

## Case study: WSROC cigarette butt litter reduction



15 Queen Street, St Marys.

**Bilingual speakers helped educate 500 smokers as part of the WSROC project.**

# WSROC chalks up a win over problem cigarette butt litter

Chalk art, new bins, social media posts, media articles and educators were used by the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) to target cigarette butt littering.

The campaign led to a total butt litter reduction in 13 of the 14 sites.



Butt litter at Auburn Central, northside.

## What was the problem?

- Cigarette butt litter in shopping strips was identified as a regional priority in the *Western Sydney Regional Litter Plan 2016-2021*. Butt litter was the only common litter issue shared by all WSROC councils.
- Councils are responsible for the cleanliness of shopping strips and invest significant time and money keeping them clean.
- Most of the councils had never tackled cigarette butt litter reduction projects.

## What did we do?

- Pre-campaign baseline butt litter checks across 17 hotspot locations



Chalk art depicted butts slipping into waterways and urged smokers to #BinYourButt.

## Local Litter Check

The EPA's easy-to-use Local Litter Check is a free tool to help understand your local litter problem. Details can be found on the EPA website.

- Fourteen cigarette butt bins and two bin attachments were installed across eight council areas in cigarette butt litter hotspots nominated by the councils.
- Decorated hotspot locations with pavement stickers or chalk art installations.
- Hired street performers and bilingual educators to talk with the public.
- Used enforcement officers to patrol hotspot areas.
- Conducted butt litter checks post-campaign to evaluate any changes.

## What did we achieve?

- A total litter reduction in 13 out of 14 sites.
- Education of 500 smokers through bilingual speakers.
- A smoker satisfaction rating of 86% in hotspot areas.
- A reduction of total litter count by 46%.
- A reach of 212,577 people through social media videos.

## How was the project evaluated?

WSROC conducted Local Litter Checks at the start and finish of the campaign. The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) provided data from its *Report to EPA* portal to assess the increase in littering reports during the project.

## What did we learn?

- Installation of dedicated butt bin infrastructure is effective in reducing litter when placed in well-used smoking areas that have a cigarette butt litter problem. Only one bin did not make a significant impact and this may have been due to the large size or wide-open nature of this hotspot location.
- A three-minute video achieved the highest community engagement, outperforming 60-second videos. This video featured unscripted community vox-pops about why they don't like litter in English and their native language.
- As there are fewer smoking areas than in the past, well-signed dedicated smoking areas give smokers confidence about where they can smoke. Keeping the areas clean improves smoker satisfaction with the location and prompts them to correctly dispose of their butt litter.

## What is the project's legacy?

The regional approach benefited the participating councils through centralised coordination, shared experiences and being supported as part of a team. Joint procurement of infrastructure resulted in competitive pricing, with free installation and 12 months of free servicing to the project bins until April 2019.



Cigarette bin infrastructure and signage in Fairfield.

### Photos

EC Sustainable. Fairfield images by Enviropoles Australia.

### NSW Environment Protection Authority

Email: [info@epa.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@epa.nsw.gov.au)

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

ISBN 978 1 922260 86 4 | EPA 2019P1769

July 2019

The EPA [disclaimer](#) and [copyright](#) information is available on the EPA website.