

MILLION
ACTS OF BLUE

**A TOOLKIT FOR A
PLASTIC-FREE FUTURE**

THANK YOU FOR DOWNLOADING **A MILLION ACTS OF BLUE:** **A TOOLKIT FOR A PLASTIC-FREE FUTURE!**

**THANKS TO YOU
AND THOUSANDS
OF NEW
ZEALANDERS,**
TOGETHER WE'VE
MADE SOME GREAT
PROGRESS!

Greenpeace, alongside numerous other organizations in the #BreakFreeFromPlastic movement, is campaigning globally to stop the plastic pollution problem at its source - with the corporations that have created it and the governments that are failing to regulate it. We believe in a world that's free of single-use plastics, and we are uniting to build that future!

We are joining together through a **Million Acts of Blue**, for our beautiful blue planet, to create the real change we need to secure a plastic-free future that is healthier for our families, our communities and the species that call this planet home. We are holding companies accountable, urging governments to take strong action, and championing a lifestyle that reconnects us to each other and to the beauty of the planet we are working to protect.

COUNTDOWN AND NEW WORLD HAVE BOTH COMMITTED TO PHASING OUT PLASTIC BAGS BY THE END OF THIS YEAR

Together, we delivered a petition signed by over 65,000 of us, and a letter demanding a ban on single use plastic bags to the New Zealand Government

Because of you we now have a seat at the table: this April Greenpeace presented a proposal to ban plastic bags amongst all retailers to the Environment Select Committee at Parliament.

WHAT IS AN ACT OF BLUE?

Turning the tide on plastic pollution by taking action to stop single-use plastic from being created in the first place. Inspired by love for our amazing blue planet and the urgent need to protect our oceans, waterways, landscapes and communities.

We are excited that you have joined us and look forward to supporting you in the change you will be making in your corner of the world.



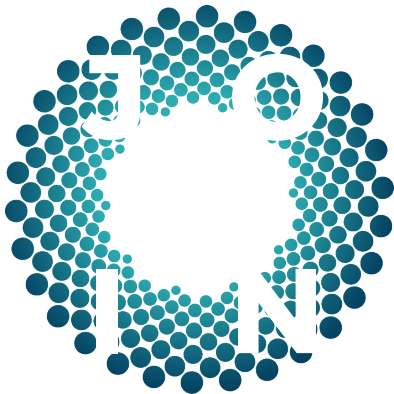
• KEY FACTS AND INFORMATION

- **Growing crisis:** Scientists estimate that around [8 million tonnes](#) of plastic is ending up in the ocean each year - that's the weight of roughly a billion elephants or 47 million blue whales.
- **Tip of the iceberg:** [It's estimated that 94% of the plastic that enters the ocean ends up on the seafloor. Barely 1% of marine plastics are found floating at or near the ocean surface and 5% end up on beaches.](#)
- **New Zealanders use 1.6 billion plastic bags a year**, yet on average each bag is only used for 12 minutes before it is thrown out and ends up as waste. Environmental group Sustainable Coastlines retrieved [more than 91,000 plastic bags during 34 beach clean-ups in NZ.](#)
- **Impact on Marine Life:** Turtles and other marine life mistake plastic bags for food, resulting in animals choking or being entangled.
 - 1 in 3 turtles found dead on New Zealand beaches have swallowed plastic.
 - 1 in 3 birds found dead off the coasts of NZ and Australia have eaten plastic
 - 7 out of 8 fish species common in NZ ate plastic on a regular basis
- **We cannot recycle ourselves out of this crisis:** Over [90% of plastics produced are never recycled.](#) Unfortunately less than 2% of plastic bags used in New Zealand were recycled under the soft packaging recycling schemes last year.
- **Growing Crisis:** The plastic industry is only trying to expand, Big Oil giants of [Exxon and Shell invested \\$180 billion USD last year in new plastic production facilities](#) and they are trying to increase the industry by 40% over the next decade.
- **Pacific Islands:** Henderson Island - a South Pacific island which lies halfway between New Zealand and Chile - [has been found to have the highest density of plastic pollution in the world.](#) With the Pacific Ocean and its unique marine life on our doorstep, New Zealand has a huge responsibility to tackle ocean plastic pollution.



1) SEND A LETTER TO THE EDITOR


Traditional media such as newspapers, TV, magazines and radio remain some of the best options for reaching large numbers of people.



SUBMITTING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Placing a letter to the editor in your local newspaper can be an effective way to share knowledge with other people in your region or to call a particular notable aspect of an issue to people's attention. Below are some tips! (And [here's a template.](#))

- **Start with the local press.** You are more likely to see your letter published in the local press than national so identifying a popular local or regional paper would be a good place to start. Consult the website for the requirements on submitting a letter before you proceed.
- **React to the news.** Newspaper editors like to receive letters related to current news, so if you see something placed about plastic pollution or a related topic, put the odds in your favour by responding quickly. For example, if government officials make an announcement about an initiative tackling plastic pollution, you could submit a letter that calls on the government to take concrete action and set ambitious reduction targets. If a company announces a plastic policy with false solutions, you could submit a letter that calls on the CEO to take



real action by phasing out single-use plastics. Make sure to reference the article in your letter.

