



ballina shire council
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VISION

TARGET 1

“ See a decrease of 30% in illegal dumping incidents in Ballina Shire by the year 2028. ”

TARGET 2

“ See a 30% reduction in plastic litter by 2025 and a 60% reduction in all litter by 2030. ”

INTRODUCTION



A key priority of the NSW Government is combatting illegal dumping and littering. Ballina Shire Council agrees that it is a priority to reduce the incidence of illegal dumping and littering across the Shire.

Council is committed to protecting the local environment and community by reducing the amount of litter and its social, environmental, health and financial impacts.

Council's objective is to create anti-littering behaviour in the Ballina Shire through an integrated approach of education and awareness, infrastructure, enforcement and monitoring and evaluation.

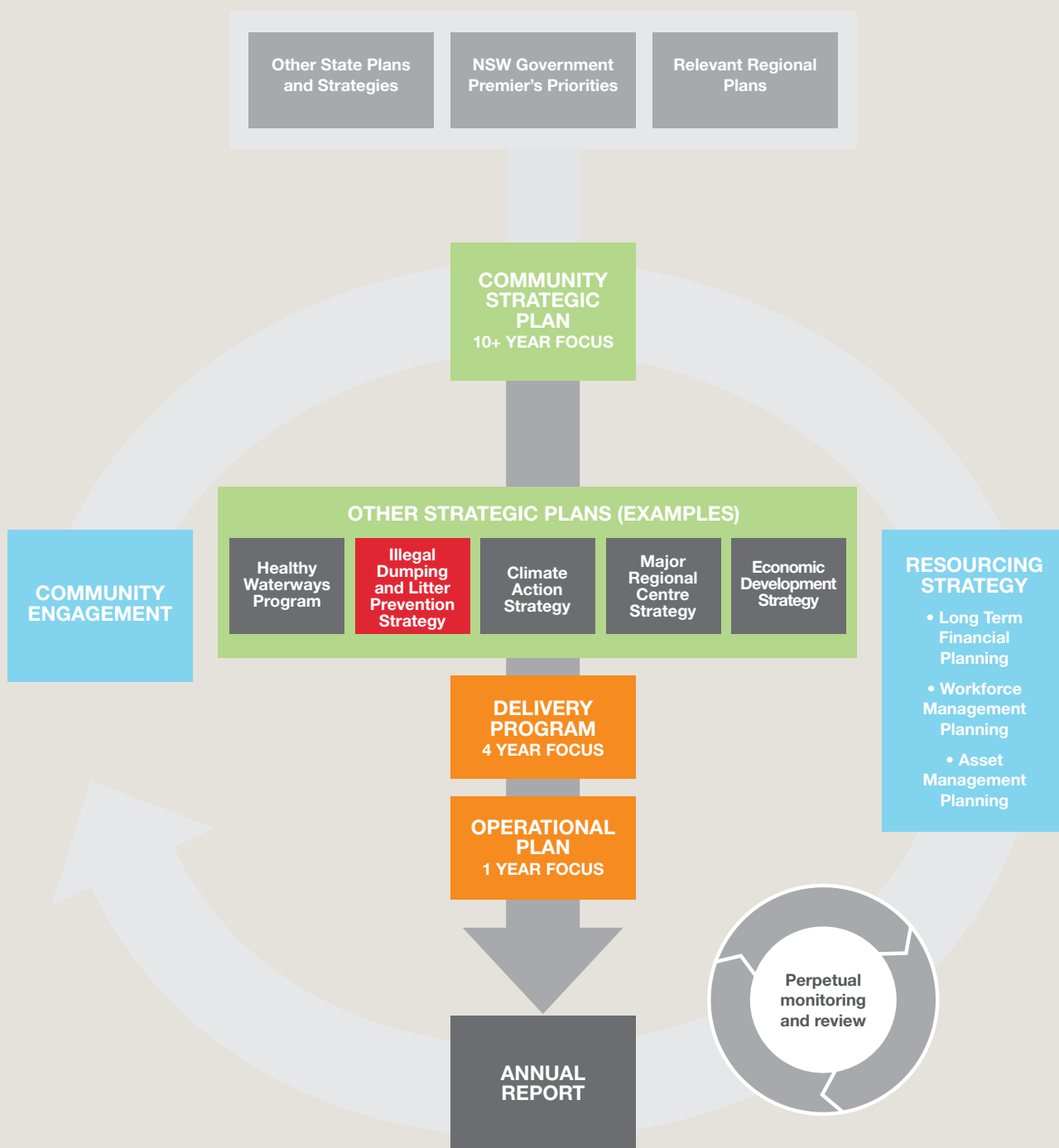
It is a criminal offence under the *NSW Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* (the Act) to wilfully or negligently dispose of waste in a manner that harms the environment. It is also an offence to transport waste to a place that cannot be used as a waste disposal facility. In both instances the person who deposits or transports the waste and the owner of the waste are liable for fines or prosecution, the directors and management of a corporation are also held liable for breach offences under s169 of the Act.

Ballina Shire Council has used the NSW state-wide strategy, the *NSW Illegal Dumping Strategy 2014-16*, the Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils *Illegal Dumping Strategy 2017-2020*, Byron Shire Council's *Litter Prevention Strategy* as well as other research and strategies on the topic, together with local data on illegal dumping and litter to inform the development of this Ballina Illegal Dumping and Litter Prevention Strategy.

OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Illegal Dumping and Litter Prevention Strategy forms part of the NSW Office of Local Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

There is a number of key elements in the framework including reporting requirements. The diagram below illustrates where the strategy fits in the overall framework and how our plans interrelate.



OUR GOALS

1

Minimise the incidents of illegal dumping and littering in Ballina Shire.

2

Drive positive long-term change in community attitudes and behaviours to prevent illegal dumping and littering.

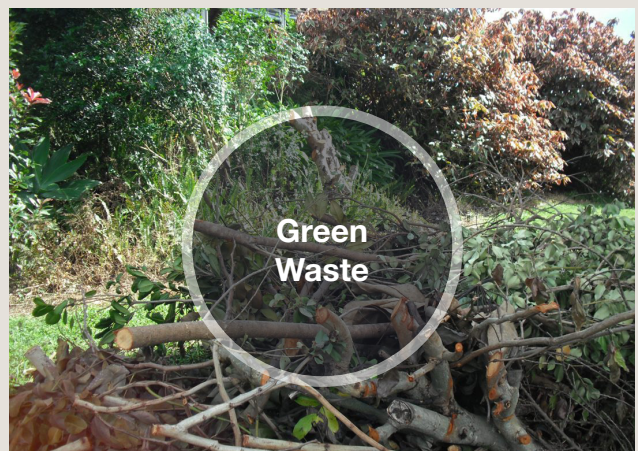
3

Reduce the social, environmental, health and financial impact of illegal dumping and littering.



PRIORITY WASTE TYPES

Based on the data collated for the Shire the priority areas are:



ILLEGAL DUMPING IN BALLINA SHIRE

WHAT IS ILLEGAL DUMPING?

Illegal dumping is the unlawful disposal of any waste that is larger than litter to land or water. Illegal dumping may vary from small bags of rubbish or household waste in an urban environment to large scale dumping of construction and demolition waste, tyres, soil and hazardous materials like asbestos.

In addition, illegal dumping includes situations where there is illegal landfilling when waste is used as “fill” land with the consent of the owner or occupier of the land without having the necessary planning approvals or licences.

Illegal dumping research undertaken by the EPA in 2015 showed that more than half of the NSW councils surveyed advised that they had noticed an increase in the illegal dumping of both household waste and asbestos in the past five years.

In urban areas nature strips, roadsides, carparks, bushland, laneways, sporting grounds and vacant land are often used as dumping sites. In rural locations illegal dumping occurs in road verges, bushland, crown land, cane pads and private roads and rural private properties.

