

Litter Management in Australia

November 2008

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS LITTER?

Litter is a highly visible form of pollution. It can be almost any material that is disposed of incorrectly. Litter can include cigarette butts, drink containers, food wrappers, plastic bags, bill posters, junk mail, poorly secured material from a trailer and illegal dumping.

Litter detracts from the amenity of public spaces and reduces the value of our natural environment. Litter can impact on the environment in a number of ways. It can:

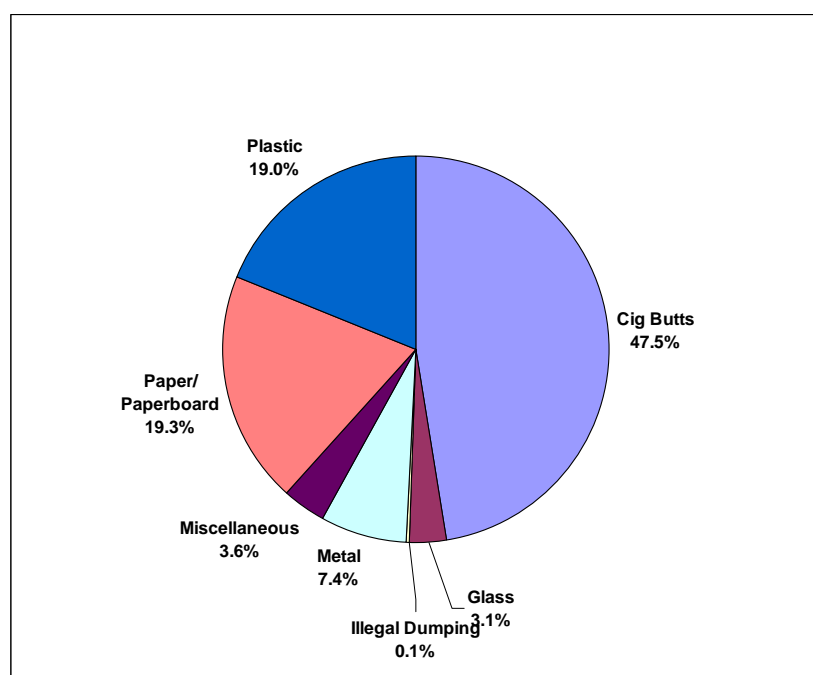
- choke waterways and be a danger to marine life
- pose a danger to native animals by polluting their food and water
- block drains and cause floods
- become a fire hazard (e.g. lit cigarettes being thrown from vehicles)
- be dangerous or cause health risks (e.g. broken glass, syringes, animal faeces)
- cost the community, councils and state governments hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to clean up
- cause more litter – if people see litter around, they may be more likely to litter.

This report aims to summarise and outline all actions which are currently being taken by organisations (including government and non government) to minimise the impacts of litter on the environment. The scope of this report includes any communication campaign, strategy or legislative and administrative framework and enforcement tools, focused at reducing or preventing post consumer litter (i.e. not including dumping or fly tipping).

WHAT IS BEING LITTERED?

The National Litter Index for 2006, produced by Keep Australia Beautiful, shows that cigarette butts are the most commonly littered item by number of items. The second most commonly littered category includes items made from paper and cardboard, such as paper bags, paper cups and paper based packaging, with plastic items a close third.

Figure 1: Types of litter as a percentage of items found

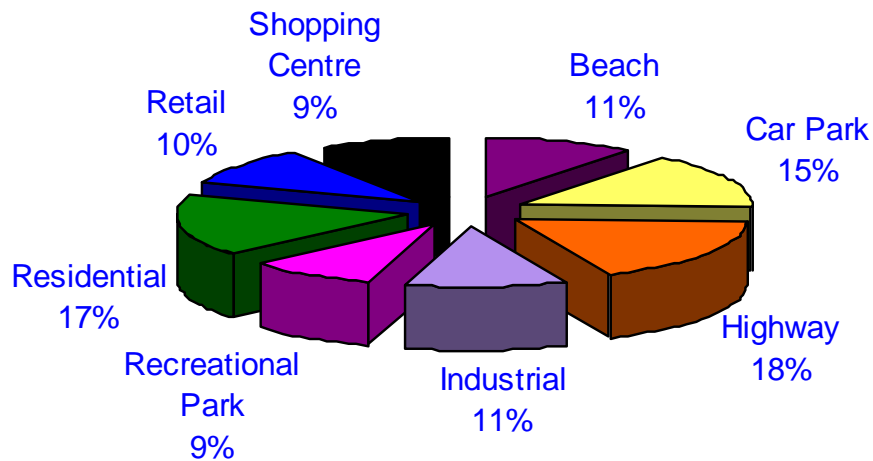


Source: NEPC Service Corporation using *National Litter Index Charts 2007/2008*

Litter is found in many different public places. The graph below shows a break down of where litter is found.

Figure 2: Proportion of total sites by site type

Proportion of Total Sites by Site Type

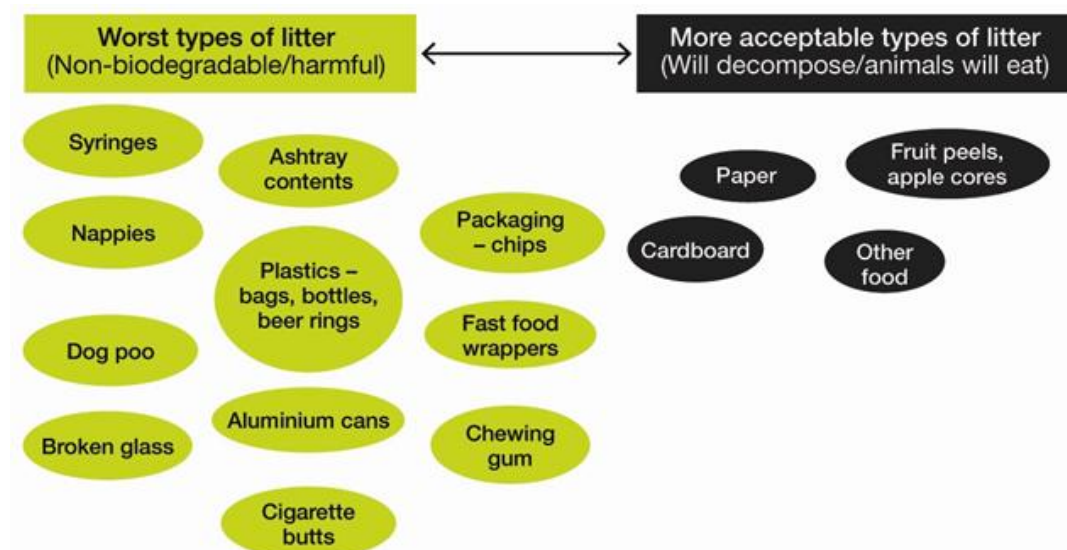


Source: National Litter Index Annual Report 2007/2008

PERCEPTIONS OF LITTER

Research in Australia and the United Kingdom shows that items littered can be ranked (as perceived by members of the public) from potentially harmful and unacceptable to less harmful and more acceptable.

