



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, cigarette butts were the most frequently identified item littered across all sites in Tasmania, while paper and paperboard such as takeaway food containers or utensils contributed the largest amounts of volume to the State's litter stream.

And, whilst the total amount of litter by item and volume recorded a drop overall nationally and in Tasmania, Keep Australia Beautiful (KAB) 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 KAB Tasmanian Chairman, Ken Stewart, "but also poses a greater environmental risk in terms of marine pollution and maiming or killing marine mammals and other wildlife that ingest or get entangled in this litter."

"In Tasmania, it is estimated that over 500 tonnes of litter is delivered to the Derwent estuary each year. Much of this litter is associated with the urban stormwater system from when it rains, and litter on our roads and streets is washed into stormwater pits and pipes. It is then delivered, untreated, into our waterways."

"The problem of litter accumulation along the Derwent's foreshore has been cited as one of the community's greatest concern, so the Derwent Estuary Program has been working with councils and businesses to keep stormwater clean and reduce the amount of litter getting to our waterways."

"The floating litter trap at New Town is an excellent example of what councils can do to capture litter from urban rivulets, preventing pollution of the Derwent estuary, but the real solution lies simply in people taking responsibility for where their rubbish ends up", Mr Stewart 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.

The Hungry Jack's 'Bag it and Bin it' program is Principal Sponsor of Keep Australia Beautiful Week, with Tasmanian 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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PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

KABTAS Chairman, Ken Stewart, is available for photographs or TV interviews at the floating litter trap at New Town upon request.

MEDIA CONTACTS

- Ken Stewart, KABTAS Chair on 0418 314 080
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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 TAS summary visit <http://www.kab.org.au/litter-research/what-we-do/national-litter-index/>