Offenders will often go to extraordinary lengths to illegally dispose of waste. Consequently, illegal dumping is often premeditated and is undertaken in a way to ensure that detection and fines are avoided. The behaviour can be reinforced when offenders see the dumped waste being cleaned-up by councils or other land managers, therefore ensuring that the offender has effectively cost-shifted the responsibility of disposal to a third party.



WHAT TYPES OF WASTE ARE BEING ILLEGALLY DUMPED IN NSW?

The NSW EPA have identified that state wide household waste made up 47% of all illegally dumped waste, followed by green waste at 17%, construction and demolition waste at 9% and tyres at 7% (see figure 1).

NSW EPA data also shows that construction and demolition waste and contaminated soil are the most common types of waste illegally landfilled.

Research undertaken by the NSW EPA over the last decade shows that households continue to be the prime source of illegal dumping. Waste generated by NSW households continues to be the biggest problem area in relation to illegal dumping in the State.

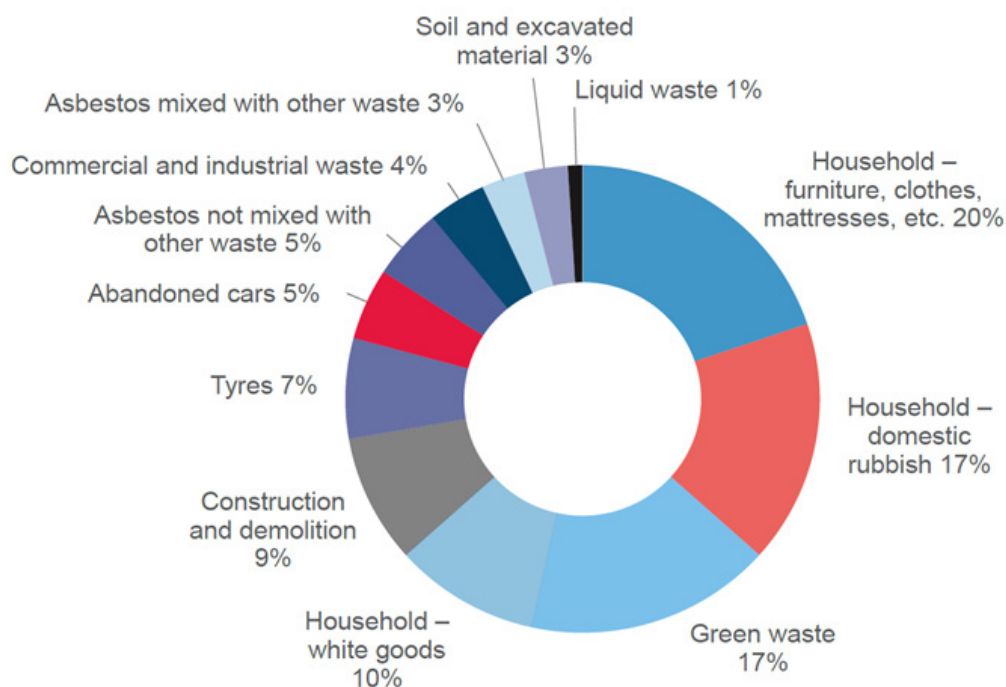
The NSW EPA's Illegal Dumping Report concluded that "illegal dumping is a significant issue for NSW LGAs,

charitable recyclers and other land managers...the perception among these groups is that illegal dumping has become more prevalent in recent years..."

The Report also found that "there were no discernible differences in the demographic characteristics of people who dump at the kerbside and people who do not"¹¹, further it concluded that "illegal dumpers are not characterised as having low incomes, a lower level of formal education or as culturally and linguistically diverse."

Finally, the Report found that "it is young people, males and those in full-time employment who are among the most likely to illegally dump waste elsewhere (other than or in addition to the kerbside)."

FIGURE 1: TYPES OF ILLEGALLY DUMPED WASTE, AS REPORTED BY URBAN AND RURAL LOCAL COUNCILS ACROSS NSW

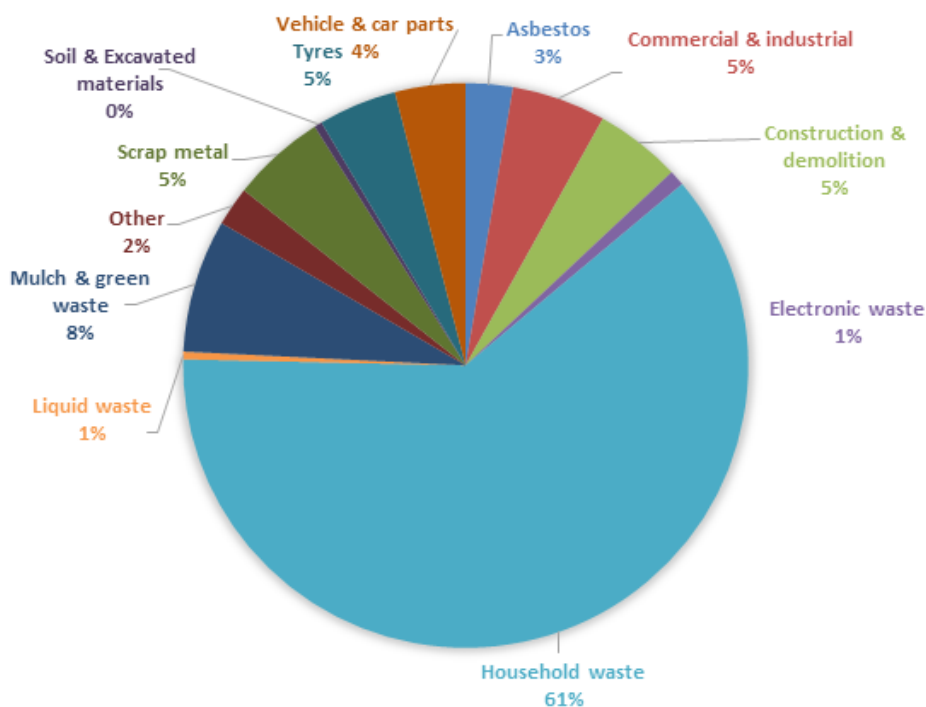


WHAT TYPES OF WASTE ARE BEING ILLEGALLY DUMPED IN BALLINA SHIRE?

Ballina Shire Council recorded 223 incidents of illegal dumping in 2019. Ballina's data for 2019 show household waste was the most commonly dumped waste type at 61%, with green waste next at 8% followed by commercial & industrial and scrap metal at 5% (see figure 2). It is also worth noting that waste tyres represented 5% of incidents and a regional problem has been identified with the collection, tracking and illegal dumping of waste tyres on a commercial scale.

Waste is being primarily dumped in urban areas, industrial areas, near landfills, at charitable recyclers, on crown land and road reserves. In summary, illegal dumping is occurring in almost every urban and non-urban location in the shire, however there appears to be a predominance of dumping of household general waste in residential areas, while mattresses and large waste items are found in more out-of-the-way locations.

FIGURE 2: TYPES OF WASTE ILLEGAL DUMPED IN BALLINA IN 2019



WHAT MOTIVATES ILLEGAL DUMPING?

While people will often litter in full public view, illegal dumping is more likely to occur in remote locations, late at night or at other times when dumpers know there will be no-one present in a particular location. In rural areas where rural landfills may be unmanned it is not unusual for dumpers to make use of the unmanned facility as a dumping site, particularly as the landfill's opening hours are usually clearly signposted. A growing issue is dumping in broad daylight has been identified at places like charity bins, charity shops and in industrial areas.

The clandestine behaviours that often accompany dumping appear to indicate that dumpers know their activity is illegal and their actions are undertaken in order to avoid detection and enforcement action. It is important to understand what motivates people to illegally dump waste, as this will underpin the development of strategies to address the problem. The NSW EPA has identified four recurring reasons that motivate illegal dumpers:

- convenience
- using organised networks, particularly with regard to waste generated by businesses
- an unwillingness to pay
- an uncaring attitude.