Figure 3: How litter is perceived

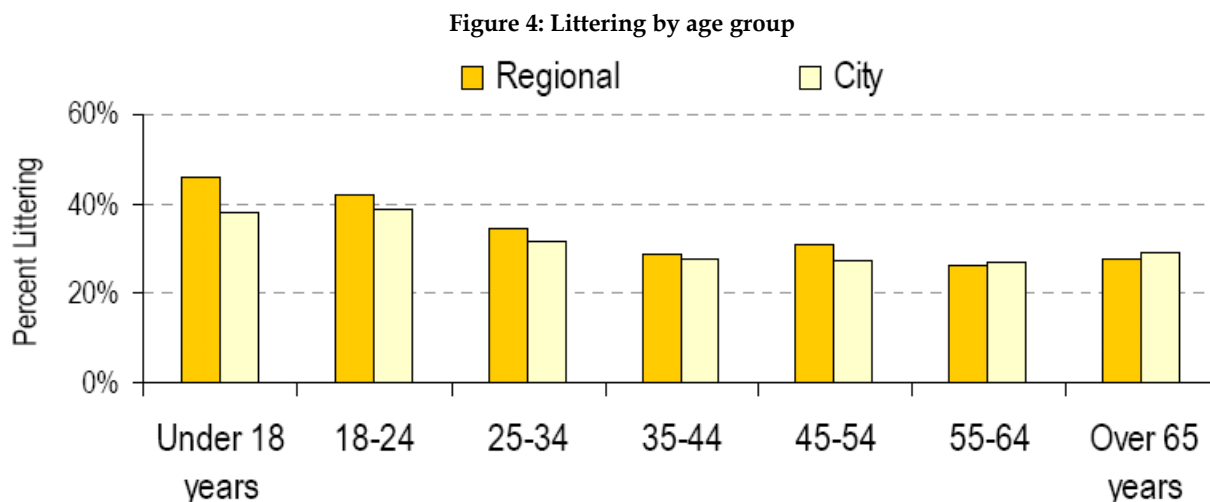


Source: Sustainability Victoria, Litter Strategy, Background Paper

LITTERING BEHAVIOUR

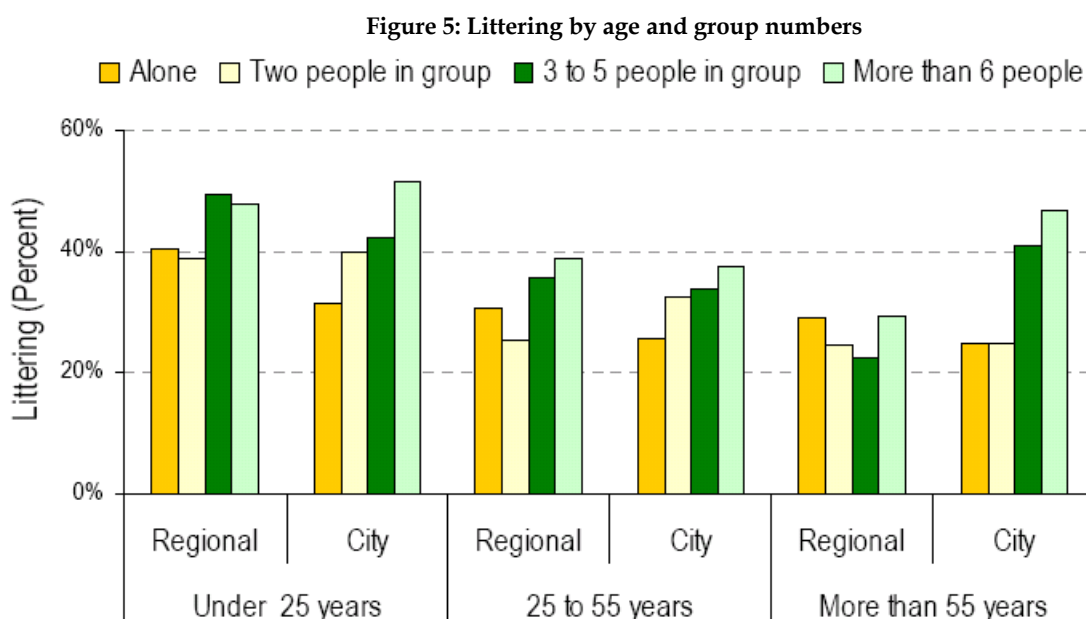
The former Beverage Industry Environment Council funded a number of littering behaviour studies. These studies were conducted nationally and surveyed litterers after they have littered or placed an item in a bin. The studies have found that the majority of people who litter in public places are unable to remember that they had littered or did not show a willingness to admit they had littered.

The littering behaviour studies have found that there is no clear relationship between the gender of those using public places and disposal behaviour. There is a perception that younger people are more likely to litter, however, this could be due to the prevalence of young people in public areas. The figure below shows that across all age groups, there is a littering rate of over 20%.



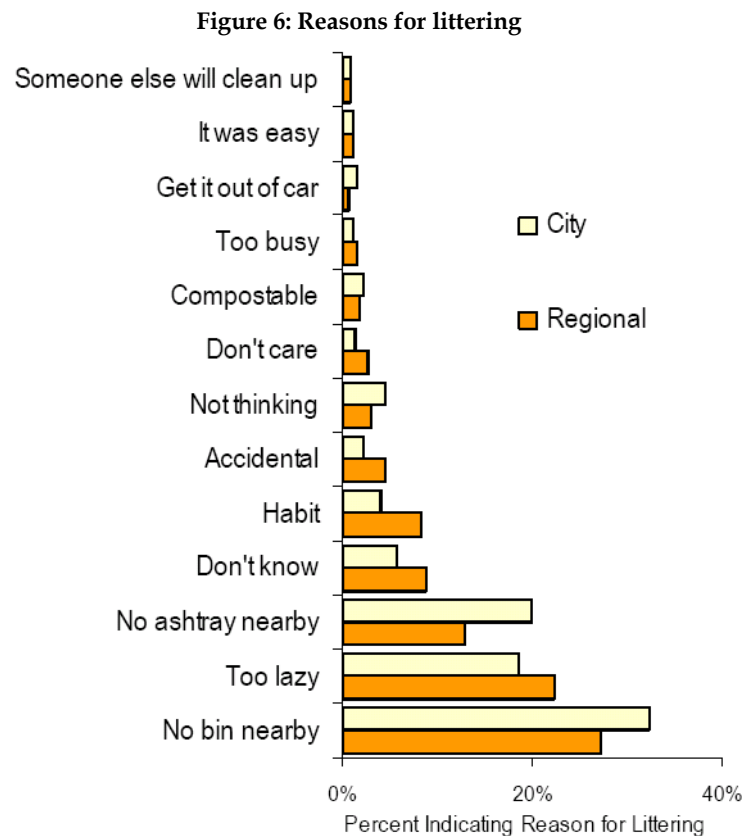
Source: Beverage Industry Environment Council, 2004, *Littering Behaviour Studies VII, National Benchmark 2004*

The litter behaviour studies have found that people are more likely to litter when they are in a large group – the larger the group, the more likely people are to litter. This may reflect a tendency for diminished personal responsibility when people are part of a larger group.



Source: Beverage Industry Environment Council, 2004, *Littering Behaviour Studies VII, National Benchmark 2004*

Litterers give a number of reasons for their behaviour such as 'no bins or ashtrays nearby', or that they were 'too lazy'. Figure 6 below shows that there are some deliberate decisions made by litterers.



Source: Beverage Industry Environment Council, 2004, *Littering Behaviour Studies VII, National Benchmark 2004*

The *Littering Behaviour Studies VII, National Benchmark 2004*, summarises the complexity of littering behaviour:

The Litter Behaviour Studies series is based on the accepted notion that littering behaviour is part of a complex phenomenon and people do not simply fall into stereotypical categories of being either 'litterers' or 'non-litterers'. Efforts at behaviour change need to take a variety of factors into account and seemingly simple solutions – such as the issuing of fines, for example – cannot on their own be expected to lead to sustainable long term outcomes.

It is recognised by the littering behaviour studies that the approach that best prompts attitudinal and behavioural changes to littering, integrates the elements of enforcement, education and infrastructure whilst targeting a specific littering behaviour.

WHAT IS BEING DONE ABOUT LITTER?

