



SEAL THE LOOP

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why is Zoos Victoria running *Seal the Loop*?

A.

- As a zoo-based conservation organisation we are committed to wildlife conservation.
- Thousands of marine birds, mammals, reptiles and fish are killed or injured each year due to poorly discarded fishing line. Zoos Victoria provides veterinary care for many wildlife entanglement victims each year.
- Plastics are the most common litter item found in Australia¹. Seal the Loop helps to reduce such waste as Seal the Loop bins are made from recycled plastic.
- This initiative is the first of its kind in Victoria and environmental and recreational angling groups alike have expressed a need for such an initiative for the sake of marine wildlife and the health of recreational fishing.

Q. How does it work?

A. Plastic collected from bins at Melbourne Zoo are recycled and made into specially designed Seal the Loop bins. These bins are placed at ports and piers around Victoria's coastline to help facilitate the responsible disposal of fishing waste by recreational anglers. With the 2011 expansion of the program we will also have stickers available to be included on fishing charter boats around Victoria.

Q. What do you hope to achieve?

A.

The *Seal the Loop* initiative aims to:

- reduce marine wildlife entanglement rates.
- raise awareness of the threats that plastics pose to marine wildlife
- encourage onsite recycling, consequently reducing the amount of waste generated at Melbourne Zoo.

Q. How/Where are the bins made?

A.

The bin design is completely original and has been developed by a Melbourne Industrial Designer, John Vanzella. After the recycled plastic sheets are cut, each bin is hand-built in Melbourne ready for installation on a port or pier near you.

Q. What happens to the fishing line after being collected from the bins?

A. The fishing line is currently included with general waste, and where possible some fishing groups are reusing higher quality line. The line is cut into shorter pieces before entering general waste so as not to cause damage to wildlife when in landfill.

¹ Clean Up Australia – Sources of Rubbish - http://www.cleanup.org.au/rubbishreport/sources_rubbish.html

Q. Won't the bins just be used for general waste and fill up?

A. Zoos Victoria conducted a trial of 20 bins around the Victorian coastline in early 2011. Over five months these bins were monitored and the contents carefully recorded. All bins have recorded some proportion of other waste, however fishing waste made up around 60% of the contents, and no bin overfilled.

Q. Where can I find a bin close to me?

A. A map of all Seal the Loop sites can be found on our website at www.zoo.org.au/sealtheloop

Q. Has anything been done like this in Australia before ?

A. Yes. This program is based on a similar program which has been rolled out by OceanWatch Australia on coast and inland waterways around New South Wales. This program proved to be successful after a trial period. *Seal the Loop* is the first project of this in Victoria.

Q. What is the cost to a council or organisation for taking on a bin?

A. The bins are offered completely free of charge to any organisation, council or group who agree to install and ensure they are properly managed. Organisation of the emptying of the bins is the responsibility of individual councils or organisations and is generally done by local volunteer groups, individuals or council contractors.

Q. How do people hear about the *Seal the Loop*?

A. The bins are educational tools in themselves. They include text which shares the key message with anglers and others. We also have a range of posters and stickers available that groups involved and other interested parties can use to help spread the message. We are also planning on including our messages on fishing charter boats around Victoria where possible throughout 2011/12.

Melbourne Zoo has interpretive static displays and presentations for visitors. Key messages onsite at the zoo involve the importance of recycling plastics as well as disposing of fishing waste thoughtfully when at the coast.

Q. Who is funding the program?

A. As of mid 2011 the Victorian Government has allocated funding over two years to install a further 40 '*Seal the loop*' recreational fishing line disposal bins around Victoria. This grant was allocated under the Department of Primary Industries' Recreational Fishing Grants Program.

Q. What can I do to help?

A. There are a number of ways you can become involved. If you are interested in becoming involved in the project in any way you can contact Ben at Zoos Victoria
E: bsanders@zoo.org.au P: (03) 9340 2744

Next time you are at Melbourne Zoo, ensure that you can place recycle your plastic waste and contribute to the creation of more Seal the Loop bins.

Visit our website for more information
www.zoo.org.au/sealtheloop