The Queensland EPA identified the following motivations for illegal dumping:

- lack of repercussions from illegal dumping
- a desire to avoid disposal fees at landfills
- laziness (perceived time and effort required for correct disposal)
- lack of awareness of the availability of waste and recycling infrastructure
- perception of what is illegal dumping (e.g. depositing household items beside a charity bin)
- poor planning/disorganisation resulting in a need to dispose of waste after hours
- assumption that people are employed to manage the site (e.g. the land owners or managers of the location are responsible for the clean-up)
- a perception the unwanted items will be available for someone else to recycle (e.g. kerbside dumping of household items).

Many of the above behaviours and perceptions can be reinforced when dumpers see the waste being removed by council or other land managers.

COST OF ILLEGAL DUMPING

Illegal dumping is a costly, constant and highly visible problem that impacts on the social, environmental and financial well-being of communities. Illegal dumpers unfairly shift the cost of waste disposal to local governments, communities, charities and state agencies, Aboriginal and private land managers forcing the redirection of scarce resources from more worthy activities.

In 2007, it was estimated that NSW councils spent over \$10 million a year on cleaning up illegally dumped waste, with some larger councils expending as much as \$400,000 a year on the problem. In addition to the financial impact, illegal dumping results in significant social and environmental impacts. Ballina Shire Council spends on average \$80,000 to \$100,000 per year to collect and dispose of illegally dumped waste.

SOCIAL IMPACTS

The social impacts of illegal dumping include:

- reduction in amenity leading to reduced visits by residents and visitors
- decrease in community pride
- increased crime and decreased perceptions of safety, spaces that look uncared for can attract anti-social behaviour
- injury and public health risks as a result of sharp objects, unsafe objects or unsanitary materials being dumped
- prevent or hinder the maintenance works of access ways, roads and property
- increasing the hazards faced by emergency services' personnel and land managers' staff by exposing them to potentially hazardous waste or preventing access to roads.



FINANCIAL IMPACTS

The financial impacts of illegal dumping include:

- injury or death to livestock that might be traversing land that has been used as a dumping sites
- loss of resources through materials which could have been recycled or composted being dumped
- loss of income to landfill operators, resource recovery and recycling facilities through the loss of the resource
- reduction in visitor numbers affecting the local economy, people choosing not to visit reserves and forests because they have become dumping grounds
- reduction in property values affecting residents
- diversion of councils' and other land manager's resources towards prevention, compliance, clean-up and waste disposal and away from more worthwhile activities.



WHAT IS LITTERING?

Littering has been defined as the deposit of waste at a place that is an amount less than 200 litres in volume. Common types of litter include cigarette butts, drink bottles, fast food wrappers, material from vehicles that is poorly secured, grass clippings swept into the gutter and fishing tackle.

Littering includes throwing food wrappers or cigarette butts from a vehicle, leaving a food container under a park bench, stubbing a cigarette onto a footpath, tossing an apple core into a garden bed, or allowing waste to blow from a moving vehicle.

Dangerous or aggravated littering is litter which causes or is likely to cause harm to a person or the environment. Common types of dangerous or aggravated litter include discarded syringes, lit cigarettes, and intentionally broken glass.

WHY DO PEOPLE LITTER?

It is important to understand why people litter so that appropriate prevention mechanisms can be developed. While there is no typical litterer, most people understand that littering is illegal.

Social research conducted by the NSW EPA shows that the main causes of littering include:

- laziness
- a perception that litter is not an important environmental concern
- a feeling that someone else is paid to clean up anyway
- cleanliness of the area.



WHY IS REDUCING LITTER IMPORTANT?

Not only does litter pose a major threat to the local environment and wildlife, but it can also cost ratepayers a lot of money. There are significant clean-up costs, and it can have a negative impact on local businesses and the tourism industry. Litter impacts us all and can prevent us from enjoying our local community areas such as parks, beaches, rivers and the town centre.

Littering has several impacts as listed below.



OUR STRATEGIES



The NSW EPA recommended that future strategies and interventions to reduce illegal dumping and littering should:

- capitalise on businesses' and individuals concern for their reputation
- reinforce the social norm that illegal dumping and littering is unacceptable
- create a social norm around reporting illegal dumping and littering
- increase the perceived likelihood of being caught dumping and littering
- raise the profile of the personal consequences and ensure fines are more than the savings made by dumping illegally and littering
- educate householders to request evidence of legal disposal from any contractors used
- share best practice relating to strategies to minimise, enforcement and clean-up among Council staff and other land managers.



STRATEGY 1 BUILDING AN EVIDENCE BASE

Use evidence to understand illegal dumping, and illegal dumping and littering behaviour in our Shire.

Good quality information on where, when, why and by whom illegal dumping is occurring is important to develop appropriate regional and local responses to the issue. Key in obtaining this information is the active use of the RIDonline tool coupled with increased reporting of dumping-specific data in relation to who and why will continue to improve the Council's knowledge base and inform the development of further strategies to combat dumping.

Ballina Council has been using RIDonline since 2016 and therefore have established a good baseline of data over several years. However the public uptake of RIDonline has been slow and some illegal dumping incidents are not recorded as Council field staff may collect the waste without any formal record of the incident entering into Council's system or RIDonline. Since 2016 only 83 illegal dumping incidents have been entered into RIDonline by members of the public compared to 965 entered by Council staff.



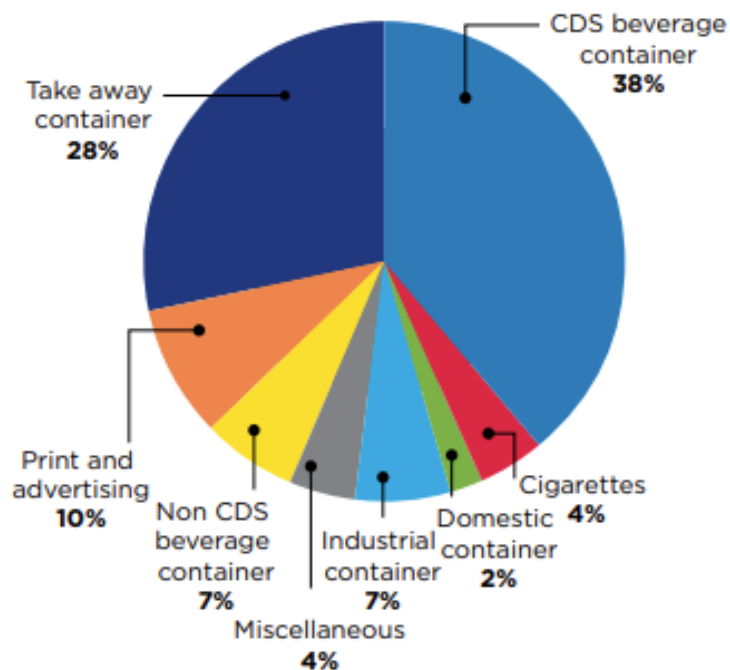
	ACTION	OUTCOMES
1.1	Establish baseline data for illegal dumping in the Region	Continue to enter all known illegal dumping incidents into RIDonline
1.2	Ongoing training and support for Council field staff to use RIDonline	Informed council staff who are committed to the timely, logging of all illegal dumping incidents on RIDonline. Robust data on illegal dumping which can be used to inform prevention strategies and actions.
1.3	Encourage other land managers in the region to input data to RIDonline e.g. Local Land Services, Crown Land, RMS and Jali Land Council	Informed land managers who are committed to the timely, logging of all illegal dumping incidents on RIDonline. Robust data on illegal dumping which can be used to inform interagency prevention strategies and actions.
1.4	Aggregate RIDonline results and publish outcomes regionally and locally to raise awareness of the problem	Councils, businesses and residents are aware of the size of the problem and the costs associated with its management.
1.5	Analyse and map data to identify possible trends and commonalities	Trends and commonalities identified and tracked to inform and enhance enforcement activities. Data analysed to identify Illegal Dumping Hot Spots in the Ballina Shire. Data analysed to inform prevention strategies and actions. Identify existing, new and emerging illegal dumping hotspots.
1.6	Encourage and promote the public use of RIDonline	Facilitate rapid reporting and actioning of illegal dumping incidents. Minimise the administrative efforts for Council staff in entering data into multiple systems.