Actions for reducing litter are undertaken by both non-government organisations and government agencies, including local governments. There are three main forms of response:

i) Legislative tools

On a legislative basis, jurisdictions tackle litter in different ways. Some jurisdictions have specific litter legislation while others have repealed specific legislation and inserted clauses into other Acts e.g. local government Acts, and police Acts (for enforcement). The legislative and administrative frameworks of each state and territory are outlined below.

- ii) Communication and awareness campaigns focused on behaviour change and litter reduction
Commonwealth, state and territory governments, as well as local governments, implement awareness campaigns and programs aimed at reducing litter. These campaigns are summarised in Table 2.
- iii) Clean up activities
As part of their responsibilities, councils and state government agencies undertake clean up activities. A number of non-government agencies also undertake community based activities to reduce or clean up litter, which are described later in this report.

COMMONWEALTH, STATE AND TERRITORY GOVERNMENTS

LEGISLATION, ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORKS AND ENFORCEMENT

Commonwealth

The Commonwealth does not have any direct responsibility for managing litter. However, the Commonwealth has provided funding to non-government organisations such as Keep Australia Beautiful for the National Litter Index and Branded Litter Study.

New South Wales

Legislative and administrative frameworks

The Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 (POEO Act) was amended to allow for stronger but more flexible and enforceable anti-litter provisions.

Offences

Littering offences include:

- littering (including littering from vehicles) – depositing litter on land or waters in a public place or an open private place
- aggravated littering – littering which is reasonably likely to cause or contribute to appreciable danger or harm to any persons, animals, premises or property
- depositing, or causing someone to deposit, advertising material in a public place or open private place other than in a mail box or under a door, or on a vehicle.

Fines

Maximum penalties for prosecutions for littering range from \$2,200 to \$5,500.

Different on-the-spot fines also apply depending on the litter involved and the circumstances of the case:

- littering with a small item - \$60
- littering with unlit cigarette or extinguished cigarette butt (excluding littering from a vehicle) - \$60
- littering with lit cigarette butt (excluding littering from a vehicle)- \$200
- littering from vehicle (any type of litter) - \$200 individuals/\$400 corporations
- general littering (excluding cigarettes and littering from a vehicle) – \$200 individuals/\$400 corporations
- aggravated littering - \$375 individuals/\$750 corporations
- depositing advertising material in place or on vehicle - \$200 individuals/\$400 corporations
- causing or asking a person to deposit advertising material contrary to Act - \$200 individuals/\$400 corporations.

Enforcement

Many government agencies have powers to enforce the litter laws and issue litter fines, including all 152 local councils, the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, NSW Police Service and the Department of Fisheries.

Number of fines issued

Changes to littering offences regulations under the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* in July 2000 have resulted in a massive increase in fines being issued, from fewer than 800 fines issued in 1999 to more than 7000 fines issued in 2007-08.¹

Victoria

Legislative and administrative frameworks

Since 1995, the Victorian Litter Reduction Strategy has provided the direction for the management of litter. In 2002, Victoria's litter laws were strengthened by including enforcement provisions for litter in the *Environment Protection Act 1970*.

Victoria's Towards Zero Waste Strategy provides overall direction for litter management. A new litter strategy is being developed.

The Victorian Litter Action Alliance (the Alliance) is the peak body for litter management and prevention in Victoria and aims to provide a coordinated approach to preventing litter in Victoria across state and local government, industry and community sectors. The Alliance has produced a range of best practice litter prevention kits incorporating education, infrastructure and enforcement activities. These can be accessed at <www.litter.vic.gov.au>.

Offences

The *Environment Protection Act 1970* includes provisions for:

- offences relating to bill posting and unwanted advertising material
- prohibiting and regulating the deposit of litter in the environment
- littering from vehicles
- aggravated littering – which includes the intentional deposit of glass, metal, etc, or the intentional deposit of litter that poses a danger to any person, animals, land, water, or vehicle
- the removal of detrimental or disorderly objects and other things.

Fines

On-the-spot fines set in 2002 range from \$113 for depositing a small item of litter, such as paper or an extinguished cigarette butt, to \$227 for placing advertising material on vehicles, depositing burning litter or throwing litter from vehicles. Offenders can be prosecuted in court up to \$4357, or \$6805 for aggravated littering. The level of fines is adjusted in line with inflation on 1 July each year.

Enforcement

The Act provides for a shared responsibility for litter enforcement between litter authorities such as EPA Victoria, Victorian Police, local governments, VicRoads, Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water.

¹ <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/warr/litter-rept04.pdf>

Number of fines issued

Victorian residents can report litterers to the EPA VIC via mail, fax or on-line, resulting in an infringement notice being issued to the litterer. Reporting of litterers has risen rapidly in recent years, supporting research findings that the community support fining those who litter.

- Nearly 13,000 fines issued in 2002-03, a jump of 60 percent from the previous year.
- Over 18,000 fines issued in 2003-04
- Over 22,000 fines issued in 2005-06. Over 90% of the fines are for cigarette butt littering.

Revenue from fines is generally retained by the litter authority which issues the fine.

Queensland

Legislative and administrative frameworks

The *Environmental Protection Act 1994*² has been amended to allow for stronger and more flexible and enforceable anti-litter provisions, particularly in relation to littering from vehicles.

Offences

Littering offences include:

- littering from a vehicle (including boats)
- dangerous littering – including broken glass left in a children's playground or a lit cigarette in dry grass
- disposing of waste in an area that is not a dedicated waste facility
- illegal dumping.



Fines

Under the new litter laws, authorised officers can issue a greater range of offences and penalties. The changes:

- extend the single on-the-spot fine of \$150 for littering with a range of littering offences and fines
 - littering from a vehicle - \$225
 - dangerous littering and littering (20-200 litres) - \$300
 - littering more than 200 litres (illegal dumping) - \$1237
- allow authorised officers to issue an infringement notice to the registered owner of a vehicle from which a littering offence was observed
- allow an authorised officer to issue a clean up direction notice for illegal dumping of waste.

Enforcement

Authorised officers from all local governments, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service have the ability to issue littering and waste dumping infringement notices.

If a person fails to pay the fine or supply a statement indicating that they were not the offender, the administering authority may refer the matter to the State Penalties Enforcement Registry (SPER) for further enforcement of non-payment of fines.

Number of fines issued

Revisions to the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* were being implemented from February 2008. Over the six months between March and August 2008, the Environmental Protection Agency has

² Specific litter legislation has been repealed

issued 96 penalty infringement notices for littering from a vehicle and dangerous littering. The number of infringement notices issued has been increasing each month. A number of local governments have been very proactive in enforcing the new provisions; however the total number of infringements issued is unknown at this stage.

Litter Prevention

The Queensland Litter Prevention Alliance (QLPA) was established in 2005 to develop and coordinate litter prevention, education and management activities. Membership comprises southeast Queensland local governments, Keep Australia Beautiful Council (Qld), Healthy Waterways, the Packaging Stewardship Forum, several state government departments and a number of environment and community organisations. Information can be found at: [<www.qldlitter.com/news1.php>](http://www.qldlitter.com/news1.php).

The EPA works with a number of partners such as event organisers, shopping centres, transport hubs and sporting venues to introduce public place recycling as part of a \$1 million initiative to improve recycling in public venues and events across Queensland. The project has been part funded by the National Packaging Covenant.

Western Australia

Legislative and administrative frameworks

Under the *Litter Act 1979*, littering is illegal. The Keep Australia Beautiful Council (WA) (KABCWA) is the statutory authority for the Litter Act.

The KABCWA established the Western Australia Litter Prevention Taskforce to undertake the development of a litter prevention strategy for Western Australia. The three-year Strategy (2006-09) sets out a framework for effective litter and illegal dumping prevention and management, and provides strategic direction for the combined and consistent efforts of community, industry and government throughout the state. A new five-year prevention strategy is in the process of being developed.

