MidCoast Council
Midwestern Council
Mitchell Shire Council
Moirra Shire Council
Moorabool Shire Council
Moreland City Council
Moreton Bay Regional Council
Mornington Peninsula Shire Council
Murrindindi Shire Council
NetWaste
North East Waste
Northern Grampians Shire Council
Orange City Council
Parkes Shire Council
Penrith City Council
Pyrenees Shire Council
Regional Council of Goyder

Resource Recovery Group
Richmond Valley Council
Shire of Augusta Margaret River
Shire of Peppermint Grove
Strathbogie Shire Council
Sunshine Coast Council
Town of Bassendean
Town of Cambridge
Town of Claremont
Town of Cottesloe
Town of East Fremantle
Town of Mosman Park
Town of Victoria Park
Tweed Shire Council
Waverley Council
West Wimmera Shire Council
Western Metropolitan Regional Council
Whitehorse City Council
Willoughby City Council
Yarriambiak Shire Council



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We wish to acknowledge the custodians of the land where we live, work and play, the Whadjuk (Perth region) people of the Nyoongar nation, we pay respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. The Plastic Free Foundation acknowledges and pays respect to all First Nations peoples where Plastic Free July takes place as the Traditional Owners and ongoing custodians of the land.