

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 'down-cycling' 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.

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.

Flight Plastics Ltd in Lower Hutt can recycle 8000 tonnes of clear PET annually back into new packaging.



Take! *Kia kaha*
Action *te mahi*

Look at the table on the next page that shows how easy it is to recycle different types of plastic. Which of these items do you use and put in the recycling bin?

**MĀ TĀTOU KATOĀ E ATAWHAI
I TE TAONGA AO TUROA**

**Everyone has a role to play
in conservation**



Ease of recycling different types of plastics



Easy to recycle

Commonly collected by council recycling schemes



PET



Polyethylene terephthalate



HDPE



High density polyethylene



Possible to recycle in some places

Sometimes recycled



LDPE



Low density polyethylene



PP



Polypropylene

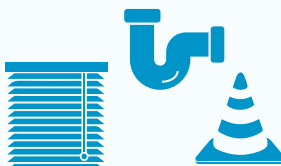


Difficult to recycle

Not often recycled



PVC



Polyvinyl chloride



PS



Polystyrene



OTHER



Other

