

Media release draft- NLI

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New litter programs reap results: WA no longer dirtiest state

A spate of new litter education and abatement programs is being credited for a drop in the number and volume of littered in WA; with the State no longer Australia's dirtiest.

The *National Litter Index 2009-10* reported the number of items littered in WA per 1,000sqm fell by 16 items from 87 in 2008/09, while the volume of litter by 1000sqm in WA fell to 9.44L, from 11.93L the previous year.

In 2008/09 WA was the country's most littered state. The recent survey proves NSW as the most littered, recording an increase in the number of items and volume of litter reported.

Keep Australia Beautiful Council WA Chair Mel Hay said the launch of community clean-up program Adopt-a-Spot and the Outback Pack travellers program in WA could have contributed to the drop in WA litterers.

"There's still a long way to go in eliminating Australia's litter problems but it is encouraging to see the drop in national figures, lead by the reductions from WA," he said.

"It has been a tremendous year for KAB WA including the launch of the Adopt-a-Spot program, which now see more than 160 groups of volunteers actively cleaning up spots in their community and the trial and launch of the Outback Packs and Bin your Butt programs."

"More than 7,000 Outback Packs have been freely distributed to travellers across the State and the reports returned to KAB are positive and reflect that many travellers are cleaning up litter as well as their own rubbish in some of the State's most remote destinations."

"Bin Your Butt is gaining momentum in tackling WA's cigarette butt litter program. The NLI once again proves that cigarette butts are WA and Australia's most littered item by number so it's great to see businesses take the lead in educating staff and patrons through the program."

Mr Hay said a 40% increase in regional communities registering for the Tidy Towns – Sustainable Communities awards program reflected the upward trend in towns taking action to eliminate litter and manage resources.

West Australian figures remain significantly higher than the national average of 66 items per 1000sqm (WA at 71 per 1000sqm) and 7.55L per 1000sqm (WA at 9.44L per 1000sqm), which were lower than results from the previous year.

The index, which was re-established in 2005/06, is used by Keep Australia Beautiful (KAB) organisations around Australia when evaluating and designing litter reduction behaviours.

The National Litter Index is an independent study which evaluates 1,059 sites randomly selected in Australia. In WA 151 sites audited plus 15 rural highways.

When considered by area, WA highways and industrial areas and retail sites are the most littered, while recreational parks and beaches are the least littered. When considered by item number, cigarette butts remain WA's most littered item (33 items per 1000sqm down from 41 items per 1000sqm in 2008/09) with plastic items and paper items the next most littered (both 16 items per 1000sqm).

Plastic material is by volume the most littered item in WA, followed by illegal dumping and plastic non-alcoholic beverage containers

For the first time in 2009/10 a separate study focussing on roadsides was completed. The overall results for roadsides indicate that many people eat and drink in their cars and throw the resulting litter out of their vehicles, which is a very disturbing trend.

"We ask all people to take their rubbish with them and put in the bin when you get to your destination," said Mr Hay.

Mr Hay said the onus is now on the WA public to continue the positive trend.

"Littering rates may be on the downward trend however we are a long way off figures from 2005/06 and from the ultimate goal of zero litter," he said.

"KAB WA will continue to work tirelessly on educating the community on the consequence of littering, endeavour to change littering behaviours and support those in the community who are doing the right thing, particularly those participating in programs and clean-ups."

"Looking to the future, KABWA is excited to launch a new schools program, a marine litter abatement program and expanding the Outback Packs travellers program and continue to promote the anti-litter message to all West Australians."

To find out more about the Index or to join a litter program visit www.kabc.wa.gov.au or phone (08) 6467 5122.

2010/11 National Litter Index- The Results

WA Results for 2009-10

In Western Australia both number of items and volume of items dropped from the previous three years reducing from a high of 87 to 71 littered items per 1000m² and from a volume of 13.06 to 9.44 per 1000m². However, litter has not yet reduced to 05-06 levels.

WA Litter by number of items

The main material types are: cigarette butts, glass, illegal dumping, metal, miscellaneous, paper/paperboard, plastic. Results for 2009-10:

- Cigarette butts – 33 items (down from 41 items in 2008/09, 36 items in 2007/08, 35 items in 2006/07 and up from 29 items in 2005/06)
- Plastic items –14 items (down from 17 items in 2008/09 and 18 items 2007/08 and 2006/07, but up from down 11 items in 2005/06)
- Paper/ paperboard – 14 items (down from 16 items in 2008/09, 2007/08, 2006/07 and up from 10 items in 2005/06)
- Metal items – 6 items (down from 7 items in 2008/09, 8 items in 2007/08 and 2006/07 and the same as 2005/06).

WA Litter volume by material:

- Plastic material decreased to 3.39 litres per 1,000m² (down from 5.21 litres in 2008/09, 5.09 litres in 2007/08, 4.62 litres in 2006/07 and 3.54 litres in 2005/06)
- Paper/ paperboard objects decreased to 2.30 litres per 1,000m² (down from 2.56 litres in 2008/09, 2.72 litres in 2007/08 and 2.79 litres 2006/07 and up from 2.03 litres in 2005/06)
- Metal objects decreased to 1.36 litres per 1,000m² (down from 1.61 litres in 2008/09, 1.83 litres in 2007/08 and 1.84 litres in 2006/07 and up from 1.34 litres in 2005/06)

Glass decreased to 0.86 litres per 1,000m² (down from 1.17 litres in 2008/09, 1.11 litres in 2007/08 and 0.96 litres in 2006/07 and up 0.72 litres in 2005/06)

WA Litter by site type

The eight site types are: Beaches, Car Parks, Highways, Industrial, Recreational Parks, Residential, Retail, Shopping Centres

The most littered sites were

- highways: large number, large volume
- industrial locations: large number, large volume.

WA's Dirty Dozen by Litter Items

Cigarette Butts – total

Paper/Paperboard – other

Plastic – other

Plastic – food container or utensil

Metal – other

Miscellaneous – total

Glass – Alcoholic beverage container

Paper/Paperboard – food container or utensil

Plastic – non-alcoholic beverage container

Metal – non alcoholic beverage container

Metal – alcoholic beverage container

Paper/Paperboard – non-alcoholic beverage container

WA's Dirty Dozen by Litter Volume

Plastic – other

Illegal Dumping – total

Plastic – non-alcoholic beverage container

Paper/Paperboard – food container or utensil

Glass – alcoholic beverage container

Paper/Paperboard – non alcoholic beverage container

Metal – alcoholic beverage container

Metal – non alcoholic beverage container

Plastic – plain water container

Paper/Paperboard - publication

Plastic – food container or utensil

Miscellaneous – Total