

# Smokers a pain in the butt for littering

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## **AAP**

A new survey has given the nation another reason to malign smokers - they are to blame for most of Australia's litter.

The Keep Australia Beautiful national litter index points to cigarette butts as the most common item of litter in 2009/10.

The national survey, which has been running for five years, found the most litter per 1000 square metres in Tasmania, and the least in Victoria.

The national average was 66 items of litter per 1000 square metres or 7.55 litres in volume.

Cigarette butts were clearly the most common kind of litter counted, with 32 butts per 1000 square metres in the 2009/2010 survey, up from 30 butts in the previous count.

Over five years, the survey has shown littering on the decline.

Keep Australia Beautiful chairman Don Chambers said every Australian needed to take responsibility for their rubbish and where it ended up.

Mr Chambers told AAP that butts had become a bigger problem since smokers were forced outdoors over passive smoking concerns.

"Legally, smokers now need to be aware of the effects of their smoking on other people's health, but they should also be aware of the effects of their littering," he said.

Mr Chambers wants more thought to be put into providing outdoor smoking areas with ashtrays.

"I'm just appalled when I walk out of our airports and see people smoking away and seeing them dropping their butts around," he said.

He also called for governments to crack down on littering with "dob in" schemes.

He credited Victoria's approach, which allows motorists who witness littering from cars to report it, with its low litter rate.

"There is a group of people who will always litter unless they know they will be fined," he said.

"They are not interested in the environmental issues, they are not embarrassed by dropping rubbish."

Keep Australia Beautiful will discuss the findings with authorities in Canberra next week.