Recycling plastics Ko te hangarua i ngā kirihou

Recycling plastics is difficult so most waste plastic is not recycled



Te mahi hangarua

What is recycling?

Recycling is a process where waste plastics are sorted, melted and made into new plastic products. Ultimately, each time a piece of plastic is recycled, the quality of the plastic declines in a process known as 'downcycling' until it is no longer useful for recycling. Some types of plastic do not melt when heated and cannot be recycled by melting and reshaping into new products.

He pēwhea te rahi?

How much do we recycle?

Globally, an estimated 14% to 18% of plastic waste is recycled, or less than one in five pieces. Many countries, including New Zealand, can only recycle some types of commonly recycled plastic. We send some plastics to be recycled overseas but many countries have stopped accepting waste plastics, resulting in large stockpiles.

Flight Plastics Ltd in Lower Hutt can recycle 8000



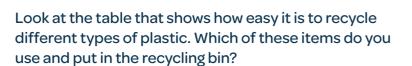
He aha ai?

Why are more plastics not recycled?

Plastics are only recycled when it is cost effective to do so. It is often cheaper to make new plastics.

Contamination is also an issue for recycling. Food residues and additives in the original plastic are two major sources of contamination. Another problem for recycling is many products contain different types of plastic or non-plastic material and these must be separated for effective recycling.

tonnes of clear PET annually back into new packaging.





Ease of recycling different types of plastics



Easy to recycle Commonly collected by council recycling schemes













High density polyethylene



Possible to recycle in some places Sometimes recycled











Low density polyethylene



Polypropylene



Difficult to recycle Not often recycled











Polyvinyl chloride











Other