Offences

The Act authorises KABCWA, local government, police and other specified State agencies to take action against those who litter. This action can be in the form of 'on-the-spot fines', or as reports to the KABCWA which are followed up by fines being sent to the offenders. Littering offences include:

- careless cigarette butt disposal
- discarding general litter
- dangerous litter
- illegal dumping
- advertising material and bill posting
- insecure and uncovered loads
- abandoning shopping trolleys
- fire in litter bins.

The litter legislation is in the process of being repealed and inserted into the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* in order to create a new offence for illegal dumping and substantially increase the penalties for littering.

Fines

Fines range from \$75-\$200

Enforcement

EPA, police, local Government, specified state officers are authorised to issue fines.

Number of fines issued

No information provided

South Australia

Legislative and administrative frameworks

Container deposit legislation

South Australia has had container deposit legislation (CDL) since 1975. The legislation was introduced to control litter and waste from beverage containers. Under sections 65-73 of the *Environment Protection Act 1993*, a wide range of beverage containers sold in South Australia are required to carry both a refundable deposit and approved refund markings.

South Australia has found CDL to be a successful environmental tool that provides an important driver for recycling and reducing litter. CDL enjoys wide public support within the State.

The *Environment Protection Act 1993* has been amended to address a number of systemic issues within the current beverage container refund system to improve its functioning.

Litter legislation

Provisions for litter management and enforcement fines are contained in the *Local Government Act 1999*³.

Offences

Litter offences include:

- general littering
- abandonment of a vehicle
- littering from a vehicle.

Fines

On-the-spot fines for general littering start at \$315.

Enforcement

Local Government

Number of fines issued

Confirmed statistics on litter fines are not available, however Keep South Australia Beautiful (KESAB) has suggested that just under 200 fines are issued per year.

Tasmania

Legislative and administrative frameworks

New litter laws have commenced in Tasmania. The *Litter Act 2007* provides enforceable anti-littering provisions to:

- prohibit and regulate the deposit of litter in the environment
- regulate distribution of materials that may become litter
- facilitate the removal of litter
- generally protect and enhance the quality of the natural and urban Tasmanian environments
- enhance Tasmania's "clean and green" image.

³ Specific litter legislation has been repealed.

Special provisions have been developed to address specific littering situations and management issues including:

- the tendency of certain materials to become litter through escape or likely escape from a private place to other places, for example unsecured loads on vehicles and unsecured waste on commercial premises and construction sites
- placing household and commercial rubbish in public litter bins
- insecure delivery of advertising materials, the placing of leaflets on motor vehicles and illegal bill posting
- public reporting of littering offences, especially littering associated with motor vehicles.

Members of the public can report littering that they have seen, especially littering associated with a motor vehicle. Reporting littering involves completing a littering report, which can be done online or by filling out a printed form. The report forms the basis for the Environment Division to take further action, either by issuing a written warning or an infringement notice or to prosecute the offender.

Offences

The Act and its Regulations establish a tiered range of penalties for littering offences, based on the type and amount of litter, and whether the offender is an individual or a corporate body.

Fines

\$120 (per penalty unit).

Enforcement

Litter laws will be enforced primarily through the service of infringement notices and litter abatement notices. Prosecutions in court may also be initiated. The aim is to encourage people to accept responsibility for disposing of litter appropriately and thus reduce litter and its impacts on the community. Online reporting is also available to the public.

All police officers and officers specifically appointed under the Act as authorised officers are empowered to take action against offenders including: Parks and Wildlife service officers, compliance investigation section officers, inland fisheries officers, local government authorised officers

Number of fines issued

Minimal litter enforcement activity was undertaken during the period 2004 to 2008 due to the outdated and difficult nature to enforce the *Litter Act 1973* and difficulty with enforcing the regulations. Consequently, there is minimal data available for this period. Comprehensive data on the number of fines issued and revenue received from fines for enforcement of the *Litter Act 2007* will become available through the recently introduced (April 2008) Monetary Penalties Enforcement System. Data available from this source will provide a breakdown by the issuing authority. An improved snapshot will be available by June 2009 after the system has been operational for a year.

- Prior to the introduction of the *Litter Act 2007* and electronic infringement notices, there appears to have been no movement in the value of litter infringements imposed during the period 2005-April 2008. Information for the last transaction was December 2002.
- From commencement of the Monetary and Penalties Enforcement System (MPES) 30/04/2008 to 17/09/08 112 electronic litter infringements with a value of \$16,200 have been lodged with MPES. Twenty five of the 112 were lodged in financial year of 2007-08.
- Of the infringements lodged, 60 have been paid in full returning \$8,040 and 4 have been part paid returning \$210. 23 infringement notices were withdrawn (19 by the issuing authority and

four for court proceedings) with a value of \$2,880. (Source of Information Monetary and Penalties Enforcement System, Justice Department)

Australian Capital Territory

Legislative and administrative frameworks

The *Litter Act 2004* is the primary legislative instrument. Infringement notices are enacted by the Magistrates Court (Litter Infringement Notices) Regulations 2004.

Offences

Offences include:

- depositing of litter in or on a public place
- aggravated littering that is likely to cause an injury to persons or damage to property in or on a public place
- littering from a vehicle
- uncovered vehicle loads
- depositing of commercial and garden waste in or on a public place
- occupier of commercial premises failing to take reasonable steps to prevent litter from the premises being deposited in or on a public place
- depositing or abandoning a dangerous container in a public place or public tip
- placing advertising leaflets etc., in or on a motor vehicle in a public place.

Fines

Penalties under the Act vary between \$1,000 and \$5,000 depending on the category of the offence. Infringement Notice penalties for individuals vary from \$60 to \$1,000 and for corporations from \$300 to \$5,000.

Enforcement

The police and city rangers and any public servant authorised by the Chief Executive are authorised to issue fines.

Number of fines issued

- 2005-06: 80 issued, 55 paid, 25 withdrawn.
- 2006-07: 73 issued, 48 paid, 25 withdrawn.
- 2007-08: 98 issued, 50 paid, 41 pending, 7 withdrawn.

Northern Territory

Legislative and administrative frameworks

The Litter Act is the primary legislative instrument. It only applies to vacant Crown land and public places, but may apply to municipal or freehold land upon request. Many by-laws under the Local Government Act as well as other Acts and Regulations in addition to the Litter Act have provisions related to littering.

Offences

It is an offence to leave, throw, deposit or abandon litter in, onto or from a public place or vacant Crown land. It is also an offence to not remove the body of an injured or dead animal that can not move itself, from any part of the public place or vacant Crown land that is used by vehicular or pedestrian traffic. In addition to a penalty, a person is found guilty of an offence may be ordered to pay the reasonable costs of cleaning up the litter.

The various By-Laws under the Local Government Act in general contain additional provisions regarding littering, providing for offences relating to handbills, glass breakage, and the offence of the owner or occupier of land allowing litter to remain on land or to allow litter to spread from land to a public place.

Fines

Not to exceed \$2000 unless litter was liable to cause injury, danger or damage (cannot exceed \$3000). Under various local government by-laws and other Acts and Regulations, infringement notice penalties vary.

Enforcement

Bodies with enforcement powers include: Police, Conservation Commission NT, Darwin Port Corporation, Local Government and Health Surveyor

Number of fines issued

No information provided

Non-legislative frameworks

The 2007 *Re-thinking Waste Disposal Behaviour & Resource Efficiency Interim Action Plan* identifies key areas requiring investment and agency action. Re-thinking Waste involves finding opportunities to integrate resource recovery and litter management within regional development and capacity building. The plan aims to engage all relevant stakeholders in the pursuit of a collaborative, efficient and effective approach.

A SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL PICTURE

All jurisdictions have legislative or administrative frameworks, underpinned by enforcement activity, to manage litter. Littering offences are common across most jurisdictions. Across Australia littering offences are reasonably consistent, with the most common being:

- general littering
- littering from a vehicle
- illegal dumping
- insecure delivery of advertising material
- dangerous/aggravated littering.

