

South Australia Still One of Australia's Cleanest States

South Australia is performing well in litter reduction with less litter than national averages and figures showing a continual decrease each year. The Rural Highways component of the National Litter Index also shows South Australia remains the state with the lowest number of items littered along highway sites.

Litter counts were conducted in 151 sites in SA and found that the most littered sites continue to be retail, industrial locations and shopping centres.

"While litter in retail sites and shopping centres remains a focus, campaigns in shopping centres appear to be having a positive impact with the number of items being littered within retail sites reducing by around 25% over the past 2 years and continuing to decrease," said Simone Cunningham, Team Coordinator for Waste Education and Special Projects from KESAB *environmental solutions*.

There were also decreases in litter counts to a lesser extent at car park sites, however, KESAB is currently working on a campaign with Jetty Road traders in Glenelg and Centro Shopping Centres at Colonnades and Munno Para to further improve these statistics.

Cigarette butts remain a concern as the most frequently identified litter item. While there has been a decrease in this year's litter count, around 40% of all littered items in SA are still cigarette butts.

"KESAB continues to partner with Butt Free Australia and councils to engage and educate residents and visitors to SA about the impact of cigarette butt litter on the environment, but there is still much to be done," said Ms Cunningham.

The recent "Butt Littering; It's Not a Good Look" campaign was held in the City of Port Adelaide Enfield with innovative advertising using outdoor decals on footpaths and Vespa scooters circulating the streets. A dedicated website and educators distributing free personal ashtrays were also used to promote the campaign.

"Over a thousand personal ashtrays were given out and 23% of people surveyed reported a change in their own behaviour; however, the incidence of cigarette butt littering is still a cause for concern," she said. "Stronger enforcement by authorities as demonstrated in Victoria may help to improve the impact of current and future campaigns."

KESAB's Litter Count in May showed increasing the deposit on beverage containers from 5c to 10c had an immediate impact by reducing drink cans and bottles to under 3% of total litter.

Illegal dumping represents the largest contribution to litter volumes in SA and showed a marginal increase from the previous 2 years. KESAB has worked closely with Zero Waste SA and local councils to implement illegal dumping reduction strategies and research indicates some success in this area.

New projects will widen the partnerships for illegal dumping to include KESAB, Zero Waste SA, local councils, the EPA and SAPOL. Community engagement on illegal dumping hotspots through surveillance and signage will become a stronger focus.

"Littering has many consequences including social, environmental and economic. It has a negative impact on tourism, harms habitat, and costs councils and event organisers millions of dollars to clean up. Whilst South Australia fairs well in the research we still have a long way to go before we can say that the social norm is to never litter," Ms Cunningham concludes.

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