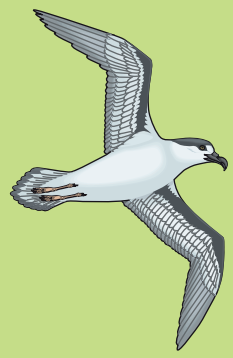
The problem with plastics

Plastic is bad for the environment. Why is it so bad, you might ask? The number one reason it is so bad is that nature cannot break down plastic so once in the environment it will stay there forever. If you drop laplap leaves in your garden, after you have used them, they will rot down and the goodness inside them is used again by nature to grow a new plant. I am sure everyone is aware that if you do the same to a plastic takeaway container the same will not happen and if you went back a year or more later it would still be there.

But is when the plastics end up in the sea that they really cause problems. And a lot of plastic is ending up in the oceans. A study published estimated over 5.25 trillion pieces of plastic are floating in the world's oceans. Another study showed that 8 million tonnes of plastics are entering the oceans each year. Any litter that ends up on our streets and roads will eventually get washed into the sea. This photo was taken in the sea just under the cliff on Wharf Road. Lots of rubbish gets dumped in this area and ends up in the sea.

Some scientists are predicting that there could be one tonne of plastic for every 3 tonnes of fin fish by 2025. The vast majority of the plastic marine debris, at least 80 percent, comes from the land.

Plastics lying on the ground look bad and therefore they reduce the appeal of Vanuatu as a tourist destination. It is not a welcoming sight for tourist arriving in our country to see plastic rubbish lining the roads from the airport and the wharf.



Plastics can smother corals and seagrasses killing them. Marine animals such as whales and turtles can get entangled in the larger pieces of plastic. Rubbish, mostly plastics, have been found in the stomachs of at least 690 different species of marine life. One study revealed that 90% of all marine birds had plastic in them and predicts that by 2050, 99% of seabirds will have plastic in them. There are more and more reports of whales dying and washing up on beaches with their stomachs full of plastic.

Make a difference

You can help to reduce the problem. Use less plastic and make sure all plastics are disposed of properly. One very easy step you can take is to say no to plastic shopping bags. Don't take a plastic bag if you are only buying one or two items and can do without. Bring you own reusable one if you are doing a larger shop.

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