

Innovative Solution for Plastic Recycling

New ways to recycle plastic waste on World Oceans Day, 8 June 2021

DURBAN, KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA, June 7, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Over [5 trillion pieces of plastic](#) litter our oceans, a situation that's only becoming worse as millions of tons of waste plastic continue to be dumped into the sea every year. The horrific reality is that this pollution is killing off marine life and if we don't act now, our oceans will be dead by 2048.

Oliver Nudds, Managing Director of [Ocean Plastic Technologies](#) (OPT) says that a large part of the ocean pollution problem is due to the fact that, globally plastic recycling is broken.

"The plastic recycling industry has been around for more than 50 years, yet only 9% of the world's plastic is recycled. Years of dependency on foreign entities to accept waste and large, expensive material recovery facilities (MRF's) have created an inefficient and costly single stream recycling process that simply doesn't work," Oliver explains.

Wanting to make the world a better place for his children, Oliver decided to do something about plastic waste and four years ago, he started Ocean Plastic Technologies (OPT). Today, this innovative business is disrupting conventional plastic recycling on an international scale.

"We're not eliminating plastic use, we're rethinking it by creating an emerging economy for a new circular plastic value chain that empowers industries, consumers and communities across the world to reduce plastic waste," says Oliver.

A circular economy is restorative and regenerative by design. This means that materials constantly flow around a 'closed loop' system, rather than being used once and then discarded. By ensuring that waste plastics are reused and recycled, they never become pollution.

For OPT, this circular economy begins with a network of Micro Recycling Plants (MRPs), mobile containerized units that process reclaimed ocean, ocean-bound and post-consumer or commercial waste plastic on a much smaller, more sustainable scale than the large material recovery facilities.

"Our MRPs are placed strategically in areas that are located as close to the source of waste as possible, whether it's a beach, a river, a landfill or a harbor. This localization makes it more convenient for people to recycle the plastic waste in the area as they don't have to travel long distances to access a recycling facility," says Oliver.

The plastic collected by reclaimers is sorted, cleaned and shredded at the MRP and then sold back into the existing supply chain, where it is recycled by manufacturing facilities into new products.

“The MRPs process all categories of plastics for recycling back into the economy at cost levels that make using recycled plastics comparable to virgin plastics. And the opportunities for using recycled plastic to make new products are endless. Within the FMCG and general retail environment alone, recycled plastic could easily be used to replace most non-food grade packaging and point-of-sale displays,” says Oliver.

In addition to driving a circular economy, the OPT model is a social enterprise or public benefit corporation as it is creating opportunities for entrepreneurs. The MRPs are independently run by owner-operators that include military veterans and people from disadvantaged backgrounds. This provides sustainable opportunities for entrepreneurs who financially benefit from the success of the unit. In turn, they are stimulating the regional economy as each MRP provides direct job opportunities for two people as well as the possibility of sustainable income for the reclaimers in the area.

“The MRP owners receive extensive business and operational training as well as structured, ongoing support from a regional project manager. We want to ensure they are successful as this is critical to the continued collection of waste plastic in the region as well as the development of a circular economy,” says Oliver.

With the demand for plastic products set to double over the next two decades, the world needs to rethink how it recycles plastic. Internationally, the OPT circular economy solution is proving to be an effective and sustainable model to clean up the environment and assist in the recovery of our water systems and oceans.

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