

Microplastics pollution from ports and shipping activities in the Indo-Pacific: Potential risks and mitigation strategies

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Research team

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1. Invitation

You are invited to participate in a research study examining microplastic pollution associated with ports and shipping activities.

2. What is the purpose of this study?

Microplastics (plastic particles <5 mm) are detrimental to the environment and our health. There is limited information available to the maritime community on how ports and shipping activities contribute to microplastics pollution and how to manage this problem. This study aims to assist maritime industry stakeholders in finding practical and viable solutions for reducing ocean plastic contamination.

The aims of the project are:

1. To explore differences in the levels of microplastic contamination in port and non-port sites across two geographical locations.
2. To develop policy imperatives and microplastic pollution mitigation strategies for the maritime industry.
3. To raise awareness of microplastics pollution caused by ports and shipping activities and to promote best practices among maritime industry stakeholders.

Key outputs from the project include:

- A White Paper on the release of microplastics into the marine environment through ports and shipping activities and options for limiting their release.
- An information-sharing webinar with the maritime community.
- Infographic and educational materials.
- Journal articles.

3. How is the study being funded?

This study is supported by a grant from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Government of Australia (99,727 AUD).

4. Why have I been invited to participate?

You are eligible to take part in this study because you are a key stakeholder in the maritime industry. Your participation will contribute to improved understanding and awareness of microplastic pollution and its more effective management in the maritime industry.

Your participation is voluntary. You can withdraw your participation from this study at any time without providing an explanation.

5. What will I be asked to do?

You will be invited to participate in an online workshop with other maritime stakeholders and the research team. The workshop will establish priorities and determine a range of policy imperatives and viable mitigation strategies to reduce ocean microplastic contamination due to ports and shipping activities.

Prior to the workshop, you will be asked to fill out a consent form. The workshop will be conducted via Microsoft Teams in 2-hour sessions centred around a particular theme(s). You can choose to participate in one or more sessions. You can choose to participate via video/audio or via the chat function only. The identities of all participants will be visible to each other.

The online workshop sessions will be recorded and automatically transcribed. If requested within 14 days following the workshop, you will be provided access to the transcription to review your contribution.

6. Are there any possible benefits from participation in this study?

There are no direct benefits to individual participants. However, project findings will contribute to improved knowledge base for maritime stakeholders in making

informed decisions for managing microplastics pollution. The project team will email you the White Paper once written.

7. Are there any possible risks from participation in this study?

You will need to participate in the online workshop using a computer, smartphone or similar device. Please feel free to periodically leave/join the meeting to avoid fatigue.

8. What if I change my mind during or after the study?

You can leave the workshop anytime without providing an explanation. You will have 14 days after the workshop to withdraw your contribution. After this time, your data will be de-identified and included in the analysis.

9. What will happen to the data when this study is over?

Raw data will be stored on a University of Tasmania server for five years after which it will be destroyed.

10. How will the results of the study be published?

Findings from the study will be published in a White Paper and journal articles. An infographic will also be produced for potential use by maritime industry stakeholders.

11. What if I have questions about this study?

If you have any queries, concerns or issues with this study, please feel free to contact:

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+61 3 6324 9480
prashant.bhaskar@utas.edu.au

This study has been approved by the University of Tasmania Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, you can contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 6254 or email human.ethics@utas.edu. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. You will need to quote [H0027611](#).

12. How can I agree to be involved?

You can consent to participate in the survey by submitting the online questionnaire.

Thank you for your time

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PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

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By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet and in particular:

- I understand that my involvement in this research will include participation in an online workshop. The workshop will be conducted via Microsoft Teams in individual 2-hour sessions, each centred on a particular theme(s). I can choose to participate in one or more sessions.
- I understand that the research will include audio-visual recording of my participation but will not appear in any use of the data once aggregated.

- I understand that participation involves the health risk(s) of prolonged online activity and that I will take suitable precautions, including temporarily withdrawing from workshop participation if necessary.
- Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction
- I understand that all study data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania premises for duration of five years from the publication of the study results and will then be destroyed.
- I understand that the results of the study will be published so that I cannot be identified as a participant
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without explanation or penalty
- If I wish, I may request that any data I have supplied be withdrawn from the research within 14 days of the workshop
- I agree to participate in the study

Name	
Signature	
Date	

Statement by Researcher

I have explained the project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

If the researcher has not had an opportunity to talk to participants prior to them participating, the following must be ticked.

The participant has received the Information Sheet where my details have been provided so participants have had the opportunity to contact me prior to consenting to participate in this project.

Name	
Signature	
Date	

