

FOCUS ON PLASTICS

Worldwide over 80 million tonnes of plastic is produced each year. New Zealand plastic manufacturers use less than 0.3% of this plastic. The volume of plastic recycled in New Zealand has increased dramatically in the last decade. 18% of all plastic packaging was recycled in New Zealand in 2000 but this will continue to increase as more individuals, businesses and Councils start sorting their rubbish. There are now over 500 different types of plastic - but the six on the plastics identification code are the most commonly used. 7-12% of waste in landfills is plastic by weight, or up to 20% by volume. Where recycling is not yet available, compacting plastic waste can reduce this volume considerably. Plastics are inert by nature and because of this often provide valuable stability in landfills.

Plastic products are normally much lighter in weight so there are immediate energy savings - think about the weight of a truck delivering glass bottles in comparison to one with plastic. Plastic also melts at lower temperatures so requires less energy to form and mould into products. The key benefits of plastics identified by the UNEP (2001) are:

- Less material is used in given applications
- Less energy is used in production
- Less fuel is used in transport and handling
- Less pollutants are produced through manufacture and use
- Less end of life waste is produced
- Low permeability
- Resistance to chemicals
- Resistance to impact
- Resistance to moisture
- Resistance to fire

Plastics New Zealand assists businesses by:

- voluntarily labeling plastic products with the plastic id code.
- giving them advice when deciding on a type of plastic packaging based on the environmental pros and cons.
- helping them identify what their plastic waste is made from.
- referring them on to plastic recyclers.
- providing technical plastics information and support.
- helping them source New Zealand made plastic products.

Did you know: There is a high demand for most commercial cling and shroud wraps - these are easily recycled with companies collecting in all main centres. Over 6,500 tonnes of clean commercial film was recycled in 2000.

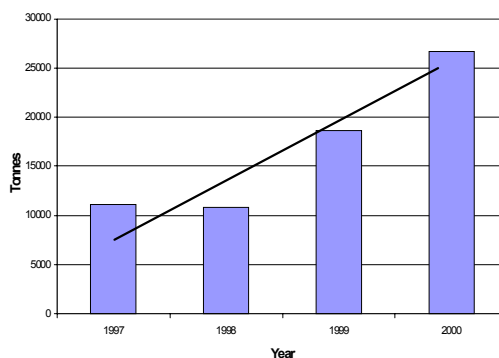
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The Plastics New Zealand information and education website is www.plastics.org.nz. It is being updated at the end of the year. The E-commerce site www.plasticsnz.com puts businesses in direct contact with New Zealand plastic manufacturers to source plastic products.

PLASTICS MASS BALANCE SURVEY 2000 Summary of Plastics Recycling in New Zealand

NZ Plastics Recycling 1997 - 2000



		1997	1998	1999	2000
	Resin	Tonnes	Tonnes	Tonnes	Tonnes
1	PET				4772
2	HDPE				5736
3	PVC				2180
4	LDPE				5229
5	PP				574
6	PS				978
7	Mixed Industrial Film				1340
8	Other				5893
	TOTAL	11070	10770	18658	26702
* Data not collected					

For definitions, please refer to the Plastics Recycling Code - available from Carolyn Cox