- **Magazines are great options.** Many magazines also have letter to the editor sections. If you want to reach a certain audience, like parents who read a parenting magazine and might have a similar experience to you feeling frustrated at your local supermarket when trying to shop plastic-free, explore a magazine that you know is popular and see when their next publication date is.
- **Keep it short.** Ideally, a letter to the editor should contain between 200-250 words. That's pretty short, so it's important to get straight to the point. [Here is a sample letter](#) that can give you an idea of the length and approach.
- **Raise interest.** The most important thing you can do to attract readers' attention is to have a catchy title. The title should make a reader want to know more. Then organize your letter to give a clear understanding of the topic you are addressing and the solution or action you are proposing. It's also useful to provide a website where people can find more information.
- **Don't give up.** Even if your letter is excellent, it may not be published because another subject is monopolizing media attention or because the paper received a significant number of letters that day. Persevere! The more often you write, the better chances you have of being published. Try your luck with a different outlet if needed!

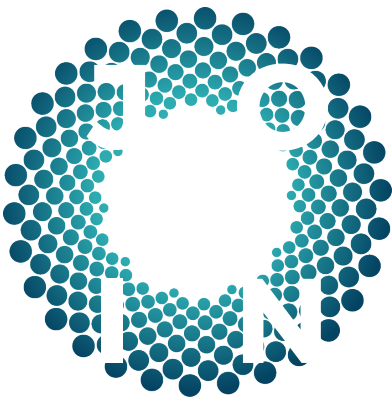
**CLICK HERE FOR MORE WRITING TIPS -
AND FOR INFORMATION ON WHERE TO
SEND YOUR LETTERS.**

**Your letter was published?
Congratulations!**

- **Keep us posted!** Let us know and send the link or a photo of your article to tonz@greenpeace.org
- **Spread the word on social media!** Share your article on social media with the hashtags [#MillionActsofBlue](#) and [#BreakFreeFromPlastic](#).



2) GET RESTAURANTS AND CAFES TO DITCH SINGLE-USE PLASTICS



A growing movement is urging fast-food chains, restaurants and cafes around the world to step up and lead by no longer offering their customers single-use plastic items as an option. Elimination of single-use plastics like straws or cups from popular pubs and cafes equates to avoidance of plastic waste and serve as a point for education and discussion about plastic pollution and the need for local businesses and corporations to take the lead on reduction solutions.

Many of us frequent coffee shops or cafes, and our favourite restaurants on a weekly or even daily basis. From a local popular spot to a big chain, getting a business to take leadership on single-use plastic reduction can create a domino effect of plastic-free action. Don't underestimate the power of getting even one spot to change, you can use it to encourage or pressure other businesses to follow suit and create single-use plastic free neighbourhoods! **All businesses can, and must, reduce their throwaway plastic footprint, and we can help them see the value in doing so.**



Some tips for getting started

1. **Goals and the 'ask'.** Identify the main goal of your campaign, and create a [one-pager](#) that you can give to businesses to explain your campaign and provide background information. Be sure to have a clear ask when you approach them. Do you want them to remove all single-use plastics? Are you able to get them to start with coffee cups or straws? Single-use plastics that they may have on offer include:
 - plastic utensils
 - plastic straws
 - plastic to-go containers
 - plastic-lined coffee cups and lids
 - plastic drink stirrers
 - plastic takeout cups
 - polystyrene/styrofoam
 - plastic bags
 - plastic food packets (eg. Ketchup)
2. **Schedule a meeting time.** Ask to have a meeting with the appropriate person. Business managers are busy people and prefer to be able to schedule meeting times.
3. **Practice your pitch.** Don't worry if you're worried about your public speaking prowess - people tend to respond to passion and authenticity, rather than perfection. Here are some [talking points to help you craft your pitch](#). Here's a [sample pitch](#).
4. **Provide background and information!** This is where the [one-pager](#) will come in handy. This gives the person you're meeting with the ability to take the information away and think about it. Not everyone will be convinced on the spot. If they say they're not interested, be sure to thank them for their time and leave them with a smile and your contact info just in case they change their mind.

