



## Plastic free July – Are you up for the challenge?

Plastic bottles, bags and takeaway containers might only be used for a few minutes, but they are made from a material that is designed to last forever.

During July, Bass Coast and South Gippsland Shire Councils are encouraging residents to take up the 'Plastic Free July' challenge and reduce plastic use for 31 days. The challenge aims to raise awareness of the problems associated with single-use plastic and to encourage allegiance to the growing movement of people that are determined to do something about it.

South Gippsland Shire Council's Sustainability Coordinator, Geoff McKinnon, is concerned about the ongoing impact of plastic to the environment and the loss of resources that occur when plastic is landfilled rather than recovered for recycling.

"Plastic disposal is an ongoing problem. Some plastics are simply not recyclable and others are made into low grade products that are suitable for only one use. Inevitably it all ends up in landfill where it will remain forever, absorbing already limited space. It is essential that we all look at ways to reduce our plastic consumption and Plastic Free July is a great way for people to get started."

Plastic Free July is an award-winning campaign developed in 2011 in Western Australia. Last year more than 1 million people across the world committed to refusing single-use plastic and this year's challenge is set to be even bigger.

Bass Coast Shire Council's Coordinator Waste Services, Michael Spiller, hopes that the challenge will help local residents to adopt, or continue, responsible plastic behaviours on an ongoing basis.

"Already six out of ten people are refusing plastic shopping bags and avoiding pre-packaged fruit and vegetables. It's really wonderful that people are getting on board and looking at new initiatives to help minimise their plastic use and to reduce waste in general."

"People have the ability to drive change as to how plastics are used in our communities. We hope that Plastic Free July is just the beginning. Bass Coast Shire Council will also be focussing on a plastic bag free program in 2018."

To sign up for the Plastic Free July challenge, please visit [www.plasticfreejuly.org](http://www.plasticfreejuly.org)  
You can choose to avoid single-use plastic packaging, takeaway items (bags, bottles, straws or coffee cups) or go completely plastic free.

**PR2065 23/6/17**

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