

**PLASTIC FREE JULY:
PRACTICAL WAYS TO REDUCE
PLASTIC LITTER IN OUR
WATERWAYS**



10 July 2022

Each year Plastic Free July® is an opportunity for us to reset our relationship with plastic, especially the single-use variety, urges BeachPatrol Australia President Ross Headifen and the Beach Patrol Team.

Plastic Free July® encourages us to use less plastic for cleaner streets and oceans, a major concern of the BeachPatrol Australia and Love Our Street movement.

“BPA/LOS is a volunteer run movement organising beach and street cleans across Victoria to help reduce our growing litter problem. We have 43 Beach Patrol and Love Our Street groups that organise cleans once a month,” said Ross.

“Since 2014, almost a million pieces of plastic have been collected from 2700 beach and street cleans. This equals almost 8000kg of rubbish from 3416 volunteer hours. However, there is only so much we can do.

This year we are calling on Councils, the State Government, Road Authorities, business owners and households to do more of the lifting and make changes to arrest our plastic pollution problem. The last federal election showed that health and environment were equal concerns- we need to turn our concern in to practical action,” he added.

Here’s our four easy win recommendations:

Require all Council mowing and slashing to pick up all rubbish BEFORE the mowing takes place.

Once plastic rubbish is mowed on nature strips, parks or roadside verges, it’s turned in to thousands of microplastics, which are impossible to remove from the environment. They are then easily washed into our storm water drains, our creeks and out to the bay and ocean. By 2050 it is estimated there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish. Council and Shires can easily remove the larger pieces of plastic rubbish before they are slashed into harmful microplastics, going on to potentially kill fish and seabirds who often ingest them. It just takes a moment to get off the mower before it gets shredded.

All Roadworks contracts be required to remove all rubbish from the roadworks site during and at the completion of the works.

When roadworks are taking place is a perfect time to remove problem roadside rubbish. BPA/LOS cannot remove rubbish where speeds are over 60kmh due to the risk and many roadworks are on freeways or highways that are not accessible or safe for volunteer groups. The lane is closed, and staff are there- make it a contractual item that there is no rubbish left when the contract is finalised.

Clean Up our Freeways Annual Event

The sides of our freeways- M1, Eastlink, the Hume, many others- are disgusting. We’re a first world country with filthy roadsides that encourage apathy amongst the public. Plastic and other items left in the weather fragment in to microplastics. Come rain, they enter the nearest creek and out to the bay, wreaking more havoc on our environment. Surely our toll road operators that are making profits from us as commuters, as well as our State Government, can take more responsibility for the filthy state of our roadsides. Why not have a Clean Up Our Freeways event so we can be proud of our arterial roads.

<https://www.beachpatrol.com.au/>

Business and households- take responsibility for the rubbish on your nature strip or in your workplace car park

A volunteer movement- no matter how effective- cannot tackle this problem alone. We're asking all businesses and households to look at the litter at your site and adjacent land and take responsibility for it. Just because it is beyond your front or rear door does not mean it is someone else's job to come and clean it up. There is no someone else. Action is contagious and you will inspire other people. We've all been to stores and businesses where they take great care that their store is well presented on the inside, but the outside carpark is home to discarded packaging and microplastics.

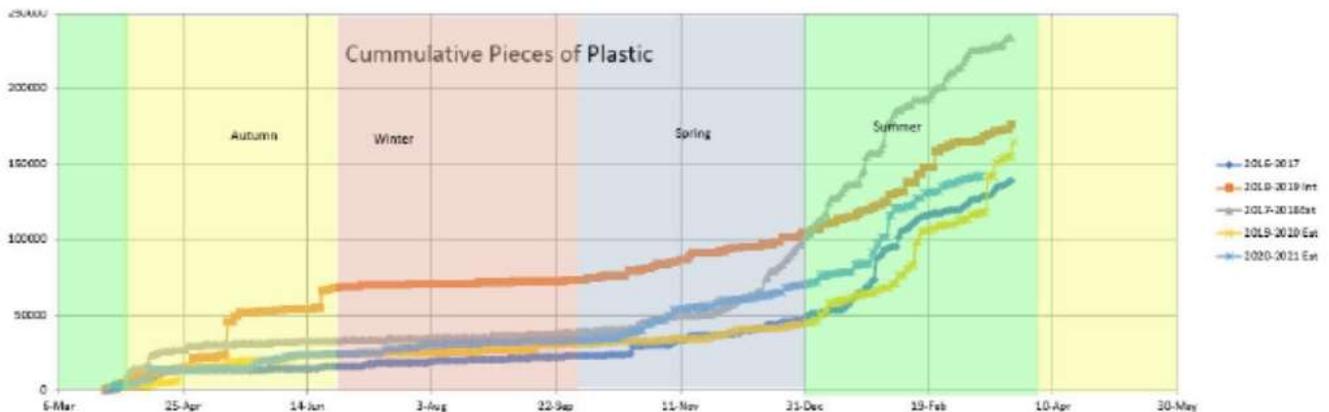
Some businesses have staff out at work at numerous outdoor locations, such as telecoms, infrastructure repairs, they are all responsible for cleaning up their work before they leave the site.

"Only by working together can we tackle this environmental crisis that is at least as pressing as our need to reduce CO2 emissions. After all, plastic is a fossil fuel product," added Ross.

Further information: Virginia Wallace 0401 713 475

www.beachpatrol.com.au

Statistics from Port Melbourne with over 1200-point survey- plastic litter is constant over 5 years.



Plot showing cumulative plastic litter collected off the same beach in Port Melbourne, every 2nd day for 5 years.