The legislative frameworks of most jurisdictions enable a range of officers to fine litterers. Table 1 below outlines the revenue reported from litter fines issued by state.

Table 1: Revenue from fines 2005-08

2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
New South Wales		
• \$1,329,415	• \$1,254,470	• \$1,327,885
Victoria⁴		
• \$1,597,712	• \$1,919,711	• \$1,805,298
Western Australia		
• \$164,335	• \$232,352	• \$312,357 ⁵

⁴ Note: EPA Victoria only. Figures are for cash receipts (including Infringements Court revenue)

⁵ Revenue retained by the entity KABC

2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Queensland		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Queensland EPA does not retain revenue from littering fines 		
South Australia		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not data available 		
Tasmania		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No data available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No data available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From 30/04/2008 to 17/09/08 112 electronic litter infringements with a value of \$16,200 have been lodged \$8040 of that has already been paid. No data provided
Australian Capital Territory		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$12,370 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$7,080 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$10,100 with 41 fines pending
Northern Territory		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No data provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No data provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No data provided

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

To raise awareness about littering and fines for litter, states and territories undertake campaigns through television, posters and print media.

Table 2 lists some of these campaigns over a three-year period. Campaign graphics from some campaigns are in the figures below.

Figure 7: Victoria – ‘Do the right thing in Victoria’

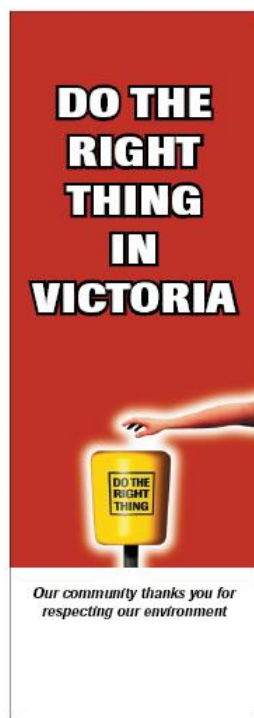


Figure 8: New South Wales – ‘Don’t be a tosser’

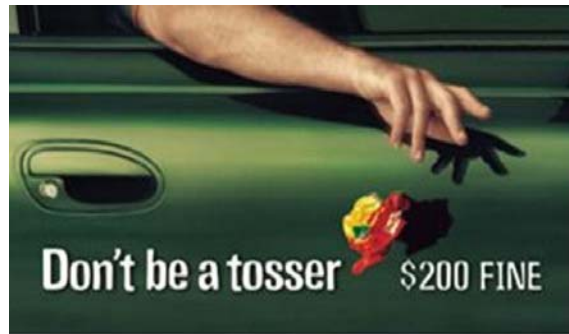


Figure 9: Queensland – ‘Don’t rubbish Queensland’



Figure 10: Western Australia – 'Litter and you're rubbish'



Figure 11: Tasmania – Look Who's Littering – ON THE ROAD

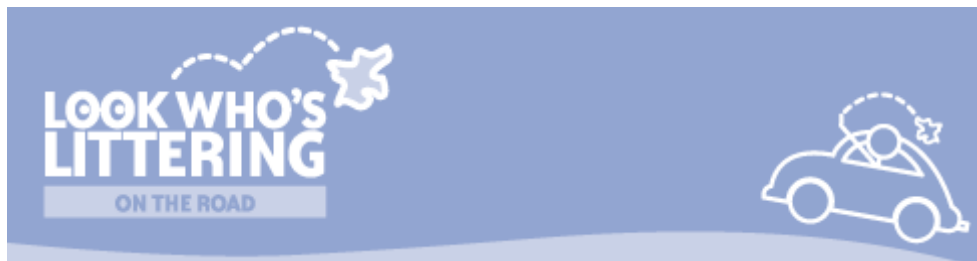


Table 2: Summary of campaign activities⁶ 2006-08

2006	2007	2008
Commonwealth		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Day of Action on Cigarette Butt Litter 	
New South Wales		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Don't be a Tosser' 'Litter, it's in your hands'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Don't be a Tosser' 'Litter, it's in your hands'.
Victoria		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commonwealth Games Campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Don't be a Tosser, Bin Your Butts' Litter grants for butt litter programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of Roadside Litter and Resource Recovery Kit in progress Litter grants for addressing illegal dumping and butt litter programs.
Western Australia		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Litter Reporter Scheme Reporting on-line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Litter Reporter Scheme Reporting on-line Litter prevention grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Litter and You're Rubbish – billboards, bus pacs and radio Litter Reporter Scheme Reporting on-line Litter prevention grants
Queensland		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Butt Stops Here – Don't Mess with Queensland⁷ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't Rubbish Queensland – communication of changes to <i>Environmental Protection Act 1994</i> regarding litter enforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't Rubbish Queensland Public Place Recycling – 'Do the Right Thing, Use the Right Bin'
South Australia		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No data provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No data provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No data provided
Tasmania		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Awareness with regard to draft Litter Bill "Don't Waste Tasmania" litter reduction campaign promoted through the Tasmanian Litter Reduction Taskforce via televised community service announcements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Awareness with regard to the <i>Litter Act 2007</i> Promotion of key new provisions, in particular the public reporting of littering offences from motor vehicles. "Do The Right Thing" litter reduction campaign promoted through the Tasmanian Litter Reduction Taskforce via televised community service announcements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Look Who's Littering – ON THE ROAD' media campaign, launch of Litter Hotline, the public reporting of littering offences system. "Do The Right Thing" litter reduction campaign promoted through the Tasmanian Litter Reduction Taskforce via televised community service announcements
Australian Capital Territory		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ACT does not have a campaign specific to litter. However, litter is incorporated within the Waste Wise school program. 		

⁶ Campaign activities include special events and one-off grants to community or local government

⁷ Undertaken in conjunction with the Queensland Department of Emergency Services and Keep Australia Beautiful Queensland

2006	2007	2008
Northern Territory		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Litter Abatement Resource Recovery Strategy (LARRS) including the Implementation plan and Litter and Recycling Grants Program Development of the 'Re-thinking Waste Disposal Behaviour & Resource Efficiency Interim Action Plan' 	<p>Re-thinking Waste Disposal Behaviour & Resource Efficiency Interim Action Plan (collaboration with Product Stewardship Forum (PSF)). In 2007-08 the partnership of PSF and the Northern Territory Government offered a total of \$ 310 099 funding for integrated resource recovery and litter management projects through Rethinking Waste Grants for both individuals and schools addressing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of Education Programs Development of Regional / Industry Development Projects: Re-thinking Waste Governance Projects 	<p>Re-thinking Waste Disposal Behaviour & Resource Efficiency Interim Action Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Programs: Re-thinking Waste in Schools Challenge; Targeted community/neighbourhood waste management; Community service announcements addressing recycling and resource recovery. Regional Industry Development Projects: Established a recycling enterprise in a remote community (Lajamanu); Development of Waste Management Standards for Small Communities in the NT; Development of a Community Waste Audit Tool for Communities of less than 1000 people; Community Waste Management Planning; Infrastructure grants; Commence development of waste minimisation plans for the hospitality and construction industry. Rethinking Waste Governance Projects: Meet responsibilities of the National Environment Protection (Used Packaging Materials) Measure.

GUIDELINES AND STRATEGIES

The Victorian Litter Action Alliance (VLAA) has produced guidelines and tool kits aimed at small to medium sized organisations, such as local government and incorporated associations to implement their own anti-litter policies. These include litter prevention kits for cigarette butts, dog excrement, road signage, building sites, illegal dumping and campaigns.

Western Australia has produced guidelines for community cleanups 'Tips for organising a clean-up' available in copy and on-line.

