



Media Release – 22 August 2011

Litter...Dropped on Land, Kills at Sea

Keep Australia Beautiful Week kicks off today with a graphic reminder of the catastrophic consequences that litter can have on Australia's waterways and wildlife.

According to figures released today in the annual Keep Australia Beautiful National Litter Index, the total amount of litter by item and volume recorded a drop overall nationally and in some states or territories.

However, Keep Australia Beautiful warns that the reduction in some litter items may in fact be attributed to the exceptional wet conditions experienced in many areas of Australia simply washing away the lighter litter items from the streets, into nearby storm water drains and waterways where they can't be recorded.

This not only moves the problem elsewhere, says Keep Australia Beautiful, but also poses a greater environmental risk in terms of marine pollution and maiming or killing marine mammals and other wildlife.

According to KESAB CEO, John Phillips, "Each year, millions of items such as cigarette butts, plastic and glass beverage containers, food packaging and fishing gear make their way into our oceans and rivers through storm water drains, or by being left on beaches and river banks."

"This pollutes local waterways and can also injure or kill marine mammals that ingest or get entangled in this litter. At least 77 species of marine wildlife found in Australian waters are affected, with sea turtles, seabirds, dolphins and sea lions being particularly vulnerable."

"This is such an avoidable problem that we can all play a part in addressing by simply taking responsibility for where our rubbish ends up", Phillips added.

During Keep Australia Beautiful Week a number of awareness raising and educational activities will take place around the country to highlight and remind people of the harmful impact that just one piece of litter can have on the environment and wildlife.

KESAB in South Australia will be releasing its local findings and recommendations during the Week.

The Hungry Jack's 'Bag it and Bin it' program is Principal Sponsor of Keep Australia Beautiful Week, with all South Australian restaurants featuring marine themed tray liners to remind their customers of the need to dispose of their packaging waste responsibly.

For further information and tips on how you can help keep our waterways litter free visit the KAB Week pages at www.kab.org.au

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Editor's Notes:

STATE/TERRITORY NLI RESULTS COMPARED TO NATIONAL AVERAGE

Table 3a

By item (per 1,000m²)

MATERIAL	NAT	NSW	ACT	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	NT	TAS
Cigarette butts	29	33	23	18	41	32	23	15	53
Plastic	12	11	8	7	16	14	12	8	15
Paper/paperboard	11	15	9	8	12	16	12	4	9
Metal	5	6	3	3	5	7	4	3	4
Glass	2	2	1	3	1	4	1	2	3

Table 3b

By volume (1,000m²)

MATERIAL	NAT	NSW	ACT	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	NT	TAS
Plastic	1.95	2.66	1.15	1.05	2.38	3.10	1.31	1.14	2.34
Paper/paperboard	1.74	2.38	1.49	1.15	1.78	2.52	1.10	0.65	2.89
Metal	0.88	1.03	0.66	0.70	0.89	1.64	0.32	0.50	1.23
Glass	0.50	0.72	0.17	0.53	0.31	1.03	0.25	0.27	0.41
Cigarette butts	0.003	0.004	0.003	0.002	0.005	0.004	0.003	0.002	0.006

For the full NLI report including SA summary visit <http://www.kab.org.au/litter-research/what-we-do/national-litter-index/>

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