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5. Avoid false solutions! Avoid suggesting alternatives that might not be any better. Check out the [list of false solutions](#) in the facts section. *It's important to promote reuse or avoidance, as a way to decrease waste and tackle the problem of throwaway culture.
 6. **Focus on solutions.** In your pitch, briefly outline the problem, but focus on the opportunity to be part of the solution.
 7. **Support and give props to participants.** Proposing that they have their sign-on letter displayed is another option for promotion. Be sure to offer ways to celebrate businesses' involvement in the campaign like by highlighting them in a blog or web content or through social media. Local restaurants and cafes may be more interested in joining a campaign to reduce single-use-plastics if it's perceived as beneficial to their brand or profile, and if their efforts are publicized to existing and potential customers. .
 8. **Find existing 'leaders' and start with 'early adopters'.** Before you launch the official campaign, seek out existing businesses who have already made the changes you are asking others to make. Use them as examples of 'leading businesses' in your pitch. Approaching businesses you think will be 'early adopters' like smaller, local cafes can help build momentum. Similarly, start by approaching venues that you have a pre-existing relationship with, or that you know will be responsive to change such as businesses that already have some sort of environmental or sustainability focus. You can help build your confidence in talking about the campaign and bring others on board.
 9. **Contact community influencers.** Look for other local community engagers and influencers that are important to local businesses such as school green clubs, local politicians or local radio hosts to also help promote the campaign!



10. **Don't get discouraged!** Not every business is going to want to come on board straight away. It's possible they will get on board as your campaign grows and when they see their competitors joining or their customers start asking for no SUPs.
11. **Make it a media moment.** If you're having success with your campaign, it's worth sharing the news. Here are some tips on how to get [media attention for your campaign](#).

You got some businesses to stop selling single-use plastic? Amazing!

- **Keep us posted!** Please send us information about the outcome at ActsOfBlue@greenpeace.org.
- **Spread the word on social media!** Share any positive commitments or developments made by businesses and add the hashtags #MillionActsofBlue and #BreakFreeFromPlastic.
- **Tackle another section of the toolkit!** Inspired to do more? Download another section and be in touch with how we can support you in another Act of Blue!

Other groups taking action on plastic

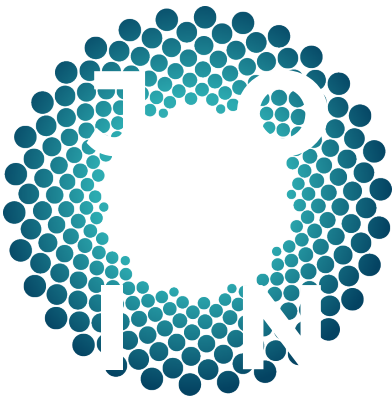
Check out our allies in the movement at www.breakfreefromplastic.org

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3) LOBBY FOR A SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAN



Write a letter or an email

Writing a personal letter or email to your MP can be an effective tactic as it shows growing public support against single-use plastics, and you will likely to receive a response. Write a letter to state your concerns and request action be taken on plastic pollution. If a politician has supported your cause, a letter to acknowledge that carries a lot of weight and validates their action and continued support.

To join Greenpeace's call for a nationwide ban of plastic bags, [here is a template letter](#) you can use to send to the Environment Select Committee and Associate Environment Minister Or write your own letter to politicians about action needed on other kinds of plastic pollution. When writing a letter, here are some things to keep in mind:

WRITING A LETTER

- Use your representative's electorate address for local issues and use their parliamentary address for national issues. Here's a link to help you find your MP.
- Include your address and contact details in the letter header
- Be sure to identify yourself as a constituent, include your name and address
- Personally sign the letter



WRITING AN EMAIL

- Have concise and consistent messaging with a Write to the appropriate politicians, DO NOT write to everyone as tempting as it may be.
- Use the formality of a letter, not the informality typical of emails
- State the topic in the subject line of your email

In your message

- Have a clear statement of purpose and ask, and be sure to request a response in the form of a letter, request a meeting or a phone call.
- Staying positive and avoiding harsh criticism will get you farther!
- Keep printed and dated copies of all the correspondence between the two of you
- **Check the news.** Has your representative been in any media stories relevant to plastics pollution? Check national and local media sources.
- **Find them on social media.** Search for your representative on Twitter and Facebook to 'follow' them and also see how they are engaging with the public and on what issues.

Want to do more?

- **Encourage others to write,** the more they hear the same message, the more likely they are to listen. Share your letter or email as a template and encourage people to personalize it. Share your letter with other groups interested in the cause.
- **Host a letter-writing party.** Grab some snacks, get some paper or your computers and write together!
- **Follow up!** Write back to the person thanking them for their response, adding any reminders of your requests and commitments they have made.

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An elected official is supporting a single-use plastic ban? Progress!

- **Keep us posted!** Please send us information about progress you are making or positive initiatives at tonz@greenpeace.org
- **Spread the word on social media!** Share any positive commitments or developments made by your elected official and add the hashtags #MillionActsofBlue and #BreakFreeFromPlastic.
- **Tackle another section of the toolkit!** Inspired to do more? Take part in some more actions in the toolkit!

Other groups taking action on plastic

Check out our allies in the movement at www.breakfreefromplastic.org

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