

Annual South African Plastics Recycling Survey results released

Plastics SA, in conjunction with the South African Plastics Recycling Organisation (SAPRO), recently released the annual South African Plastics Recycling Survey, outlining the state of the country's plastics recycling industry for 2019 through data received from plastics re-processors and packaging industry associations like Plastics SA, Petco and other stakeholders. SA packaging manufacturer Tuffy and SAPRO have also joined forces to highlight the challenge of plastic waste.



Recycling operations and achievements

The report reveals that in total, 503,600 tonnes of plastic waste was collected for recycling across the country, of which more than half (362,800 tonnes) consisted of packaging. Of this, 352,500 tonnes of plastics was converted back into raw materials in order to manufacture other products in 2019. Although these statistics represent progress, the report notes that South Africa produced almost 1.8 million tonnes of plastic products in the same period.

The largest quantity (70.4%) of recyclables came from landfill and other post-consumer sources. Unlike other countries, recyclables in South Africa are mostly sourced from landfill at a high cost. Plastics recycling also saved an estimated 244,300 tonnes of CO₂ in 2019, the equivalent emissions of 51,000 cars in the same year.



Corona pilots beer packaging made using surplus barley

18 Mar 2021



South Africa's recycling operations

There were 288 recycling operations recorded in the country in 2019. Of these recyclers, 52% were based in Gauteng which recycled 60% of the tonnages during the year. The number of larger recyclers (according to tonnes per recycler) were higher in the Western Cape than in other provinces – 11% of the total number of recyclers were based in the

Western Cape, recycling 14% of the total tonnages. Recycled tonnages have seen a steady increase in Gauteng in the last three years with most of the end-markets situated in the province.

The survey also noted that recycling rates will increase as brand owners and their manufacturers commit to higher levels of recycled content in their products.

Driving economic development

Survey findings further revealed that R2,065bn was injected into the informal sector through the purchasing of recyclable plastics waste in 2019, creating 58,750 jobs which included waste pickers and employees of the smaller entrepreneurial collectors.



New campaign promotes recycling of food and beverage cartons

15 Mar 2021



Role of plastic and putting the focus back on waste management

“As integral as plastic is to modern life, plastic waste remains a significant global problem. The survey provides important insight into the growth and development of the plastic recycling industry and highlights plastic recycling activity in our economy. It also allows us to promote the value of more sustainable business practices and consumer choices,” said Johann Conradie, chairperson of Sapro.

Solutions to manage plastic pollution and waste

“While there is no single solution to end the war against plastic waste and pollution, recycling is one of the most important actions available to reduce petrochemical usage, CO2 emissions and the quantity of waste to be disposed of,” added Conradie.

“No single organisation can solve the plastic pollution challenge by itself. An inclusive, collaborative process with multiple stakeholders across the plastics value chain is needed,” said Anton Hanekom, executive director of Plastics SA.



2021 Petco Awards winners announced

5 Mar 2021



Driving much-needed education, awareness and behaviour change

In 2020, Tuffy joined forces with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF South Africa) to create greater awareness around the waste-to-landfill impact on the environment through on-product messaging, in-store communication, and other relevant activities. When consumers purchase the brand's refuse bag packs, Tuffy has been donating a portion of the sales in support of the vital conservation work done by WWF South Africa.



This pledge is also underpinned by Tuffy’s role as a founding member of the SA Plastics Pact, a national initiative developed by WWF South Africa in 2019 whereby various key stakeholders have set a series of ambitious 2025 targets aiming to address plastic waste and pollution.

“Ecological awareness is now more important than ever, and this partnership has given us the opportunity to amplify the need for increased knowledge around sustainability issues and help drive more environmentally sensitive business practices,” commented Rory Murray, Tuffy marketing head.

“We are encouraged that the South African plastics industry supports the transition to a circular plastics economy. However, moving forward we will need more commitment and investment from all stakeholders to accelerate this transition to stop the increasing leakage of plastic into the environment. We celebrate the achievements of companies like Tuffy, who are also founding members of the SA Plastics Pact, and have taken the lead in this process. As indicated in our own *Plastics Facts & Futures Report*, we are committed to working with all key stakeholders to tackle plastic pollution in South Africa,” said Lorren de Kock, project manager: circular plastics economy at WWF South Africa.