

Here is the full transcript of nine-year old Straw No More project campaigner Molly Steer's TEDx Talk titled: Straw No More at TEDxJCUCairns conference. To learn more about the speaker, visit [her Facebook page here](#).

Hi, my name is Molly Steer and I'm nine years old, and I've just found out that straws really do suck. Earlier this year, my mom and I went to see a movie called "[A Plastic Ocean](#)." It was the first time that I've been told that plastic never ever breaks down, but actually never goes away.

The movie said that all over the world oceans are filling up with our plastic rubbish. This plastic gets into our oceans and hurts the marine animals. But not only that, when humans eat fish and seafood, we are eating the plastic that they have eaten. Birds are eating broken up bits of plastic and then starving because there's no room left in their stomachs for real food.

Turtles think that plastic bags are jellyfish which is their favorite food. And we've all seen that plastic straws stacked up on poor turtles' nose. It's not fair. On my way home from watching the movie that night, I started thinking about what I could do to help. I started thinking about plastic straws. They seem kind of harmless, don't they?

But did you know, every day, humans use more than 500 million straws? If you wind these up, end to end, that would wrap around planet Earth four times. Every single day I thought about how we only use these plastic straws for a few minutes before we throw them in the bin.

And what about the drinks that come with more than one straw? It's crazy! The problem is: they don't always go in the bin. They often end up in the storm water drains and go to the ocean. And even if the straws do make it to the bin, what then? What do you think happens to them, once we throw them in the bin? As I said before, plastic can't break down, so can't

actually ever go “away.”

ALSO READ: [Marina Abramović: An Art Made of Trust, Vulnerability and Connection at TED Talks \(Transcript\)](#)

You see, when my mom tells me to put my clothes “away,” I know where they go. They have a place to go, but with plastic there is no “away.” Did you know that the very first plastic straw you’ve ever used is still somewhere on this planet? Somewhere. It will never break down and it will never go “away.” I knew that if my friends knew about all this plastic, they all would help the ocean, too.

After all, we live in Cairns, and the Great Barrier Reef is our backyard. It’s our playground. I wanted to help the Great Barrier Reef, so I decided to try to get plastic straws out of canteens of local schools. And of course, the first school to start with was my own school. I felt really happy that all the teachers at my school were so supportive of my idea and content to help protect our environment. They were the first school to join in with the Straw No More project.

I then started talking to other people about my idea, including the newspaper, TV and radio stations. Because of this, other schools from around Cairns heard about it, and said they wanted to join in too. Soon, we had messages from people in South Korea, New Zealand, England and America, as well as some other states in Australia, who wanted their schools to join in with the Straw No More project.

Now, I know there’re some people with limited movement of their arms, people in wheelchairs, for example, and I understand those people really rely on straws. They need to use straws, but most of us don’t. Living straw free is actually really simple. All you need to do is make the decision to stop. Simple!

And if you must use straws, you can make sure it's a reusable straw. Bamboo, stainless steel, glass and paper straws are much better alternatives than plastic straws. Of course, you can just say, "No to straws" altogether.

ALSO READ: Stephen Kohn: The Untold Stories of the Whistleblowers of 1777 (Transcript)

When you buy a drink at the take-away shop or cafe, or a bar, if you're a grown-up, specifically ask for "no plastic straw" and tell the staff member why, ask them to join in with the Straw No More project as well as showing their customers they care about our planet.

Currently, 16 schools have agreed to take the Straw No More project, which is about 10,000 kids not using plastic straws, in their drinks, at school, every day. If each one of these kids was previously using just one straw a day, that means a total of three million less straws are going into our environment near to the Great Barrier Reef each year. But my job isn't done yet. I'm going to keep going until plastic straws are out of every school in Cairns, in Queensland, in Australia, and maybe one day, in the world.

My name is Molly Steer and I hope you'll agree, that straws really do suck!

Sharing is caring! [Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Share on LinkedIn](#)[Share on Pinterest](#)