

# Dog Poo and the Great Barrier Reef.



- The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority lists plastic marine debris as one of the main threats to the reef.
- The Australian Marine Debris Initiative Database shows single-use plastic items like dog poo bags are a major litter issue facing reef and waterways across Australia.
- Animal waste might seem like a small source of pollution, but it can add up to big problems for water quality, particularly when combined with plastic litter.
- Dog poo contains bacteria, germs and parasites that can transmit diseases and infections to humans, such as Salmonella, Campylobacteriosis, Cryptosporidiosis, Toxocariasis, Hookworm infection, Echinococcosis (caused by tapeworms) and Giardia.
- Dog poo contains nutrients that cause excessive algal and weed growth, and even eutrophication. This can make the water unusable for swimming, boating, or fishing.
- Plastic from dog poo bags breaks up and gets into the soil, air, waterways and the ocean.
- Plastic items pose a threat to marine animals from entanglement, smothering, and ingestion as well as accumulation of toxins attached to the plastic.
- In order to make a difference to contamination of our soil, water, food and air, we all need to do our bit.

## Dog owners can do this by:

- Being prepared – carry a bag, trowel or scooper with you on every walk with your dog
- Picking up after your dog
- Disposing of dog poo bags responsibly, in a designated bin or appropriate compost facility
- Keeping plastics out of soil and waterways
- Raising awareness of the toxicity of plastics and dog poo

## Did you know?

Dog poo doesn't just decompose. It adds harmful bacteria, parasites and nutrients to local waterways when it's not disposed of properly.

For more information, resources and references go to: [www.reefclean.org/dontdump](http://www.reefclean.org/dontdump)

ReefClean is funded by the Australian Government's Reef Trust



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# The Green Way to Dispose of your Dog's Poo.



## Fact sheet



■ **Flushing:** Has been rated the **most environmentally friendly** way to dispose of your pets waste in Australia due to our excellent waste water treatment systems.

■ **Composting:** Pet waste can be composted, it just needs to be done so under certain conditions. Some local governments allow disposal in the provided green waste bin – just check with them! It is recommended that the composting unit is buried to increase temperature, is away from edible gardens due to leaching liquid and is not used on edible gardens. Special units called **pet digesters** can be purchased or made for pet waste composting.



■ **Dog Poo Bags:** Many dog waste bags claim to be **biodegradable** but still contain petrochemicals (ethylene or polyethylene), which means they break down into smaller plastics. Other bags claim to be **compostable** but some are only at an industrial level and not suitable for home or landfill breakdown. Look for bags made using **cornstarch**.

■ **Paper:** Things like old newspapers, toilet paper, reused paper bags are suitable for picking up solid dog waste. Products such as 'Pooch Paper' uses recycled non-chlorine bleached paper with a grease resistant coating made from corn to help prevent any "leaking".



■ A nearby leaf or piece of rubbish collected on your walk!

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