

## Australian Local Government News 24.9.10

### Cigarette butts top litter index

Keep Australia Beautiful's most comprehensive litter report released today shows many Australians are still littering, despite increased awareness about the need to protect our environment.

The National Litter Index is Australia's only national, annual, quantitative measure of litter by type, location and volume, with five years of data for all states and territories.

According to the National Chairman of Keep Australia Beautiful, Don Chambers, "The National Litter Index (NLI) helps define the scale and distribution of litter and identifies key problem areas and litter items so that government, industry and community can refine their approaches to litter prevention and resource recovery. It also highlights where consumers are not doing the right thing. At the end of the day it comes down to individual behaviour. Individuals need to take responsibility for the rubbish they produce and where it ends up."

This year for the first time the NLI includes a specific report on packaging and on regional highways. The raw data is published alongside the report so stakeholders with a particular interest in certain litter items such as illegal dumping, cigarette butts or beverage containers can extract the information they need to make informed decisions on how to best address the issue. Cigarette butts continue to be the most numerous form of litter, whilst plastic litter objects account for the biggest litter volume. The results also highlight how each state and territory compares against the national average and how they have performed over the past five years.

The release of the National Litter Index coincides with renewed emphasis on litter reduction by the Environment Protection and Heritage Council which has called for action on litter and packaging waste, whilst the Australian Packaging Covenant has also outlined its intention to introduce measures to reduce the incidence and impacts of litter.

The Keep Australia Beautiful Network of State and Territory offices are all active in using the NLI to inform a broad range of programs focussed on education, infrastructure and enforcement resulting in reduced litter and increased recycling. To view the full national, state and territory reports go to <http://www.kab.org.au/what-we-do/litter-research/>.