

Can a world without plastics exist?

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You may think our answer is obvious and potentially in contrast to those who believe that plastic is nothing but a pollutant. If most of our answer lies within the question, should the question not rather be 'why plastics cannot be banned?' Here's our perspective...

Let's talk about the carbon footprint impact of food waste vs. plastic packaging:

Food waste itself has a significantly higher carbon footprint impact compared to (even) single use plastic items that has the ability to survive extreme environments without affecting the integrity of the food or beverage inside it. By extending the shelf life of most foods, with the use of plastic packaging, a lower carbon footprint is achieved. Some of the top SA retailers has committed to lowering their supply food chain waste by 50% by 2025 and the modest plastic pack plays a critical role in meeting this commitment.

How about 'fit for purpose'?

Yes, this much-loved buzzword has merit! Sealability and light, oxygen or CO2 barrier properties does not only mean increased shelf life or travel time but it also means that you get to enjoy that juicy cucumber or crisp lettuce whilst its still packed with nutrients. Not only is the food itself protected (did we mention that food waste has a higher carbon footprint?) but you enjoy the optimum health and flavour benefit. Using the correct packaging medium for the correct food type is a very relevant consideration.



And hygiene? Who's not concerned about that?

You can take that [rPET grape punnet](#) off the shelf knowing that others have seen but not touched or contaminated the grapes you are about to consume. Plastic packaging reduces contamination and bruising significantly. It's a clean medium that can be filled and sealed without human contact. Most plastic grades can also withstand multiple industrial washing, de-gassing and temperature sterilisation cleaning processes.



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How important is your child's safety?

The chemical resistance factor in plastic packaging means you can keep your bulk purchased product for a longer period of time, even the chemically based ones. The manufacturing process embraces technology which means one can produce lifesaving products such as multi-reseal [childproof closures](#) for hazardous products. But the benefits do not stop there.

Only half of plastic substrates converted is used for food packaging

Your home is more energy efficient due to the insulating properties of plastic components used during the building process (water pipes, vinyl flooring, roof underlay, sanitary components and certain ceiling cornices – yes, they are all plastic). Your car is more efficient per kilometre due to light weighted plastic components and safer thanks to your plastic child safety seats and airbags. How about your comfort? Enjoy your patio set or your multi plug adapters?



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Let's move away from your comfort: under the dire pandemic conditions, plastic components have made healthcare more affordable and has been a contributor to saving many lives due to sterilised plastic packaging components, blood transfusion bags, [pharmaceutical packaging](#), hospital vinyl flooring that inhibits bacteria growth, breathing tubes and a range of other life-saving medical components.

We've discovered that the undoubtful answer about the relevancy of plastics is a 100% 'yes', let's also consider who's responsible for the mammoth task of managing the recycling process. Next month we'll see who's taking responsibility for what – you may be surprised at who the finger is pointing to.

Mpact Plastics is a leading producer of rigid plastic packaging and cling film in southern Africa. We operate out of nine production centres across the country, providing packaging from plants with relevant certifications. We service the food, beverage, personal care, home care, pharmaceutical, agricultural and retail markets. In upholding company values, and as a supporter of the circular economy, we positively contribute to industry associations, enabling various communities to participate in recycling solutions.

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Mpact is the largest paper and plastics packaging and recycling business in Southern Africa. Our integrated business model is uniquely focused on closing the loop in plastic and paper packaging through recycling and beneficiation of recyclables.

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