

Case study: MIDWASTE PICITUP program



A family enjoying taking part in a PICITUP event.

Communication between volunteer litter collectors and councils needed to be easier.

Community joins in to help PICITUP litter campaign

A total of 277 individuals, 60 families and 40 school/community groups registered to take part in the PICITUP program across six MIDWASTE local government areas (LGAs). This represents a 20% increase of people picking up litter regularly.

What was the problem?

There is a significant level of voluntary litter collection by both community groups and individuals in the MIDWASTE region, but the communication and arrangements between volunteers and councils was either ad hoc or non-existent.



PICITUP participant Shalise Leesfield regularly cleans litter from the beach and foreshore near her home in the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council LGA.

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



A PICITUP participant regularly uses a boat to collect litter from Wallis Lake in the Mid Coast Council LGA.

This MIDWASTE project aimed to increase the amount of community involvement in litter prevention and clean-up (a 20% increase in people participating in regular clean-ups in at least two LGAs) and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of these efforts by providing support and clearer arrangements with councils.

What did we do?

- Secured agreements with Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation to use the PICITUP brand and secured participation of all six MIDWASTE member councils to have their offices used as pick-up points for PICITUP Litter Kits.
- Designed, procured, packaged and transported PICITUP Litter Kits including a re-usable upcycled Boomerang Bag, four litter sacks, gloves, booklet, Report A Tosser card and PICITUP marketing materials.
- Promoted and engaged individuals, community groups and schools to register for the PICITUP program.
- Sent two e-newsletters promoting litter news, initiatives and opportunities, including 'report litter from vehicles' and 'report illegal dumping', and two PICITUP surveys, to all program participants.
- Analysed survey results and provided targeted support in response to surveys, including provision of equipment, contactor clean-ups and signage.
- Further action and engagement with program participants is planned for 2019.

What did we achieve?

- An engagement with all six MIDWASTE LGAs, with two councils more engaged in promoting the program.
- 277 individuals participated in PICITUP including approximately 60 'family' registrations and 40 'school and community groups' registrations, taking total participants in clean-ups to approximately 1,200.
- 348 residents registered to report littering from vehicles in the MIDWASTE region in 2018 (reporting has been heavily promoted in this PICITUP program as well as other MIDWASTE and council litter projects).

How was the project evaluated?

The project was evaluated on the involvement from each member council and the results from two participant surveys.

What did we learn?

- The management and communication systems between councils and MIDWASTE are considered sound and viable for the medium- to long-term, with councils acting as pick-up points for Litter Kits but MIDWASTE managing the program for the whole region.
- Preparation, packaging and transport of the Litter Kits is very labour intensive, and the time required for this should not be underestimated. Storage of spare kits also needs to be considered.
- The PICITUP program appeals to several different types of participant, which presents some challenges and opportunities for the future. Individuals (and families) are the primary target and the program design suits them.

However variations should be considered to provide more tailored support for community groups and school groups.

- Active involvement in promotion by councils is critical to reach a larger number of individuals.

What is the project's legacy?

The PICITUP program has had a solid start and is expected to continue, building in numbers and evolving in response to participant needs. More supported, engaged and active community involvement in litter clean-up is expected to have flow-on effects for litter prevention, through 'clean equals clean' and a gradual shift in community expectations and behaviours.

Photos

Main image: MIDWASTE Regional Waste Forum; Shalise Leesfield image by Shannon Leesfield; boat collecting rubbish image by Ken Hunt.

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