



National Litter Index (NLI) 0910

Cover note by Keep Australia Beautiful National Association

The purpose of the cover note is to put the technical report in context and to provide information on the proposed use and future plans for the NLI

Proposal for a National Litter Index Review

- it is proposed that the National Litter Index fieldwork report by McGregor Tan be supplemented by an expert review of the trends in the data and a comparison with the legislative, education, infrastructure and enforcement regimes in each state and territory
- this may help explain items from the report such as an increase in a type of litter or an increase in litter at a particular site type.
- it is proposed to be funded by an additional levy on current funding partners or by finding an additional source of funds
- contact Keep Australia Beautiful National Association for further details

Background to the proposal:

Litter

- most Australians agree that litter is unsightly, expensive to tidy up and some litter is potentially dangerous to wildlife
- most Australians have, consciously or unconsciously, contributed to litter in our towns, cities and beaches
- that is why litter continues to be a problem that needs to be addressed through the joint efforts of community, business and government utilising education, infrastructure and enforcement.

Environment Protection and Heritage Council (EPHC)

- the EPHC, Environment Protection and Heritage Council, is the forum for the State, Territory and Australian Environment Ministers
- on 5.7.10 the EPHC Strategic Plan 2010-14 stipulated that:
'Over the next five years, the Covenant (Australian Packaging Covenant) will target improved design, away from home recycling, litter and product stewardship by all parties in the packaging chain.'

Australian Packaging Covenant (APC)

- an agreement between companies in the supply chain and all levels of government to reduce the environmental impacts of consumer packaging.
- taking action to reduce the incidence and impacts of litter.
- the APC includes mechanisms to fund agreed projects
- funds are half from state and territory governments and half from industry
- the Keep Australia Beautiful National Litter Index is funded in this way

Keep Australia Beautiful (KAB)

- KAB is a community based not for profit association
- it aims to lead, challenge and inspire all Australians to strive for a sustainable and litter free environment
- it works with community, industry and government using education, infrastructure and enforcement to address the problem of litter
- KAB has core programs covering research, awareness and community action
- we conduct research such as the National Litter Index
- we raise awareness and initiate behaviour change through programs such as Keep Australia Beautiful Week
- we identify, acknowledge and promote local environmental improvement through awards such as the Australian Sustainable Communities Awards consisting of the Tidy Towns, Sustainable Cities and Clean Beaches Awards.
- we provide practical support through local grants such as the Beverage Container Recycling Grants funded by the Coca-Cola Foundation

Role of Business

- since Keep Australia Beautiful began in 1966 business has provided funds for our programs such as Tidy Towns and Keep Australia Beautiful Week and have conducted their own programs such as the 'Do The Right Thing' campaign
- Government and Business are engaged in a voluntary scheme, The Australian Packaging Covenant (formerly the National Packaging Covenant), which seeks to reduce the environmental impacts of packaging including litter.

Role of Government

- waste and litter are primarily a State and Territory responsibility in terms of legislation (see list below) and education. It is primarily a Local Government responsibility in terms of waste collection and litter tidy up.
- The three levels of Government, Business and Community are engaged in a voluntary scheme, The Australian Packaging Covenant (formerly the National Packaging Covenant), which seeks to reduce the environmental impacts of packaging including litter.
- the Australian Government has a leadership role in coordinating government activities and has released a National Waste Policy

Litter Research

-there are two main forms of litter research:

-the first is quantitative research which seeks to measure the extent and scale of the problem.

-an example is the National Litter Index which measures what litter occurs where and in what volume.

-this form of research is necessary to help community, business and all levels of government to clearly understand the size of the problem in order to agree the level of funding and effort needed to address the problem.

-once the scale of the problem is established there is a role for the second form of research, qualitative research, which helps understand littering behaviour and in turn inform plans for education, infrastructure and enforcement by community, business and all levels of government.

-see appendix for list of current litter research

Litter Research by Keep Australia Beautiful

-the National Litter Index was conducted for over a decade til 1995 when funding ceased.

-it was reintroduced with funding from the Australian Government in 2005/2006 and remains Australia's only national, annual, quantitative measure of over 1,000 sites twice per year to determine what quantity of litter appears where and in what volume.

-it is now funded half by State and Territory Governments and half by the National Packaging Covenant Industry Association.

-the National Litter Index made possible the Branded Litter Study in 2007/2008 which identified the brands and companies that were prominent in the litter stream. The research was unable to include a comparison between share of litter and share of market which would have made the results more actionable. It should also be acknowledged that litter is caused by the inappropriate actions of a minority of customers, not by the companies and brands associated with litter.

Past National Litter Index

-the first report in 2005/2006 gave a snapshot

Current National Litter Index

-in 2009/2010 we now have five years of robust data

-this provides the raw data for trend analysis

-trend analysis is the opportunity for create learning from the data collected over time. The additional analysis is not costed into the current report

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