

Case study  
June 2016 -  
June 2017

**HEY TOSSER!**  
Put your rubbish in the bin



Fines apply.

[epa.nsw.gov.au/litter](http://epa.nsw.gov.au/litter)



New bins and signage at Gallows Beach car park

Well-designed and clean infrastructure was a winner.

## Gallows Beach car park litter reduction project at Coffs Harbour

Involving local associations and the community in litter awareness and reduction enabled Coffs Harbour City Council to empty bins only half as often as before the project, reduce litter at Gallows Beach car park by 86%, and clean up the beach and shallows.

### What was the problem?

Popular Gallows Beach in Coffs Harbor is used by surfers, dog owners, walkers and joggers, families, tourists and people who watch these activities.

The beach car park is elevated from the main jetty precinct picnic and recreation areas. Often, when people sit in their cars or on the rocks eating, drinking or smoking, they leave their rubbish behind. This litter is blown onto the beach and ends up in the surf. Litter can be trapped by the rock wall for long periods before being washed out during high tides and storms.

The initial Local Litter Check showed most litter was small items like cigarette butts and takeaway and small plastic containers.

## Cost

Grant:  
\$26,920

In-kind:  
\$7,901

Total Cost:  
\$34,823

## What did we do?

The main aims of the project were to:

- reduce the volume of litter by 50%
- increase public awareness of litter's impact on the beach and ocean
- raise awareness that fines can and will be issued for littering.

Coffs Harbour City Council:

- conducted one-on-one education with site users, including handing out 24 keep cups and over 100 car litter bags and discussing the litter problem at Gallows Beach, followed up by a ranger blitz during the statewide litter prevention month in March–April 2017
- formed partnerships with key community groups to encourage them to promote the 'Hey Tosser!' message to their stakeholders
- worked with the local branch of the Sea Shepherd Marine Debris Campaign team to conduct a community clean-up and raise awareness of litter, an event that received excellent media coverage
- installed three new bins fitted with butt containers
- ran local media and social media campaigns
- conducted a free community screening of the movie *Bag It* with a local panel of experts for a question and answer session.



Before: Old bins at Gallows Beach car park



After: Updated bins with Hey Tosser! signage at Gallows Beach

## What did we achieve?

- Litter was reduced by 86%, a level 36% more than our 50% target.
- Bins need to be emptied only half as often as before, and no bins have overflowed. Previously, bins overflowed up to three times a week.
- A free community event was a great success and resulted in ongoing conversations about the impact of litter on Gallows Beach and other areas.
- The level of litter awareness has increased, with a 166% increase in positive responses during user surveys.

The grant provided an opportunity for the council to connect with groups such as the Sea Shepherd Marine Debris Campaign team

This networking is invaluable to the council.

- One of the best results was the increase in awareness about the Report to EPA app and portal, to report littering online. Coffs Harbour's participation in Report to EPA increased by 64% from June 2016. Since February 2015, 82 penalty infringement notices were issued in Coffs Harbour using Report to EPA; since June 2016, 125 community litter reports were made.

## How we evaluated our program

- We conducted Local Litter Checks to assess the number and volume of items littered in the car park.
- We observed bin usage.
- We surveyed site users to evaluate changes in attitude to litter and fines for littering.

## What did we learn?

- One-on-one communication and community engagement through well-promoted events had a big impact. The question and answer session at the community engagement event exceeded expectations, running 1.5 hours overtime.
- Social media worked well, but did not have quite the anticipated impact.
- Well-designed and clean infrastructure was a winner. We are looking at designing council's new litter bin collection vehicles in line with a similar Hey Tosser! message, along with a Report to EPA tag line.
- Report to EPA could be better promoted to the Coffs Harbour community.

## Legacy

Many community members have an increased awareness of litter's impacts as a result of our community engagement event and one-on-one discussions with council staff during the project.



Sea Shepherd Marine Debris Campaign community clean-up at Gallows Beach

The grant provided an opportunity for the council to connect with groups such as the Sea Shepherd Marine Debris Campaign team, Coffs Harbour Boardriders Club, The Marine Science Centre, and the community. This has resulted in ongoing communication and understanding. These groups now have a contact within council to whom they can bring ideas for further litter prevention initiatives. This networking is invaluable to the council.

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**Photos:** Coffs Harbour City Council

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