HOW DO WE MEASURE LITTER?

The National Litter Index

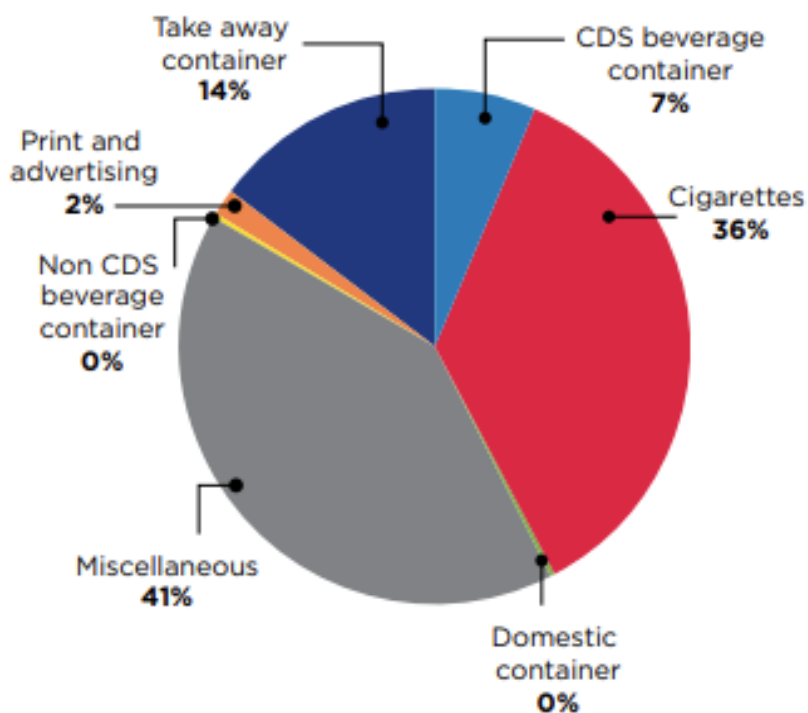
The litter data the NSW EPA have is not perfect, but it gives a useful starting point to guide priorities and target actions. The longest standing survey that measures litter across Australia is the National Litter Index (the Index), a yearly report by Keep Australia Beautiful. It is a broad survey that measures litter by the number of littered items across 983 sites nationally (151 in NSW). The volume of litter is then calculated from the items counted. More information is available on the Keep Australia Beautiful website www.kab.org.au, click on the Programs tab and then Litter Research.

FIGURE 3: VOLUME OF LITTER PER EPA CATEGORY - NATIONAL LITTER INDEX 2018-19



The Index shows that drink containers covered by Return and Earn are a large proportion of the NSW litter stream (Figure 3). Cigarette butts contribute very little volume to the litter stream but they continue to be the most littered item, representing around 36% of all items (Figure 4). Although they have shown a steady downward trend over many years, they are still ever present and a major concern for the community.

FIGURE 4: ITEM COUNT PER EPA CATEGORY - NATIONAL LITTER INDEX 2018-19



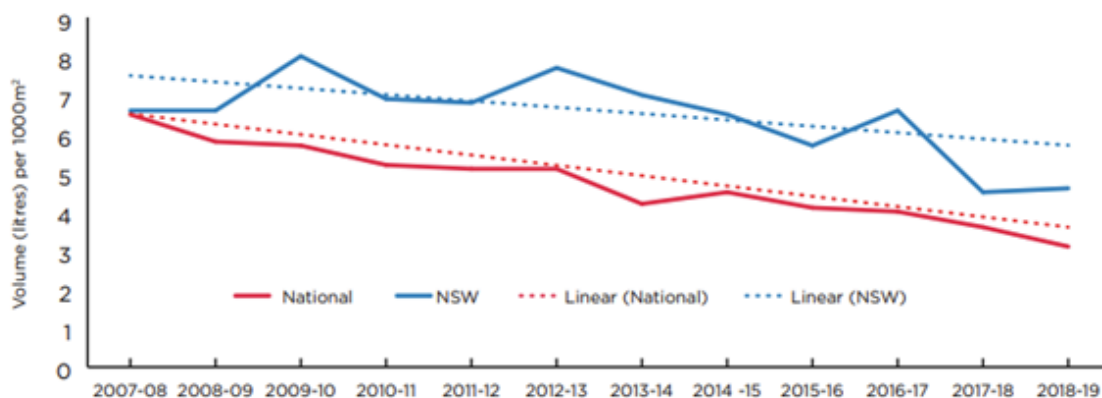
Miscellaneous items (including broken bits of plastic, clothing items, nappies and paper bags) make up 35% of littered items, while takeaway litter makes up 14%. Drink containers, included in the NSW Return and Earn scheme, make up 7% of littered items counted.

Ballina Shire Council has limited data in relation to local litter and will introduce NSW EPA Local Litter checks to establish a solid local data base to be used to monitor trends and the success rate of the implementation of this strategy.

Our state has been reducing litter since the Index began in 2005–2006, at around the same rate as national trends (Figure 5 and Figure 6).

The recent sharp downward trend in volume in 2016-17 (Figure 5) can be mostly attributed to the effect of the introduction of Return and Earn on 1 December 2017 that had a large impact on the number of littered drink containers.

FIGURE 5: LITTER VOLUME TRENDS - NSW AND NATIONALLY

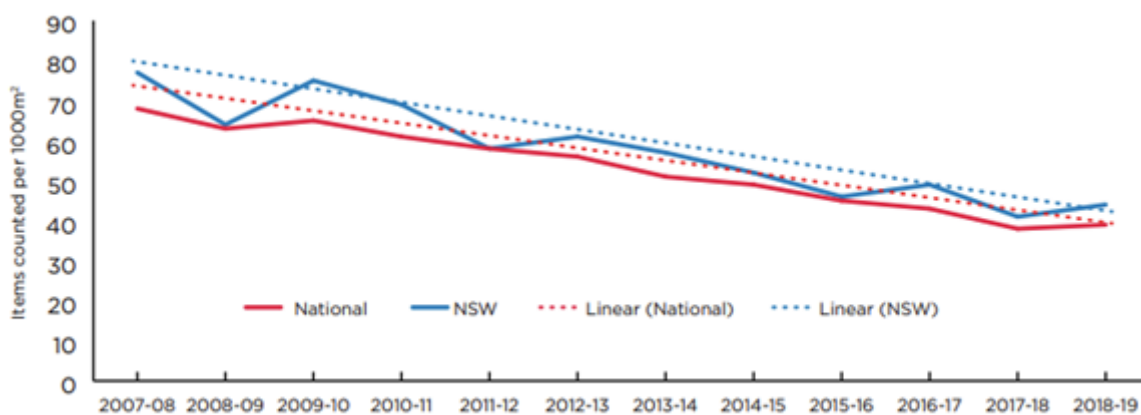


MEASURING LITTER IN THE BALLINA SHIRE

Council will introduce NSW EPA Local Litter Checks to gather accurate local littering data. This will assist Council to:

- Understand the nature, extent and causes of littering
- Understand the litter type, amount and volume.
- Roll out successful projects, policies and identify new ways to reduce littering
- Target Council's efforts
- Monitor littering rates.

FIGURE 6: ITEM COUNT PER EPA CATEGORY - NATIONAL LITTER INDEX 2018-19



PRIORITY LITTERING ISSUES IN THE BALLINA SHIRE

Ballina Shire Council has identified six priority litter issues based on the national and state litter data.

These are:

1. Smoking related items including cigarette butts, cigarette packets, and lighters.
2. Take away related items including takeaway containers, straws, coffee cups, plastic bags, napkins and bottles.
3. Beverage related items including cans, glass and plastic containers.
4. 'Other' related items including unidentifiable hard and soft plastics, cloth, gum, metal/foil, foam, wood, food and hazardous material (syringes, condoms, band aids, dog poo).
5. Discarded fishing line and tackle.
6. Preventing micro-plastics entering our waterways.