Tasmania has produced Enforcement Guidelines for the *Litter Act 2007*. The purpose of these guidelines is to guide officers in state and local government on the enforcement of the *Litter Act 2007*⁸. The guidelines will be used mainly by authorised officers appointed under the Act. The guidelines are not publicly available.

⁸ The Litter Act may be viewed at <http://www.thelaw.tas.gov.au>.

Public place and major event recycling guidelines

Some jurisdictions have guidelines to help prevent litter and encourage recycling in public places and at major events. Common elements of these guidelines include bin placement, signage and monitoring of the system

Plastic bag litter management

The EPHC have developed guidelines for plastic bag litter management as part of the overall response to plastic bag litter issues. The two guidelines developed were:

- Guidelines for Management of Plastic Bag Litter in Public Places – developed to minimise plastic bag litter generation at outdoor public places such as recreational parks, roadside rest stops and car parks, public transport nodes, shopping precincts, sport venues and other places where large gatherings congregate.
- Guidelines for Management of Plastic Bag Litter at Landfill sites – developed to help managers of unattended and attended landfills reduce generation of plastic bag litter and aim to protect residents and the environment from the offsite effects arising from landfills receiving municipal waste.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local governments are involved in the clean up and prevention of litter. In most states, local government officers have the power to issue fines for litter. Some local governments, such as the City of Melbourne, have introduced bylaws or permits to control common litter items such as cigarette butts.

Typical local government litter management initiatives and activities include:

- issuing of fines
- bin placement and emptying
- litter patrols
- street sweeping and manual clean ups
- installation of butt bins
- litter prevention education campaigns
- public place and major event recycling.

The cost of many of these activities is fixed, regardless of the rate of littering.

CAMPAIGNS AND STRATEGIES

Local governments also conduct education programs or partner with local businesses to prevent litter. One example is the 'Butt Free Business, Please butt it, then bin it' campaign – a joint initiative of the cities of West Torrens and Holdfast Bay in South Australia, in conjunction with the Butt Littering Trust. This campaign included the installation of butt bins at participating businesses and the distribution of personal ashtrays to staff. The program led to a 63% reduction in butt littering across participating businesses.



In Tasmania in 2002 the Southern Waste Strategy Authority (SWSA) commenced a litter reduction radio campaign as part of its litter reduction program. At the conclusion of this campaign and in conjunction with the Beverage Industry Environment Council (BIEC), SWSA formed the Tasmanian Litter Reduction Taskforce, which, to date has attracted sponsorship from local and

state government bodies, industry stakeholder groups and private industry. The taskforce has been responsible for launching a state-wide television campaign using the BIEC 'Don't Waste Tasmania' theme. More recently, the campaign moved to an updated version of the successful "Do The Right Thing" campaign of the 70's and 80's, retaining the original jingle and promoting iconic Tasmanian locations along with people disposing of litter in the correct way.

At the same time the number of public place garbage and recycling bins was increased in key locations across the State. By 2005 there was an estimated 2,350 public garbage bins in southern Tasmania alone. According to the Litter Behaviour Study VII – National Benchmark (2004) in 2001 Hobart went from having one of the worst disposal behaviour index levels in the Nation to equal second best in 2004.

Plastic bag litter reduction programs

A number of councils, in some cases funded by state government agencies, have undertaken plastic bag litter reduction programs. Examples of these programs are below.

New South Wales

Marrickville Council implemented a plastic bag reduction campaign called 'Bagbusters'. This aims to reduce the use of plastic bags. Bagbusters consults with local retailers to design simple and cost effective plastic bag reduction strategies, further assisting them by sourcing alternative bags, providing signs and training staff. Public events and festivals are held to encourage shoppers to refuse plastic bags, and are also used to distribute free reusable bags to the public. Educational flyers and other advertising materials are produced in 10 different languages, with local media, retail signage and volunteers providing a visible presence in the streets and at festivals to reinforce the message.

Manly Council in 2008 moved to ban shopping bags at a shopping centre through council development controls.

Victoria

A partnership between the Barwon Regional Waste Management Group BRWMG and the Anglesea Neighbourhood Environmental Improvement Plan Group implemented the "Go Blue and Keep Anglesea Green – Plastic Bag Free Campaign" with the aim to help Anglesea become a plastic bag free town. The project assisted traders in making the change from plastic bags to alternatives such as paper or reusable bags to promote behavioural change in residents. The campaign had a 90% adoption rate amongst traders.

Western Australia

In 2003, the Esperance "Bag Smart Programme" was launched and led to a 75% reduction in the use of plastic shopping bags within the community. Incorporating public advocacy, community education, school and retail participation and volunteer support, the Shire of Esperance has moved from running plastic bag free days to regular plastic bag free weeks. Using radio, newspaper, TV advertising and editorial to reinforce the 'Esperance is too Fantastic for Plastic' motto, the program demonstrates a strong commitment by the community to become plastic bag free. Peak tourist months have been identified as key periods for retail and volunteer efforts, to encourage visitors to help Esperance become plastic bag free.

The KABC (WA) funds and oversees a number of initiatives as briefly outlined below.

- Litter Prevention Grants – 20007-08 KABC (WA) allocated and distributed \$100,000 for grants to 18 groups wishing to undertake litter prevention activities. The funding ranged from \$2,500 to \$10,000 for initiatives such as education kits, campaigns activities and the development of

resources for the community. \$15,000 was allocated for roadside grants through the sponsorship of the Packaging Stewardship Forum.

- Community pride programs - Clean Beach Challenge, Sustainable Cities Awards and Tidy Towns awards.
- WA Environment Awards – sponsored a category in these awards for excellence in litter prevention.
- Resources made available to the community including the KABC Community Trailer, signage, templates, pocket ashtrays.
- During the financial year the KABC (WA) provided approximately 125,070 car litter bags and 120,300 large litter bags, either free or below cost, to Tidy Town's Committees, community groups, businesses and local governments. The provision of litter bags helps keep Western Australia's roadsides litter free.
- Education / behaviour change programs including Learning about Litter for schools, Bin your Butt for businesses, illegal dumping manual and workshops for local government and State land managers, and promotion of Keep Australia Beautiful Week, and community cleanups.

South Australia

In 2006, the cities of Holdfast Bay, Port Adelaide Enfield, Charles Sturt and Salisbury, with funding from Zero Waste SA, joined forces to reduce the use of single use plastic bags. Working collaboratively with local communities and schools, the group distributed 50,000 reusable bags in the community by encouraging shoppers to swap five single use plastics bags for a reusable bag, or alternatively purchase the bag for \$1. Over 11,300 participants took part, helping eliminate 200,000 bags from the waste stream within the region. The councils followed up their campaign with a community survey to evaluate the effectiveness of their initiative.

Northern Territory

Plastic bags were identified more than 10 years ago as a major source of litter in the Arnhemland Progress Association's (ALPA) community. As a result the Board banned plastic bags from shops that are either owned, or managed by the ALPA, providing brown paper bags or recycled boxes as an alternative. Local community support was gained for the 'Don't choke the turtles' campaign, by highlighting the danger of plastic bags to marine animals, particularly playing on the strong cultural connection with the sea, and totemic relationships with sea turtles. In communities where the ALPA has the only shop in the town, plastic bags are no longer an issue, and other remote communities are now looking to follow suit.

Queensland

In 2005, the EPA ran a plastic bag reduction program that included providing car park signage in shopping centres reminding people to use their green bag. Shopping centre managers were sent letters requesting that the signs be placed in prominent locations and also requesting the development of additional signage.

