

**Case study:
MIDWASTE
highway
rest areas**



Information sign installed along the Pacific Highway NSW.

Installing new bins and signage was an important step in reducing litter at highway rest areas.

Binning litter at Mid North Coast highway rest areas

A project to install new bins and signage at highway rest areas by MIDWASTE led to an 80% drop in complaints about litter and a 56% reduction in littering at the monitored rest stops.



A litter bins at Barrys Creek southbound rest area.

What was the problem?

Waste management infrastructure at highway rest areas in the Mid North Coast consisted of a variety of bin types, including some very outdated and poor-quality bins. Some sites had insufficient bins. There was very little signage to encourage proper bin use and prevent litter. To reduce litter at these sites and on roadsides in the region, it was considered important to upgrade highway rest area bin and signage infrastructure.

What did we do?

- Assessed highway rest areas and stopping bays in the MIDWASTE region and consolidated partnership with Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) Mid North Coast.
- Researched infrastructure and engagement options (bins, signage, collection and clean-up systems) for rest areas to improve usability for both the public and the contractor/council/RMS staff who service the bins and manage litter on the site.

Local Litter Check

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

MIDWASTE is made up of six Mid North Coast councils:
Bellingen, Coffs Harbour, Kempsey, Mid Coast, Nambucca and Port Macquarie-Hastings.



Signs promoting Report to EPA were installed at highway rest areas.

- Undertook consultation of an infrastructure improvement plan for six rest areas and two stopping bays.
- Cleaned rest areas and stopping bays.

What did we achieve?

MIDWASTE achieved:

- 56% reduction in the average number of litter items at rest area monitoring sites (target was 40%)
- 80% reduction of customer complaints relating to litter
- increased satisfaction for bin design and accessibility.

How was the project evaluated?

MIDWASTE conducted monitoring using *Local Litter Checks* and evaluation, including feedback from the maintenance contractor and RMS Mid North Coast.

What did we learn?

- Highway rest areas offer a significant opportunity to engage with motorists to reduce litter at these sites and contribute to reducing litter from vehicles on highways and other roadsides.
- Highway rest areas vary significantly in their design, infrastructure and maintenance/servicing regimes, meaning that each site needs to be assessed individually to determine appropriate measures to reduce litter.

If planning similar projects consideration should include: reviewing plans for major developments and integrating improved litter prevention into planned projects, engaging with staff/contractors servicing the sites, consideration of changes to servicing frequency and variable frequency during peak periods, recognition of the limitations of RMS staff capacity to undertake the additional works required for infrastructure installations and the block-out periods for any non-urgent works, and acknowledging that these sites are isolated and unsupervised and therefore vulnerable to vandalism and illegal dumping.

What is the project's legacy?

The project is considered to have been extremely successful. It is hoped that similar improvements will be undertaken in the Hunter-Central Coast Region and the North Coast Region, providing user-friendly and consistent waste management infrastructure and litter prevention messaging along the whole Pacific Highway.

Photos

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