TABLE 1: PREVIOUS NSW GOVERNMENT GRANT FUNDED LITTER PREVENTION PROJECTS

PROJECT AND GRANTEE	OUTCOMES
<p>Pacific Hwy Rest Area Improvement</p> <p>NE Waste (L-RIP Stage 4) 2019-20</p>	<p>In partnership with NSW RMS, improved bins and signage installed at 7 Pacific Highway rest areas (from Tweed to south of Grafton including Tyagarah & Yelgun in Byron shire and Bunjalung in Ballina Shire).</p> <p>Achieved a 56% average reduction in litter volumes.</p> <p>40% average reduction in litter counts.</p> <p>Reduced litter clean up time for maintenance contractors.</p> <p>Consistent highway litter prevention messaging south from Qld border through Far North Coast to synch in with messaging in Mid-North Coast region.</p> <p>24% increase in the submission of public 'littering from vehicle reports' (75% were from Byron, Ballina and Tweed Shire).</p>
<p>Pick up for Your Park</p> <p>NE Waste (L-RIP Stage 3) 2017-18</p>	<p>5 community groups engaged in park litter clean ups in 3 LGAs (Ballina (Lennox Head – Ross Park, Williams Reserve, Skate Park, Foreshore Park), Byron (Banner Park & Torakina Beach Reserve BH), Richmond Valley (Evans Head – skate Park, Old Boat Ramp, Shark Bay).</p> <p>Reductions of between 18% and 57% in litter items at the parks.</p> <p>97 clean ups completed (Jan – Nov 18) in 9 regional parks and reserves.</p> <p>Partnership agreements established with 2 groups.</p> <p>6 public awareness events (Jan – Jul18) with participating groups and council support.</p> <p>More than 421 hrs of volunteer time invested in clean ups alone.</p> <p>54,980 total estimated number of litter items collected.</p> <p>3,792 litres is total volume of litter collected at clean ups.</p> <p>4 of the 5 groups have committed to continuing clean ups.</p> <p>Community surveys indicated 29% recall of Hey Tosser campaign, 22% increase in awareness of littering from vehicle fines, 9% increase for other litter fines.</p>
<p>Busting Roadside Littering (phase 1)</p> <p>NE Waste (L-RIP Stage 2) 2016-17</p>	<p>Average 53% reduction in roadside littering at identified hotspots in 3 LGAs – Clarence Valley (Spring St, Glenugie, Centenary Dr), Ballina (Cumbalum) & Tweed (Chinderah).</p> <p>149% increase in north coast residents registered to report littering from vehicles.</p> <p>6 pop-up events engaged directly with more than 250 people on issue of littering.</p> <p>18 local businesses supported the program roll out.</p>
<p>Litter Reduction & Prevention in NEW Region</p> <p>NE Waste 2015-16</p>	<p>38% reduction in litter at 6 hotspots - skate parks(Lennox Head & Grafton), transit centres (Byron Bay & Lismore), recreational park (Chris Cunningham, TH) & retail strip (Canterbury St, Casion) across 6 LGAs.</p> <p>Improved infrastructure - 45 signs, 7 bin enclosures, 13 butt bins.</p> <p>5 clean up/education events engaging 650 people.</p> <p>260 community anti-littering pledges signed.</p> <p>45 local businesses partnered.</p>



STRATEGY 2 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Engage with stakeholders such as landholders, charities, businesses, JALI Aboriginal Land Council to build their capacity to respond to and minimise illegal dumping and littering. Train Council staff in appropriate responses to illegal dumping and littering.

In order to deal with illegal dumping and littering successfully it is important that Council staff and other land managers are armed with the knowledge and skills needed to address the problem. This includes training staff so that they can collect the evidence required to successfully prosecute illegal dumpers and litterers and raising awareness about what mitigation options are best suited to specific problem areas i.e. hot spots.

In addition, it is important that Council is able to utilise the data on illegal dumping and littering to review waste services to identify opportunities to improve or enhance those services in order to reduce the incidences of illegal dumping and littering.

In Ballina Shire there are a number of Waste Management Enterprises in operation that recycle and reuse waste. There may be opportunities to improve their accessibility for residents that will result in a reduction in illegal dumping or support new businesses to establish in the locality.

In addition the policies introduced by public land managers in relation to the way that they manage waste can impact on the levels of illegal dumping and littering. In locations where public land managers know that the public will be using the land for recreational and sporting purposes but the land manager does not provide adequate or appropriate waste disposal services, this increases the risk of dumping and littering occurring, either at the land manager's location or at council waste disposal facilities, which may be located nearby.



**STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND
 CAPACITY BUILDING ACTION**

OUTCOMES

2.1	Train Council Officers in compliance and investigation techniques relevant to illegal dumping	<p>Council Officers have a better understanding of the legislation and compliance regime for illegal dumping.</p> <p>Council Officers undertake more successful investigations of illegal dumping.</p>
2.2	Conduct pro-active compliance and enforcement activities to escalate the risk of being caught	<p>More compliance and enforcements activities end in success.</p> <p>Councils issue more fines/Notices for illegal dumping.</p>
2.3	Promote successful prosecutions/PINS to increase the sense of risk of being caught	<p>Decrease in the incidence of illegal dumping as dumpers become aware there is an increased risk of being caught.</p>
2.4	Work with field staff to ensure all illegal dumping incidents are being recorded	<p>Systems are put in place to facilitate the recording of all illegal dumping incidents.</p> <p>All illegal dumping incidents are recorded in the appropriate way/system.</p>
2.5	Work with other Land Managers to increase and improve compliance and investigation of illegal dumping	<p>Land Managers have a better understanding of the legislation and compliance regime for illegal dumping.</p>



STRATEGY 3 EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Increase understanding in the waste industry and community of the waste management framework. Change social norms around illegal dumping, waste reuse and recycling. Improve understanding of what activities are illegal dumping.

Education is a vital step in combating the problem because it raises the awareness of the social, environmental and financial impacts of illegal dumping. The goal of an education program is for it to be a catalyst for behavioural change, leading people to reconsider their actions and the damage it causes. In addition, education will increase the awareness of the personal consequences of illegal dumping such as loss of reputation for businesses, fines and penalties for businesses, householders and other illegal dumpers. Education will also be used to ensure that

the community is fully aware of the legal waste disposal options in their LGA and the Region generally. Additional legal disposal, reuse and recycling options should be explored encouraged and supported to provide convenient alternatives to illegal dumping.

Ballina will continue to work with North East Waste who deliver regional education and communication for its member council LGAs to provide consistent messaging on the illegal dumping problem. NSW EPAs standard education materials will also be used locally to ensure consistent messaging and branding across the state.



	ACTION	OUTCOMES
3.1	Develop and deliver an education and communication strategy to promote the problem of illegal dumping	Comprehensive education strategy developed and implemented that promotes the problem of illegal dumping, raises the awareness of the social, environmental and economic impacts of illegal dumping, increases awareness of fines and penalties and how the general public can report incidences of illegal dumping. Also promote the existing lawful waste management options and explore further opportunities.
3.2	Increase awareness of the social, environmental and economic impacts of illegal dumping	
3.3	Increase awareness of fines and penalties	
3.4	Raise awareness of how the general public can report incidences of illegal dumping	
3.5	Continue a Shire-wide smoking related litter reduction education campaign using 'Don't be a Tosser!' material and branding to promote educational messages on the effect of micro litter such as cigarette butts on waterways including the Richmond River and the Cape Byron Marine Park	
		Raise awareness about the harm caused by smoking related litter. Reduce smoking related litter across the shire and particularly near waterways.