Mackay City Council undertook to reduce plastic bag use in 2006. The Council:

- formed a partnership with local retailers to raise awareness of the importance of choosing a reusable bag.
- operated a reward system by looking for shoppers who are using reusable bags when shopping. They were entered into a weekly draw for a \$100 voucher. The competition ran for 6 months.
- following the competition period, introduced a 50% subsidy on the purchase cost of \$1 reusable bags. Residents needed to purchase 10 bags and present the receipt to Council to be eligible to receive a rebate.
- used local TV and radio to promote the campaign.

In 2004, a strategic plan with the aim to reduce the use of lightweight plastic bags on North Stradbroke Island was developed jointly by Redland Shire Council and Redland Tourism as part of a Sustainable Tourism Strategy. The plan was developed in partnership and consultation with major key stakeholders such as the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, EPA, tour companies, local distributors of plastic bags, ice and bait manufacturers, retailers, hotel and resort operators, and major supermarkets.

The plan covered a minimum period of two years, and included:

- the use of alternatives to plastic bags, such as biodegradable bags, reusable bags, paper bags, and/or boxes, etc
- signage in car parks around shopping centres reminding the community to use their “green” or calico bags in preference to plastic bags;
- posters and reusable bags with the message ‘Caring for Straddie’ (right)
- a communication/education plan detailing how to promote the reduction of plastic bags. The plan included:
 - a diffusion strategy to enable the success and lessons from this partnership to be a showcase for other communities
 - a baseline of current plastic bag usage
 - methods of monitoring the impact of the campaign
 - indicators to determine the success of the program.



In 2007, the Environmental Protection Agency made 20 grants of \$5000 available to regional local governments and regional Chambers of Commerce to reduce plastic bag use in local areas.

NATIONAL PACKAGING COVENANT

The National Packaging Covenant is a voluntary initiative by government and industry, to reduce the environmental effects of packaging on the environment. It is designed to minimise the environmental impacts arising from the disposal of used packaging, conserve resources through better design and production processes and facilitate the re-use and recycling of used packaging materials. The Covenant framework is supported by regulation in each state and territory developed under the National Environmental Protection Measure (for Used Packaging).

The Covenant establishes a framework for the effective life cycle management of consumer packaging and paper products that will be delivered through a collaborative approach. It aims to achieve, with the help of all participants, a recycling target of 65% for packaging and no further increases in packaging waste disposed to landfill by the end of 2010.

The Covenant is administered by the National Packaging Covenant Council. Membership of the council includes state and local governments and industry. The National Packaging Covenant Council has funded a number of projects aimed at reducing litter, such as:

- Southern Waste Strategy Authority awareness campaign;
- Queensland EPA public place recycling project; and the
- Away from Home Recycling Infrastructure & Behaviour Trials.

The Covenant involves reporting on key performance indicators, two of which are litter-specific:

- the amount and type of consumer packaging in the litter stream
- improvements in littering behaviour.

NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

ORGANISATIONS WHO MANAGE LITTER

Keep Australia Beautiful

Keep Australia Beautiful – a national organisation with branches in most states – encourages Australians to avoid littering and reduce their use of packaged materials. Award programs such as Tidy Towns and Clean Beaches encourage people to become involved in local issues – such as cleaning up litter.

Litter Measurement

Each year, Keep Australia Beautiful produces the National Litter Index. This survey measures over 980 sites nationally, twice a year (November and May). Sites include beaches, car parks, highways and shopping centres.

Materials collected are classified under a number of types and sub-categories as below in Table 3.

Table 3: National Litter Index Material Categories

Main Material Type	Object Sub-Category
Cigarette Butts	Total
Glass	Alcoholic beverage container Non-alcoholic beverage container Plain water container Other
Illegal Dumping	Total
Metal	Alcoholic beverage container Food container or utensil Non-alcoholic beverage container Plain water container Other
Miscellaneous	Total
Paper/ Paperboard	Cigarette packets Food container or utensil Non-alcoholic beverage container Publication Other
Plastic	Alcoholic beverage container Food container or utensil Non-alcoholic beverage container Plain water container Shopping bag Other

Source: *National Litter Index Annual Report 2006/2007*

The Keep Australia Beautiful *National Litter Index Annual Report 2006/2007*, shows that in overall terms littering increased slightly across Australia from 2005-06 to 2006-07. The latest report, *National Litter Index Annual Report 2007/2008* shows that nationally, litter in 2007-08 decreased from 2005-06 levels. The figures point to a trend of roughly steady national litter levels.

During the operation of the National Litter Index measured litter has decreased in some states (e.g. Vic, Qld, ACT) while increasing in others (SA, WA). While the National Litter Index data is rigorously collected and the most reliable survey of litter in Australia, its results may be partially weather dependent (eg. a major rain event preceding a survey can 'clear' the area of older litter). Table 4 below shows a summary of litter collected nationally and in each state over three years.

Table 4: National Litter Index - Summary of litter collected

	Items per 1,000m ²			Volume (litres) per 1,000m ²		
	05/ 06	06/ 07	07/08	05/ 06	06/ 07	07/08
NATIONAL	70	74	68	8.86	9.68	8.58
ACT	-	68	56	-	7.04	6.06
NSW	80	71	77	14.95	14.69	11.90
NT	-	64	60	-	5.32	7.24
Qld	89	86	76	7.66	7.59	7.44
SA	60	61	68	7.23	11.08	9.55
Tas	59	70	61	5.15	6.68	5.90
Vic	71	80	48	7.87	7.74	4.19
WA	60	83	85	8.57	12.19	13.06

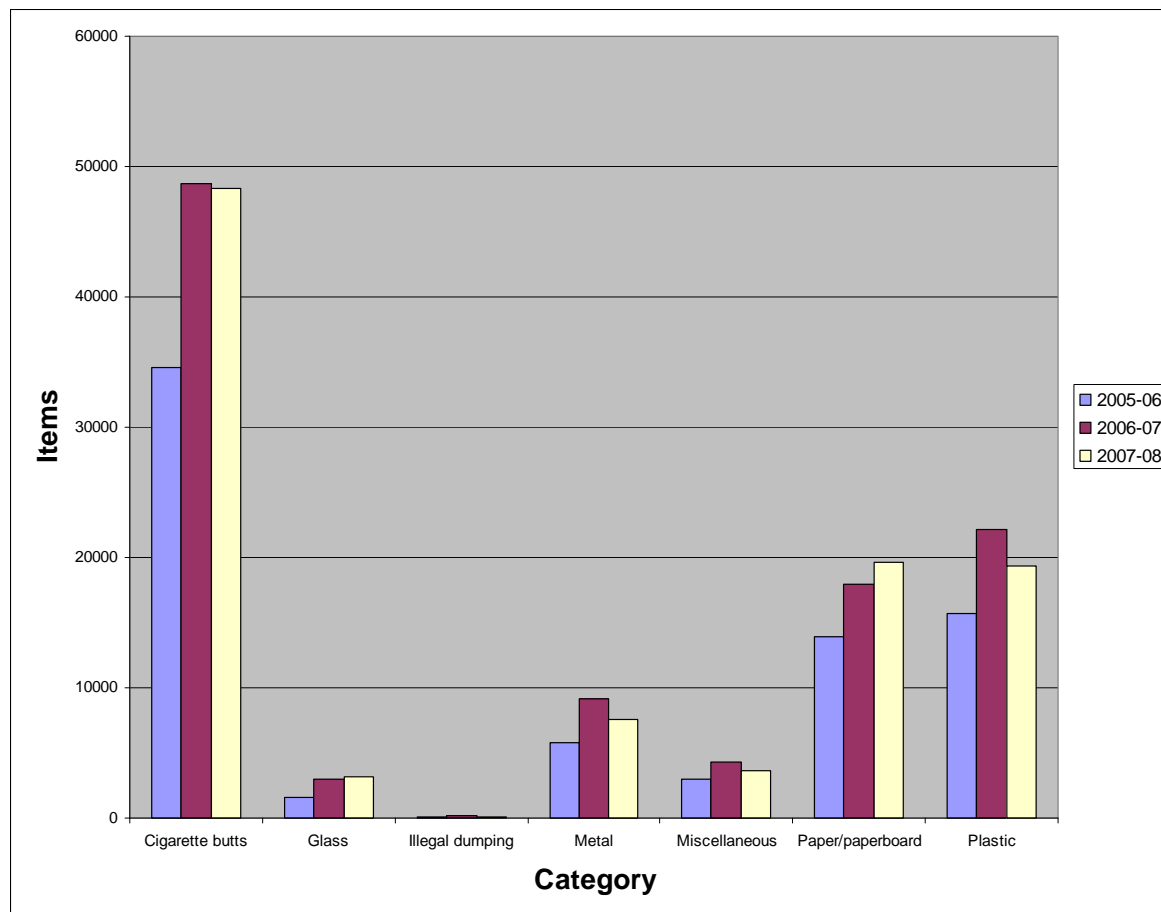
Source: *National Litter Index Annual Report 2007/2008*

