

## Appendix C: Plastic-free July

Early and partial report on action ideas from the Palmy Plastic Strategy Workshop (22 June 2019, Te Manawa). Report published 24 June 2019. For a full workshop report, see: <https://enm.org.nz/about/palmy-plastic-challenge/pppc-report>

On 22 June 2019, around sixty members of the public met at Te Manawa. Their aim: to help develop a plastic waste reduction strategy for Palmerston North.

This quick report highlights participant ideas that can be acted on relatively quickly and easily. Many require nothing more than a social media post or perhaps a bit of information-gathering, making them relatively easy to include within an immediate plastic-free July campaign.

Ideas fall into three categories. It would be straightforward to add action ideas in each category beyond those shared in the workshop and reported here.

1. **Personal action** – raising awareness of actions that Palmy residents can take on their own.
2. **Understanding** – raising awareness to help people understand problems with plastics, with potentially long-term ripple effects for personal behaviour, commercial response, advocacy, policy, and so forth.
3. **Supporting leadership** – raising the profile of inspiring early adopters.

### 1. Personal action

- Focus on small, easily achievable, incremental behaviour changes
- Tell stories about change
- Be positive
- Get the message out through schools, temples, churches, farmer's markets, international students, the deaf community, community centre users, and all sorts of community groups and community gatherings
- Have a Facebook rubbish challenge
- Encourage people to refuse these and all other single-use plastic products and to advocate for them to be banned:
  - produce bags
  - straws
  - cutlery
  - takeaway containers
  - stationery
- Yes to 'buy local' to reduce transport packaging
- Yes to gardening, home-cooking, and food sharing to reduce food packaging
- Yes to slow fashion (plastic-free fabric)
- Yes to reusable nappies, adult incontinence products, cloth menstrual pads, and menstrual cups

## 2. Understanding

- Name and shame irresponsible packaging
- Share food health and safety regulations and ideas for meeting these requirements without plastic (reusable, sterilisable containers; paper not plastic at butcher's; etc.)
- Tell people about all the commercial packaging used at each stage of getting products from manufacturer to consumer: it's not just transport packaging!
- Raise awareness: nanoplastics are found everywhere, and while we don't understand their full impact, we know they pass through cellular membranes. Promote the precautionary principle.
- Raise awareness: microplastics are released into food and beverages through plastic food packaging, and they are proven to have detrimental impacts on health.

## 3. Supporting leadership

- Create a network of zero waste business suppliers.
- Promote community champions, such as responsible businesses: perhaps provide certificates or stickers for windows.

### Anti-litter

Some anti-litter ideas might also require only a little organisation. For example, participants suggested primary school competitions and public competitions using hashtags, the "Litterati" app (<https://www.litterati.org>), or a similar IT tool. Thematically, these ideas best fit September's World Clean-up Day.

### A preliminary note on worldview

While participants recognised the value of concrete and achievable actions, at the same time several tables stressed the importance of a changed mindset.

- "I am nature; nature is me."
- Mimic the way nature works in cycles: in nature there is no waste (e.g. circular economy).
- Consume fewer high value items; move away from a disposable world with many low value items.
- Use the precautionary principle.

These concepts are less suited to a Facebook soundbite than is a comment such as "use beeswax wraps"; nonetheless, participants found it important to share the underlying philosophies and values that shape their thinking. As was noted by the group that wrote "I am nature": plastic crisp wrappers are the small problem; the way we think about our place in nature is the big problem. The more we can share this broader worldview and embed it in our strategies and actions, the better.

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End