	ACTION	OUTCOMES
3.6	Develop, implement and maintain a smoking related litter communications plan	Raise awareness about the harm caused by smoking related litter.
3.7	Develop, implement and maintain 'Don't be a Tosser!' branding and educational material including social media, website, street banners, infrastructure stickers, bus shelter ads, brochures and banners for smoking related litter	Reduce smoking related litter across the shire and particularly near waterways.
3.8	Develop, implement and maintain a specific tourism smoking related litter reduction campaign to tackle cigarette butt litter in popular hot-spot foreshore car parks, open space areas and on local beaches	
3.9	Ongoing investigation and implementation of innovative and contemporary smoking related litter education programs that will assist in achieving litter reduction objectives	
3.10	Continue with existing programs: Balloon ban, Plastic Free July, HuskeeSwap and reusable kids birthday party kits	Decrease the use of single use items that are common litter items. Support and implement programs that reduce litter in the environment. Encourage community members to actively participate in programs that result in a decrease in litter.
3.11	Continue to promote and utilise the 'tosser' campaign	
3.12	Develop, implement, maintain and promote the 'Refill Here' single use water bottle reduction program	
3.13	Develop and implement 'Take 3 for the Sea' tourism focused program that educates and incentivises Ballina Shire's visitors to care for its natural environment through innovative communications to a clearly defined and significant target audience	
3.14	Continue to promote, facilitate and support of the NSW State Government's Return and Earn Container Deposit Scheme through Council and Partner networks	
3.15	Develop and implement a peak public event (e.g. New Year's Eve, Australia Day) litter reduction plan to tackle associated spikes in litter on local beaches, parks and foreshores	
3.16	Use Variable Message Sign trailers with key littering messages in key locations	
3.17	Ongoing investigation and implementation of innovative and contemporary litter education programs that will assist in achieving litter reduction objectives	

WHY IS EDUCATION IMPORTANT?

Community education is critical for changing behaviour. It raises awareness in the community about littering and builds the norm that littering is not the right thing to do. This can influence peoples' motivations and support them to choose not to litter. Good education approaches encourage people to dispose of their litter appropriately and responsibly. These can include feedback, rewards, privileges and other incentives, information and ways to participate and get involved. Raising awareness and education can also build community engagement and support for litter prevention actions.



WHAT WORK HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

Ballina Shire Council is currently implementing the following litter reduction campaigns.



REUSABLE KIDS PARTY KITS

Ballina Shire Council and the Richmond Tweed Regional Libraries have joined forces to offer reusable kids' party kits as part of their ongoing commitment to reduce single use items across the shire. The kits are available for loan to library members at Alstonville, Ballina, and Lennox Head libraries. Each kit consists of a drinks jug, tablecloth and a set of bowls, plates, cups, and cutlery to serve 12 people, which are made from recycled plastic.

LENNOX HEAD'S HUSKEE SWAP

Ballina Shire Council and Huskee have partnered to implement HuskeeSwap in Lennox Head. Huskeecups are reusable and are made from repurposed coffee husks. The program aims to reduce the use of single use disposable coffee cups by enabling the customer to purchase a Huskee cup and once used swap it for a clean Huskee cup at a participating store.



BALLOON BAN

Ballina Shire Councillors resolved in June 2022 (resolution 230622/5) to immediately prohibit the release of helium balloons and prohibit the use or supply of all types of balloons at events on public land and at council owned facilities where all or part of the event occurs outside from 1 January 2023. This is aimed to minimise the environmental damage caused by plastic balloons, including on marine life.



PLASTIC FREE JULY

Ballina Shire Council is a member of Plastic Free July which is recognised globally as an annual month of global change, where individuals, businesses and governments come together to take action to reduce plastic waste. Plastic Free July challenge provides resources and ideas to help reduce single-use plastic waste.

JOIN HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE
choosing to refuse
single-use plastic



DON'T BE A TOSSER! CAMPAIGN

The NSW EPA Don't be Tosser! Campaign evolves the conversation with the community about litter. The Campaign identifies a range of excuses people use to justify littering and uses humour and irony. Council has been involved in the 'tosser' campaign over many years. This campaign has been one of the NSW EPAs most memorable campaigns.

NSW RETURN AND EARN CONTAINER DEPOSIT SCHEME

A container deposit scheme (CDS) is a simple way to reward responsible behaviour, reduce drink container litter and increase recycling by encouraging the person consuming the drink to hold onto the empty container for later redemption and by providing an incentive for other people to pick up littered containers to receive the refund.



NSW SINGLE USE PLASTICS BAN

New legislation banned the supply of lightweight plastic bags from 1 June 2022. Businesses and community organisations had to stop supplying a range of single-use plastic items preventing nearly 2.7 billion plastic items from entering the state's coastal, marine and bushland environments over the next 20 years. The ban does not include heavier weight reusable plastic bags, such as those for sale at supermarkets. From 1 November 2022, the ban was extended to include the supply of single-use plastic straws, stirrers, cutlery, bowls and plates as well as expanded polystyrene food service items like containers and cups, single-use plastic cotton buds, and some personal care products containing plastic microbeads.



TARGETED SIGNAGE

In locations where bin servicing is logistically challenging, signage prompts have been installed reminding users where the closest bins are. Current locations are Lake Ainsworth, Keith Hall boat ramp and Seven Mile Beach 4WD track.

ACTION BY BUSINESSES

Many local businesses support and promote reuse options, reducing the potential for littering.





STRATEGY 4 PREVENTION, INFRASTRUCTURE AND CLEAN-UP

Waste facilities are available and easily accessible, including problem waste facilities. Councils and other land owners/managers have adequate clean up capacity. Install infrastructure to prevent illegal dumping.

The NSW EPA has identified five illegal dumping mechanisms to address the behaviours and contexts associated with the dumping, Ballina Shire Council has also adopted these mechanisms.

1. Make dumping harder
2. Increase the risk
3. Reduce the rewards
4. Reduce provocations
5. Remove excuses

1. MAKE DUMPING HARDER

Increase the effort required to illegally dump. In many cases dumpers consider that it is easier to dump than to do the right thing. By making access more difficult through the use of engineered mitigation measures like gates, lights, bollards, fences or landscaping, dumpers will have to increase their efforts to find an appropriate location to dump consequently making the activity less attractive.

2. INCREASE THE RISK OF GETTING CAUGHT

If there is a general perception that there is little risk of getting caught then this supports dumpers in their activities. The perceived risk of dumping can be increased through actions such as active enforcement and compliance activities and promoting the outcomes of those activities.

In addition reducing the anonymity of spaces, introducing lighting, signage and cameras and encouraging the community to take an active role in reporting illegal dumping increase the risk of getting caught. The use of tape/stickers and leaving waste in place can also increase the perceived risk of being reported and caught dumping.

3. REDUCE THE REWARDS

Dumpers are financially rewarded for their activities through avoiding the cost of disposal and reducing the effort required for disposal. For businesses that generate large amounts of waste the financial reward generated through illegal dumping can be substantial. Compliance and enforcement such as issuing fines and requiring offenders to meet the full cost of the clean-up needs to be activated, publicising the names of businesses that have offended imposes an additional cost on businesses by impacting on the business's brand.

In addition, ensuring that the price structures are right to legally dump the waste or that the appropriate disposal options are available is also very important.

4. REDUCE PROVOCATIONS BY MAKING DISPOSAL EASIER

Dumpers may illegally dump if they perceive that it is too difficult to dispose of the materials legally. Limited landfill opening times, waste collection services that are not efficient or convenient may encourage people to dump illegally. In addition individuals may be encouraged to dump at sites that already hold dumped waste because they feel it will not make a difference.

It is important that Ballina Council adopts best practice approaches to waste management that limit barriers to the legal and appropriate waste disposal. Increased recycling opportunities should also be explored and made readily available.

5. REMOVE EXCUSES TO DUMP WASTE

Those that dump may find it easy to rationalise and find excuses for their behaviours. Laziness, lack of infrastructure (bins, landfills), claimed ignorance of the rules, perceived high land fill prices, justifications such as “no one cares” or “everyone does it” are reasons that are given to justify illegal dumping.

These excuses can be removed through targeted education, advertising waste collection and disposal services, keeping areas free of waste and displaying signs at known illegal dumping hot spots. Information should be provided to businesses and householders to ensure they know and understand their responsibilities in relation to the proper disposal of their waste.

