



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **New data reveals the true impact of individual action on reducing plastic waste**

#### ***Plastic Free July Challenge prevented 500 million kg of avoidable plastic waste around the world***

- *120 million people took part in the Plastic Free July challenge last year*
- *90% of participants made long-term changes to their daily habits*
- *The global study found 29% of people surveyed worldwide were aware of the Plastic Free July challenge*

*Perth, Australia* – To officially launch the 2019 Plastic Free July challenge, the Plastic Free Foundation has released new Ipsos data revealing over 120 million people took part in Plastic Free July in 2018, with many committing to plastic reduction far beyond the month of July.

For the first time, global data shows the real, collective impact to the plastic waste crisis when people make personal decisions to reduce their plastic footprint together. Last year nearly 500 (490) million kilograms of plastic waste was avoided as challenge participants cut their use of disposable plastics by 5.6%. Furthermore participants reduced their household waste by nearly 10% (7.5%) – significantly avoiding landfill waste and lowering the risk of plastic polluting the environment.

Rebecca Prince-Ruiz, founder of Plastic Free July challenge and one of the world's leading plastic waste experts praised challenge participants:

“The growing movement of people refusing single-use plastic sends a signal to business and government that expectations are changing. Every person has the power to influence their environment and Plastic Free July has been critical in empowering people to connect their purchase choices to the plastic pollution problem – in other words ‘turning off the tap’.”

The challenge has grown from a humble office initiative to one of the world's most popular environmental movements with participants in 177 countries. It empowers people to choose to refuse single-use plastics in their lives and has been adopted by businesses and organisations who want to move away from the concept of ‘take, make and throw away’, towards a circular economy that promotes recycling and the re-use of materials.

“One change can go a long way. The Plastic Free July challenge has encouraged millions of people to take small, daily actions and create long-lasting habits that minimise single-use plastic. In doing so, we can stem the flow of plastic waste into the oceans by taking positive actions upstream on land and in our homes,” said Rebecca Prince-Ruiz.

Plastic is a useful and valuable material but the global ‘disposable culture’ of using once and disposing of plastic is contributing to an environmental crisis. Virtually every piece of plastic ever manufactured still exists in some form today and plastic production has been projected to increase by 40% increase in the next decade.

The Plastic Free July movement aligns with and helps organisations implement the UN Sustainable Development goals and aims to empower a social change to cut the demand for single-use plastics. Reducing waste and recycling is significantly more energy efficient than piling up landfill or trying to extract plastic waste from our oceans, streets or surrounding environment.

The 2019 theme of Plastic Free July is *Your Challenge, Your Way*. To be part of the Plastic Free July movement and learn more, visit [www.plasticfreejuly.org](http://www.plasticfreejuly.org).

## **Ends**

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## **Additional information**

### **About Plastic Free July challenge**

Plastic Free July is designed to help people refuse single-use plastic and improve recycling practices. The challenge continues to drive positive change through simple solutions that help communities live more sustainably for example using reusable cups, water bottles and bags, and refusing to buy produce wrapped in plastic.

From humble beginnings in 2011, the award-winning Plastic Free July behaviour change campaign is the result of years of hard work. Started by Rebecca Prince-Ruiz and a small team in local government in Western Australia, and is now one of the most influential environmental campaigns in the world. Millions of people across the globe take part every year, with many committing to plastic reduction far beyond the month of July.

On a larger scale, Plastic Free July challenge aims to kick-start long-lasting solutions and influence business and governments to take action to:

- Improve recycling: Follow local recycling guides and put items in the right bin. Petition governments to require businesses to use recycled plastic in their products and packaging.
- Embrace a circular economy: Encourage businesses and organisations to move away from the concept of 'take, make and throw away', towards a circular economy that promotes recycling and the reuse of materials.
- Extended producer responsibility (EPR): Push businesses to own the product management lifecycle. This involves producers considering the end-of-life of the products, and making it easy for customers to dispose of products thoughtfully. Container deposit schemes are a good example of this – they reduce beverage container litter by an average of 40% and increase recycling too.

### **About Plastic Free Foundation**

The Plastic Free Foundation is a global not-for-profit organisation which leads the annual Plastic Free July challenge and works with communities to achieve a world without plastic waste. The Plastic Free July challenge uses behaviour change best practice and measures impact.

The Foundation was established in 2017 by Rebecca Prince-Ruiz and operates across the globe. The Foundation is a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC). As a registered not-for-profit, donations will help the Foundation to continue to help millions of people and organisations across the world make change.

The Plastic Free Foundation's Executive Director, Rebecca Prince-Ruiz, is available for speaking opportunities at events or conferences.