

National Plastic Pollution Web-Based Portal

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What are we doing?



We are developing a national web-based portal to display and query information on plastic pollution around Australia. **We aim to centralise information on plastic pollution from many sources into a single portal for everyone to use.** This will allow us to look at changes in plastic pollution in space and through time, as well as identify hotspots and monitor the effectiveness of government and community actions.

Why do we need a national plastic pollution portal?



Plastic pollution harms our wildlife, is detrimental to human health and impacts our economy too. To take effective action on plastic pollution we first need to understand the primary sources of plastic pollution, where it travels and where it accumulates.

Having a national data portal will enable clean-up activities to be more targeted. It will inform policies to tackle the most problematic types of plastic pollution. It will also help monitor the impact of actions that seek to reduce plastic pollution.

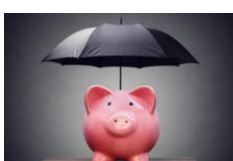
What will the portal do?



The portal will allow users to visualise existing and new plastic pollution data as it comes online. It will have the ability to either host data or point users to existing data sources. We also want to include some basic analysis and reporting tools (for example to evaluate the effectiveness of government and community actions). The details are still being worked out, and we would like to hear your thoughts on how the data portal should operate. We would also like to hear how you would like the data to be visualised (e.g., hotspots of litter lost to the environment). Our initial thoughts are that the data should be organised in a way that enables users to generate reports, see summarised data and visualise the data in different ways.

The portal is an opt-in model meaning contribution is entirely up to you.

What topics/challenges are being considered during portal development?



There are many factors to consider when developing this national plastic pollution portal. Those include but are not limited to the following: **access rights, confidentiality, data quality control, data storage requirements, knowledge sharing, accessing other databases via the portal, reporting outputs/map layers, various levels of data sharing, avoiding data duplication and ongoing custodianship and portal maintenance.** As part of the development process, we will be inviting stakeholders to participate in discussions around these issues to ensure the portal meets the needs of everyone.

Is this a duplicate of other online datastores like the AMDI or CUA database?



No! The national portal isn't a duplicate, **it is a national repository to house all sorts of different data sets from data holders who are willing to and interested in contributing to an improved national picture.** We acknowledge that AMDI holds clean up data for a number of organisations, but the national portal will house a range of data from all different stakeholders, and will create a more holistic national, inclusive picture. Again, **this will not be the same as what is already existing, it will complement the varied and diverse databases and data holders, under one umbrella.**

Who is participating?



We are inviting organisations who have conducted litter or pollution surveys in any Australian location to participate. Many organisations have already volunteered to share their data including Clean Up Australia, Conservation Volunteers Australia and Keep Australia Beautiful.

Why should we participate?



We appreciate the important role that you play in monitoring, cleaning, and protecting our waterways, coasts, oceans, and wildlife from plastic pollution. **Contributing your data will be a valuable addition to the national plastic pollution portal and will help us better understand plastic pollution in Australia.**

We anticipate that those who contribute data will also be the primary users of the portal.

How will I know my data is protected?



We will discuss and address your concerns regarding access rights and ownership of the data in the portal and can restrict access rights for some data depending on your requirements. **The decision around how much data you share via the portal will be yours.** We will be aligning the data portal and collection methods with international efforts to allow for harmonisation and to ensure we meet international best practice.

What kind of data will be in the portal?



Any pollution data collected in Australia (in the past and currently) including any marine debris/plastic/pollution/land or sea-based data. The plan is to include data ranging from small clean-up data sets to the larger and scientifically thorough litter survey data, and from one off clean up data to ongoing monitoring data. Although this is a national plastic pollution portal, we will also be including non-plastic pollution information.

What sort of information will we need to provide if we share our data?



To ensure the data is pulled into the portal in a way that is comparable, we will need to get some information from you. **We will be asking questions around what litter survey method was used (if any), were items recorded in categories, were the surveyor trained, did you record the size of the survey area, etc.**

Do I have to give you all my data and use your datastore?



No, not necessarily. If your data is accessible as an online service, we could integrate the service. However, this is not always possible. Sometimes it is simple and sometimes migrating the data opens new opportunities to handle the data into the future.

It is expected that data will be of varying detail, and this will be allowed for in the portal.

Is there a risk of us/organisations losing our identity if we share our data?



If you decide to share your data, **you will be able to share it anonymously or with very clear wording/branding** to show that it was your organisation who collected and provided the data. We feel there is a real chance of amplification of your organisations great work, rather than loss.

When will the portal be ready?



This is a multi-year project starting in **the middle of 2022 and finishing in 2025**. During this time, we welcome your participation to trial the portal and provide feedback.

How can I be involved?



We are looking for volunteers to help us beta test and trial the portal at different steps along the way. Please let us know if you would like to participate.