REGIONAL ASBESTOS DISPOSAL?

Lobby state gov to increase Australian recycling options and increase uptake of recycled products.

Information provided through the planning system to ensure a good understanding of waste disposal obligations and safe guards.

WHY IS INFRASTRUCTURE IMPORTANT?

The NSW EPA’s social research shows that people are less likely to litter if it is easy to dispose of their rubbish correctly. Each bin and its placement sends a signal about what should happen with rubbish at a site. It is important to provide clean, well-maintained bins that are site-specific, taking into account who uses a site and how.

Infrastructure can also be used to intercept litter before it enters the environment or waterways. Such infrastructure can include gross pollutant traps, stormwater filters and traps etc.

WHY IS CLEAN UP IMPORTANT?

As well as bins, it is important to keep sites clean to reduce litter. This is vital to any litter prevention activity, as doing so sends the message that litter doesn’t belong. Sites that are clean will stay cleaner. Littered sites imply that littering is simply the norm.

WHAT WORK HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

Council has been progressively upgrading its public place bin network to include the installation of new enclosures and bin stands and introduction of an extensive public place recycling network throughout the Shire. A review of service regimes and frequencies is also ongoing. This was coupled with the development of a comprehensive public place bin asset management program, to ensure the network is cleaned and maintained to a high standard. Council spent approximately \$460,000 on servicing, cleaning and maintain the public place bin network in the 2021/22 FY.

Council staff regularly clean up litter from parks, reserves, gardens, streets and coastal foreshores as resourcing allows.

Council has regular mechanical street sweepers of roads and gutters to remove debris including litter.

Council has participated in Clean Up Australia Day for many years by providing support to schools, businesses and community groups to clean up litter and rubbish from our local environment. Council aids by promoting the event, identifying suitable clean-up sites, bagged rubbish collection and disposal.

Many community groups such as Landcare, OzFish, Dune Care, Friends of Lake Ainsworth, Coast Care, other volunteer groups and individuals do proactive regular litter cleans throughout the Shire.



	ACTION	OUTCOMES
4.1	Assess Illegal Dumping Hot Spots to determine priority areas and most appropriate mitigation measures that will make illegal dumping harder	Analysis of hot spot data and mitigation measures undertaken and most effective measures selected for each site.
4.2	Implement mitigation measures at Hot Spots	Install identified mitigation measures to one hot spot each year in order of priority.
4.3	Determine effectiveness of measures on reduction of illegal dumping, review and where required implement additional measures	Effectiveness of measures reviewed and quantified. Additional measures identified where effectiveness of existing measures is not sufficient and implementation schedule prepared.
4.4	Clean up of illegally dumped waste in timely and efficient manner	Tape/sticker waste and leave on site for days prior to removal.
4.5	Waste facilities available and easily accessible	Lobby state government to direct waste levy to develop new waste recycling facilities in regional NSW areas. Investigate ways to improve waste facilities accessibility and availability.
4.6	Analyse data on illegal dumping to identify ways in which councils and other Waste Management Enterprises can improve waste services to help address the problem	Illegal dumping that is occurring as a result of poor service delivery by councils is identified. Council, other land managers and Waste Management Enterprises waste services are altered to address the problem. Identify and promote private waste facilities and other businesses (i.e. a man with a ute) that complement Council's waste management operations.
4.7	Upgrade cigarette butt bin infrastructure Shire-wide	Improve smoking related litter infrastructure to increase accessibility and use.
4.8	Service and maintain cigarette butt bin infrastructure Shire-wide	Council staff clean up smoking related litter as resourcing allows and promote community clean up.
4.9	Support and promote Community Groups' clean-up events including the annual Clean Up Australia Day targeting smoking related litter	

	ACTION	OUTCOMES
4.10	Investigate and implement innovative and contemporary infrastructure and clean-up programs that assist in achieving smoking related litter reduction objectives and targets	
4.11	Container Deposit Scheme – support suitable Reverse Vending Machine sites, including the current site at De-Havilland Cres, Ballina	Support and promote existing infrastructure that reduces litter. Look for new opportunities to use additional litter prevention infrastructure.
4.12	Continue with regular litter removal from public spaces as resourcing allows	Clean up litter as resourcing allows to prevent litter entering waterways and leading to an area being unsightly and undervalued.
4.13	Review and upgrade regulatory and educational signage network with a key focus on key Ballina Shire litter locations/hotspots (once identified through litter check data)	
4.14	Maintain implementation of public place bin network service, maintenance and cleaning program	
4.15	Implement a litter clean-up program	
4.16	Support and promote Community Groups' clean-up events	
4.17	Continue to support the Community Sharps Collection Program	
4.18	Trial the installation of fishing tackle bins at key locations	
4.19	Install mobile surveillance cameras in key locations to discourage littering and other antisocial activities	
4.20	Continue with the dog poo bag dispenser program and review locations as necessary	
4.21	Continue with the use of the specialised vacuum to clean up broken glass	
4.22	Investigate and implement innovative and contemporary infrastructure and clean-up programs that assist in achieving litter reduction objectives and targets	



STRATEGY 5 REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Strategic regulation of large scale illegal dumping including through the planning system. Enforcement action is integrated with education, infrastructure and prevention tools. The community reports illegal dumping.

If illegal dumpers believe there is little or no risk of getting caught then they are more likely to engage in the behaviour. Therefore, it is important to increase the risk and consequently reduce the rewards associated with the illegal behaviour. Critical in achieving this are regulation and enforcement activities that target the illegal activity. Ballina Shire Council will use data gathered through RID on-line to identify problem areas and then implement strategic enforcement at those locations to increase the risk of capturing dumpers either during or after the act.

WHY IS ENFORCEMENT NEEDED?

NSW EPA research shows that people will litter less if they think they will get caught. Regulation and enforcement help to change behaviour, protects the environment and reduce health risks.

WHAT ARE THE LITTERING LAWS?

The Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 (POEO Act) is the primary piece of environmental legislation regulating littering in NSW. The range of littering offences includes littering generally, aggravated littering, littering from a vehicle/ trailer, release of balloons and irresponsible depositing of advertising material.

Other relevant legislation includes the Local Government Act 1993 (breaking glass and other matter, acting contrary to notices erected by council), Graffiti Controls Act 2008 (posting bills and other markings) and the Companion Dog Act 1998 (dogs defecating in public places).

Littering is subject to a tiered range of fines under the POEO Act 1997 including:

- \$80 for littering small items, such as bottle tops and cigarette butts.
- \$250 for an individual littering from a vehicle (\$500 for corporations).
- \$450 for littering in aggravated or dangerous circumstances, such as depositing a syringe or a lit cigarette (\$900 for corporations).
- \$200 (individual) for deposit advertising material on a vehicle (\$400 for corporations).

Council has an existing Enforcement Policy (E03) which assists Council staff in responding promptly, consistently and effectively to reports of alleged unauthorised activity. This Policy will be referred to when enforcing litter legislation.



	ACTION	OUTCOMES
5.1	Provide on-going training for Council Staff and other Land Managers on identifying illegal dumpers and compliance options	<p>Council Officers and other Land Managers develop better investigation techniques that allow them to identify illegal dumpers.</p> <p>Council Officers undertake more successful investigations of illegal dumping.</p> <p>Land Managers undertake more successful investigations of illegal dumping.</p> <p>More compliance and enforcements activities end in success.</p> <p>Councils issue more fines for illegal dumping.</p>
5.2	Encourage the public to report illegal dumping activities	<p>The public takes an active interest in reporting illegal dumping.</p> <p>Increased reports of illegal dumping are received by councils and other Land Managers.</p> <p>Public assistance results in an increase in successful investigations of illegal dumping.</p>
5.3	Work regionally to identify and take action in relation to large scale illegal dumping/illegal waste facilities	<p>Councils operate co-operatively in the region to identify cross border dumping and successfully undertaken enforcement activities i.e. commercial waste tyre dumping.</p>
5.4	Increase smoking related litter patrols throughout the busy summer period	<p>Increase the regulation of smoking related litter to increase the chance of being caught to reduce littering volumes.</p>
5.5	Install and maintain appropriate smoking related signage to enable enforcement of policy in prohibited areas	
5.6	Publicise successes and promote smoking litter penalties and enforcement activities in the media to raise awareness that Council is responding to this issue	
5.7	Increase litter compliance patrols throughout peak tourist visitation periods	
5.8	In collaboration with NSW Police, develop an enforcement strategy for alcohol related litter prevention programs	
5.9	Publicise successes and promote litter offence penalties and enforcement activities in the media to raise awareness that Council is responding to this issue	
5.10	Investigate and implement innovative and contemporary enforcement programs that assist in achieving litter reduction objectives and targets	



STRATEGY 6 EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Strategy is based on data and outcomes are monitored and achieved.
Strategy reviewed every four years.

