

Case study  
August 2016  
to  
April 2017



Photography: Program materials at a highway service centre; MIDWASTE

## MIDWASTE roadside clean-up and awareness campaign

MIDWASTE Regional Waste Forum, with eight member councils on NSW's Mid North Coast, fosters co-operation on waste management and waste minimisation. Our project sought to reduce litter by engaging motorists with educational materials and extensive local advertising.

### What was the problem?

MIDWASTE's litter plan identified takeaway food and drink containers and plastics as high-priority litter items on roads between highway service centres and city centres.

We aimed to reduce litter at our monitoring sites by 10%, and have 200 local residents register to report littering from vehicles to the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA).



Service stations engaged the target audience to encourage motorists to register and report vehicle littering.

For monitoring, initial site clean-ups provided a blank slate; litter counts were then taken for a baseline period prior to the campaign, then at the end of the campaign.

## What did we do?

We produced educational materials and installed them in highway service centres to:

- raise awareness about fines for littering
- increase the number of people reporting littering from vehicles
- promote the 'Hey Tosser!' campaign.

We formed productive partnerships with local councils, and also with highway service centres because these centres afford multiple ways to send our message to many motorists.

We held litter awareness campaigns targeting motorists over two weeks in January 2017, and four weeks during March and April 2017.

We used local radio and newspaper advertising to deliver key messages including 'fines apply for littering', 'anyone can report litter from vehicles', and 'litter damages the environment'.

We also surveyed and observed highway service centre customers.

## What did we achieve?

- Our project led to 39% and 66% reductions in litter at monitored sites over the January and the March/April campaigns, respectively (well over the 10% target)
- During the project period, 332 residents registered to report litter from vehicles (again, well over the target of 200); this marked a 123% increase in registrations.

## What did we learn?

- We explored several ways to engage motorists at highway service centres, methods on which to build future such campaigns.
- Although we achieved good results in some areas using only media and variable messaging signs, better results with on-site bollard signs and banners indicate that on-site print signage is more effective.
- Highway service centres are effective places to engage motorists about vehicle littering; their managers were very supportive, and these centres afforded many opportunities to place signage and information.
- Roadside locations present safety challenges for clean-ups and monitoring (for example, unpredictable weather, and mowing or slashing); to provide enough data for confidence, monitored sites must be sufficiently large.
- Some hotspots, which look heavily littered, may have less litter occurring than land managers assume, if litter is rarely or never cleaned up.

## How we evaluated our program

- We surveyed highway service centres about roadside litter and motorists' behaviour.
- We used 14 monitoring sites to monitor litter before and after the campaign.
- We also obtained feedback from project partners, particularly service centre management and staff.

## Cost

Grant:  
\$110,000

In-kind:  
\$20,000

Total cost:  
\$130,000



Variable messaging signs targeted motorists at service stations.

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## Legacy

The project raised community awareness of litter. It provided clearer understanding of the roadside litter problem in the MIDWASTE area, knowledge that will assist design of future programs.

The project also built strong partnerships with several highway service centres, and showed the benefits of proactive relationship-building.

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### Photos: MIDWASTE

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