In 2007-08 Keep Australia Beautiful released the Branded Litter Study (BLS) for the first time. The BLS is a subset (about one quarter) of the 2007-08 National Litter Index data, which identifies the main brands present in the litter stream and the proportion of litter associated with brand owners. It includes items such as snack wrappers, take away food containers and cigarette packaging, but does not include cigarette butts. The Australian Government was the principal financial sponsor of the 2007-08 BLS and additional funding was provided by all state and territory governments (except TAS). Research was conducted by McGregor Tan Research.

The 2007-08 BLS results show that beverage containers and packaging (i.e. alcoholic, non-alcoholic and milk beverage containers and other packaging) make up 46.3% of all branded litter items. Beverage containers (*excluding packaging*) only make up about 6% of the total littered items. The leading brand-owners identified in the BLS were Coca Cola and McDonalds. Branded litter in the litter stream is not necessarily proportional to the market share of that brand, meaning that some brands have the opportunity to improve their litter prevention performance. The results also showed that 39% of branded litter was associated with paper/ paperboard items and that highway locations were associated with the highest proportion of branded litter.

Data on littered items from 2005-08 is set out below.

Figure 12: National Litter Index Littered items/Materials 2005-08



Source: NEPC Service Corporation using *National Litter Index Annual Results 2005/2006 Tabulations*, *National Litter Index Annual Results 2006/2007 Tabulations*, and *National Litter Index, Annual Report 2007/2008*⁹

Clean Up Australia

Clean Up Australia was established to involve the community in cleaning up litter. Clean Up days are held annually and have become Australia's largest community-based environmental event. In 2007, approximately 1 million volunteers across Australia removed 8000 tonnes of rubbish from beaches, parks, streets, bushland areas and waterways. Each year, Clean Up Australia release the Rubbish Report which details the rubbish collected by volume and type.

Clean Up Australia also run education campaigns to help Australians live 'greener'. The 'Say NO to plastic bags' campaign was aimed at shoppers, retailers and regional communities to reduce plastic bag use.

Litter Measurement

As mentioned above, Clean Up Australia release the Rubbish Report annually. The data in the report is compiled from site surveys conducted by site co-ordinators and volunteers on Clean Up Australia Day. In 2007, 7 043 sites were cleaned up across Australia and 814 of these sites were surveyed to produce the Rubbish Report. Sites are chosen as known areas needing clean-up rather than randomly. The quality of the 2007 data has reduced from previous years due to only 65% of the survey forms being returned correctly. The most commonly found item in 2007, and for the

⁹ Note: 2007-08 data is averaged data

previous 11 years was cigarette butts. The most littered collection sites were public bushland and school grounds.

Table 5: Top 10 Rubbish Items as % of all items collected on Clean Up Australia Day

Rubbish Item	2005	2006	2007
Cigarette butts	17	14	12
Glass pieces	12	5	7
Glass alcoholic bottles	10	4	6
Chips & confectionary bags	10	6	6
Small paper pieces	8	5	4
Plastic straws	7	-	-
Metal bottle caps & lids	6	-	-
PET bottles	6	3	3
Metal alcoholic cans	5	3	3
Metal soft drink cans	5	3	3
Plastic bottle caps & lids	-	4	5
Plastic supermarket/retail bags	-	2	-
Miscellaneous bottle caps	-	-	3

Note: blank fields indicate that this type of rubbish item is not included in the 'Top Ten' for that year

Butt Littering Trust

Cigarette butt litter is one of the most prevalent items in litter surveys. Cigarette packets also featured highly in the 2008 Branded Litter Study. The Butt Littering Trust (the Trust) was established in 2003 as an independent producer responsibility organisation. The development of the Trust was facilitated by British American Tobacco Australia Limited (BAT Australia) to achieve collaborative action together with other manufacturers, program service providers and government at all levels to address butt littering. The Trust manages and allocates funds to support and establish projects that reduce cigarette butt littering across Australia. The Trust also conducts independent research and gathers information on butt littering and solutions to butt littering to share with litter managers.

After a successful 'Butt Free City' campaign in Melbourne in March 2004, the Trust sought participation from all capital cities for a national Butt Free City campaign. The Trust provides partner cities with financial and promotional support. A Butt Free Toolbox is available on the Trust's website for use by partner cities.

The Tasmanian government participated in the National Day of Action on Cigarette Butt Litter held March 2007. The Tasmanian government is currently exploring project opportunities through the Butt Littering Trust mechanism.

Butt Free City campaigns are now held annually on a national basis. Activities of the campaign include:

- distributing personal ashtrays
- encouraging smokers to pledge their commitment to butt it and bin it
- pre and post campaign monitoring
- advertising and promotions.

The results of the campaigns over four years are below.

Table 6: Results of the Butt Littering Trust campaigns from 2005-08

Key Campaign Aspect	2005	2006	2007	2008	Cumulative Impact
Number of Partner cities	7	7	8	10	32
Average national reduction in butt littering	9.9%	17.9%	13.5%	21.2%	15.6%
Personal ashtrays distributed	12,287	13,546	18,234	22,755	66,822
Face to face engagement with smokers by educators	10,660	14,643	18,961	24 673	44,264
Butt Free City pledges	Concept not in use	12,129	13,101	20, 407	25,230
Permanent butt litter bins installed	Not measured	Approx 110	Approx 322	419	Approx 851
Media hits	Not measured	19	22	210	251
Partnerships Developed	Not measured	22	41	183	246
Potential Media Reach	1,675,611	1,524,600	5,881,483	18,036,926	Approx 27,118,620

The Packaging Stewardship Forum

The Packaging Stewardship Forum (PSF) works with partners across Australia to increase the resource recovery of food and beverage post-consumer packaging and reduce littering.

The PSF was established in May 2006 as a forum of the Australian Food and Grocery Council (AFGC). The forum continues to deliver a range of programs established over the past three decades by its predecessors, the former Beverage Industry Environment Council (BIEC) and the Litter Recycling and Research Association. It also advocates and promotes new ways of approaching the management of post consumer food and beverage packaging and its recovery.

The PSF achieves this by partnering with others on projects which focus on delivering real outcomes to increase resource recovery and reduce litter. PSF is a financial supporter of the Keep Australia Beautiful network, except for South Australia.

Training

The PSF has developed and funded a Litter and Away from Home Training Program. This program is based on the BInS (Bin Infrastructure Systems) Training Program. The training is separated into two courses: public place recycling (for local government) and events recycling (for events organisers/local and state government officers).

Conclusion

As shown in this report there already exists a wide range of litter reduction initiatives throughout Australia. National litter levels have been steady for at least the last three years. Many of the legislative provisions and campaign activities currently in place are similar across most jurisdictions. It is considered that no further action on a national approach is required at this stage.

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