For continued improvement it is important to evaluate and monitor the outcomes of the Ballina Shire Council Illegal Dumping and Litter Prevention Strategy. As outcomes are achieved this should be noted and additional actions identified with further outcomes. Where barriers or failures are identified further actions should be identified to overcome these. The strategy will be reviewed every four years or as required.

WHY IS EVALUATION AND MONITORING NEEDED?

As Council learns more about littering in the Shire, it will enable Council to understand and review what is working, what isn't working and why, and to develop programs accordingly. Council's target is to reduce micro litter in the Ballina Shire by 40% by 2030, so setting baseline evidence is key to tracking and evaluating progress towards this target.

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

Currently there is limited littering data available for Ballina Shire so the Local Litter Checks will provide Council with baseline data to monitor the effectiveness of this litter prevention strategy against the reduction of litter in the Ballina Shire.

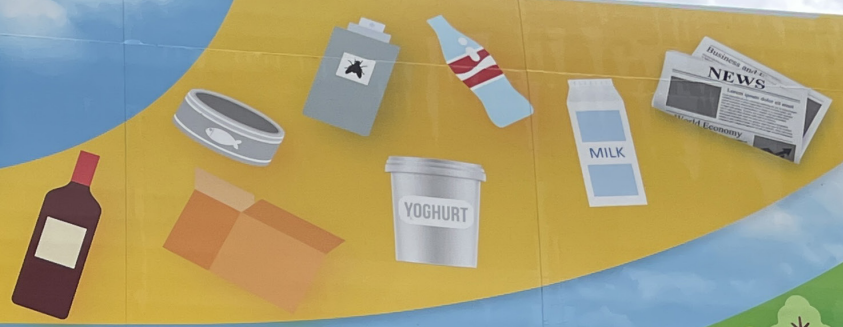
We have good data in relation to illegal dumping as NSW EPA Ridonline has been used by many.



	ACTION	OUTCOMES
6.1	Conduct Local Litter Checks with partner organisations as resourcing allows to monitor smoking related litter trends against target reductions	Ensure methods that are successful are continued and ineffective methods are discontinued.
6.2	Conduct community surveys with partner organisations as resourcing allows to measure community satisfaction of smoking related litter project delivery	Monitor for new options and programs. Listen to feedback from the community to maximise program outcomes.
6.3	Progress reports to relevant staff, senior management, partners and the community to highlight smoking related litter project success and adjust the project to incorporate feedback where necessary	
6.4	Data from local litter checks analysed to monitor reduction in takeaway, beverage and other litter related items against stated goals and objectives	
6.5	Ongoing periodic review of all Litter Reduction Programs against stated KPIs to monitor and evaluate success and effectiveness and determine ongoing implementation	

let's get it
sorted
Working together to waste less & recycle more

recycling



organics



landfill



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN COUNCIL

The development of roles and responsibilities for Council staff will ensure that all incidents are handled quickly and efficiently and avoid over lapping. The roles and responsibilities are detailed below:

CIVIL SERVICES

Roads Maintenance will be responsible for:

- Collection and disposal of Illegal dumped items from road reserve and roads
- Recording all incidents in Council's Authority System/notify EHOs
- Notify Council's Rangers or EHOs when evidence is found in dumped waste (waste and evidence should be left in situ in this instance until the matter can be investigated).
- Management of waste infrastructure
- Implementing and supporting litter prevention programs.

Open Spaces will be responsible for:

- Collection and removal of illegal dumped items from public land including reserves, parks and beaches
- Recording all incidents in Council's Authority System/notify EHOs
- Notify Council's Rangers or EHOs when evidence is found in dumped waste (waste and evidence should be left in situ in this instance until the matter can be investigated)
- Collecting litter as resources allow.

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION

Planning and Environmental Health Division will be responsible for:

- Evidence gathering
- Illegal dumping investigations
- Identifying hot spots and implementing prevention measures
- Investigating, enforcing, promoting and reviewing Council's Illegal Dumping and Litter Prevention Strategy as required.

ALL STAFF

All Council staff are responsible for ensuring all illegal dumping incidents are recorded in Council's Authority System as a CRM. This can be done by either entering as a CRM, noting if waste has been removed or not, emailing pehd@ballina.nsw.gov.au or entering into RidOnline.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997

Illegal Dumping Strategy 2014-16
NSW EPA

Illegal Dumping Report, July 2015
NSW EPA

Crackdown on Illegal Dumping,
A NSW Local Government Handbook, 2007
NSW EPA

Illegal Dumping Strategy 2017-2020
Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils

Queensland's Litter and Illegal Dumping Action Plan,
October 2013
Qld Department of Environment and Heritage Protection

www.RIDonline.epa.nsw.gov.au





APPENDIX A

PROCEDURE

The following standard operating procedure has been developed for the investigation of illegally dumped items on public land and road reserves.

1. Council receives a complaint in relation to illegally dumped items on public land and/or road reserve.
Council's administration staff will be required to ask the complainant if the material poses an immediate danger.
2. Where dumped material is identified as posing immediate danger to public health and safety, Council's crews will remove rubbish immediately. It should be noted that gloves and other PPE should be worn when handling illegal dumped materials. Manual handling may also be a risk with handling large and heavy dumped items. Caution should be taken at all times.
For all other complaints, dumped waste is to be tagged with high visibility tape and illegal dumping sticker (shall verify)
3. Crews are to investigate the source of waste for any evidence i.e. search the waste for ownership evidence material, such as packaging labels, invoices or mail with addresses, names or phone numbers or check if the CRM identifies a suspected dumper.
4. For a minor dumping incident, Rangers are to take photos of illegally dumped waste in case further enforcement action is required. Rangers are to obtain any pieces of evidence from the waste prior to crews disturbing the waste.
5. For more complex dumping incidents, including large quantities, witnesses and dumpings that have a common trend are to be referred to Environmental Health Officers for investigation and enforcement.
6. Environmental Health Officers are to interview any potential witnesses to obtain any evidence in relation to the illegal dumping. For example, did they notice when the waste was dumped, did they see the person dumping the waste.

Scenario 1:

If a polluter has been identified, and the waste has not been removed, Council's Environmental Health Officers are to issue a Clean Up Notice under Section 91 of the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 for removal of the dumped items or alternatively issue a Penalty Infringement Notice.

Scenario 2:

If waste has been dumped and the polluter is unable to be identified, Council's crews remove the waste, ensuring the incident has been entered into Council's system.

Scenario 3:

If waste appears likely to cause significant harm to the environment, people or property (for example chemical spill, leaking containers, biohazard or asbestos) Council's Officers are to contact HAZMAT or the local fire brigade. In the case of large asbestos dumpings a private licenced contractor may be required to be engaged to remove the waste and issue a clearance certificate.

Scenario 4:

If waste has been dumped on private land, Council's Environmental Health Officers are responsible for investigating and contacting the land owner. If development consent is required for waste storage or waste processing or illegal land filling, Council's Development Compliance Officers are required to investigate.



ballina shire council

ILLEGAL
DUMPING
AND LITTER
PREVENTION
STRATEGY
2023 - 2028



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