Welcome to the Vanishing Point II Exhibition, where science and art collide to raise awareness on plastic pollution in our oceans.

Plastics are an important part of our everyday lives. Take a moment to consider how many items you’ve already used today that are made from plastic. Maybe your toothbrush, lunch boxes, sandwich wrap or mobile phone covers? What else? Plastic is everywhere. It keeps items contained, safe, protected and even insulated. Have you ever considered what happens at the end of its use?

At the exhibition:

While you are here, consider the breakdown of a single plastic item such as a water bottle, how long until it is gone? What does it mean for something to disappear anyway?

Micro plastics are small plastic pieces less than 5mm long. Where did they come from? Plastics never really vanish, they only disappear from our sight; they change form like shape shifters, popping up weathered, unrecognisable and much, much smaller, on beaches around the world, sometimes 1000's of kilometres from where they began.

Soap Box Activity: Where’s micro gone?

It certainly is a bit of a disappearing act with micro plastics. After observing the exhibition and seeing the start and finish of a plastic item, we hope that you understand a bit more about plastic pollution. Try this quick activity:

In small teams agree on the most accurate and persuasive information to reduce our plastic footprint. Test out your messages and then give 1 person “the floor” or imaginary “soap box” to share your team message. Give yourself a time limit and get your message across.
Simple steps to reduce your plastic footprint

- Most importantly, reduce your consumption! The vast majority of plastic materials consumed by society are not recycled or recovered.
- Recycle within your own home - how many new uses can you find for a plastic container? Go to the tip shop or second hand shop instead of buying new.
- Use natural fibres such as cotton or wool in clothing, linen, furniture covering etc. A major source of microplastics in the ocean is from washing our synthetic fabrics. Microplastics are very small and pass through the filters of sewage treatment systems.
- There are over 300,000 microplastic beads in one tube of facial scrub. Don’t buy cosmetics, cleansing products and toothpastes containing microplastics.
- Buy in bulk if possible, and buy products in boxes, not plastic.
- Don’t let plastic waste reach the ocean in the first place! If you see a bit of plastic rubbish on the ground, pick it up.
- Say no to plastic-ware, plastic straws, disposable lighters and even plastic toothbrushes. Bring your own produce bags when you shop. Bring your own water bottle, coffee cup, eating utensils and containers when you order takeaways. Say no to that takeaway coffee plastic top if you don’t have your own cup with you.
- Participate in or initiate community clean ups at your local beach, riverbanks and roadsides.
- Educate yourself and others. What happens to your plastic waste? Check out the free curriculum, activities, posters and fact sheets at www.coastwatchers.com.au and discover more facts, stats, lesson plans.
- Follow The Clean Up team live as they clean up the wild west coast in early 2018, to take your class or home school group outside to do your own coastal clean-up.

www.coastwatchers.com.au