



Media Release

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National research shows South Australians continue to be litter bugs

Australians' littering habits have resulted in a 7% increase in volume of litter across the country in the latest results of the Keep Australia Beautiful National Litter Index released today.

The results indicate that illegal dumping is a key problem area in South Australia, along with a high volume of plastic litter items ending up on the streets.

Nationally, smokers remain the largest contributors to the volume of litter counted, with cigarette butts accounting for almost half of the total number of litter items in the last count. However, South Australia fares significantly better with cigarette butts and beverage containers, due to increased awareness and education on the issue.

KESAB's CEO, John Phillips said: "Whilst South Australia is significantly better in these two areas, it would be worrying to see us follow the UK lead where illegal dumping, or 'fly tipping' as it is known there, becomes a major litter and public health issue. Illegal dumping poses a threat to humans and wildlife, damages our environment, and spoils our enjoyment of our towns and countryside."

According to Keep Australia Beautiful National Chairman, Don Chambers, "Only 20% of Australians may smoke, but by failing to dispose of their cigarette butts properly, they are generating one of Australia's worst litter problems and seriously impacting on our environment and water quality".

"This represents 400 million* cigarette butts being used every week, with a significant number of these ending up as litter. And whilst there has been a slight drop in the number of butts counted in our research over the past two years, it is clear that far more needs to be done".

"This is something that can be easily fixed if everyone simply disposed of their packaging and litter responsibly. It's a matter of thinking before throwing." Chambers said.

To coincide with the release of the NLI results, Keep Australia Beautiful is giving away 1,200 'Stubbi' personal ashtrays featuring the KAB logo in every State and Territory. In partnership with the Nova Radio Network, smokers will be able to pick up a personal ashtray from the Nova 'Casanova street teams' throughout the week in South Australia.

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Editors notes:

The Keep Australia Beautiful National Litter Index is the only national, twice yearly, quantitative measure of litter in Australia and is based on a methodology that has been refined over 20 years. It details litter by type, by location and by brand and compares between representative sites in each state rather than the full area or population of the state. The Neighbourhood Litter Count – a version for members of the public to measure litter in their own neighbourhood can be found at www.kab.org.au

*: 20.6% of Australians smoke and they each smoke an average of 99 cigarettes each week. Source: National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2004, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare