



Keeping Queensland Clean: the Litter and Illegal Dumping Plan

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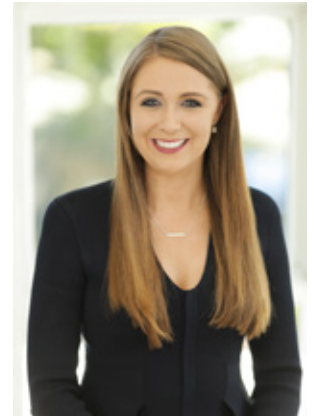
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Minister's foreword



Litter and illegally dumped waste is the most visible form of pollution in our environment and is, understandably, a major concern for Queenslanders. As well as the devastating impact it has on local environments and wildlife, litter and illegally dumped waste also impacts other aspects of our lives, from our health and wellbeing, to our lifestyle and economy.

The Queensland Government, through the *Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy*, is paving the way for Queensland to become a zero-waste society, where waste is avoided, reused and recycled to the greatest possible extent. A key deliverable of the strategy is *Keeping Queensland Clean: the Litter and Illegal Dumping Plan* (the plan), which commits to leading strong, coordinated action to reduce both the amount and impact of litter and illegally dumped waste across the state.

The plan builds on the great work already underway across local governments and in our communities, and the knowledge and learnings gathered through the delivery of the previous *Queensland's Litter and Illegal Dumping Action Plan*.

With the most commonly littered items made from plastic, the plan also aligns with *Tackling plastic waste: Queensland's Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan*. The Queensland Government has acted to reduce plastic waste and litter by introducing a ban on the supply of single-use straws, cutlery, bowls and plates, stirrers and expanded polystyrene takeaway food containers and cups. The ban, which will commence on 1 September 2021, will build on the state's lightweight single-use plastic shopping bag ban and the container refund scheme.

The plan and these initiatives provide a holistic approach to managing plastics and set the direction for Queensland to be part of local, national and global solutions to reduce plastic pollution.

To ensure the plan's success, a collaborative approach has been taken, with a suite of programs that ensure appropriate, consistent, strategic, and targeted actions across jurisdictions, stakeholders and individuals.

We all love Queensland and want a clean and healthy environment for future generations. By creating a shared value in our environment and choosing better and more sustainable options for disposing waste, together we can keep it clean.

Meaghan Scanlon MP

Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef
Minister for Science and Youth Affairs



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Introduction

Litter and illegally dumped waste is the most visible form of pollution in our environment. It impacts many aspects of our lives, from our health and wellbeing, to our lifestyle, along with the devastating impact it has on local environments and wildlife.

Both are completely avoidable acts, with responsible disposal alternatives readily available across the state. They are the result of individual choice, often motivated by nothing more than convenience, and are easily normalised and often socially accepted.

Changing these behaviours is challenging, but can be addressed in a strategic and coordinated way. The Queensland Government recognises the critical role it plays in leading this coordinated response and is committed to reducing both the amount and impact of these acts across the state. *Keeping Queensland Clean: the Litter and Illegal Dumping Plan* (the plan) outlines how the Queensland Government will play this central role.

The plan sets the context for managing litter and illegal dumping in Queensland, identifies the issues which need to be addressed, and provides a way forward via a series of actions.

The plan also identifies how we, as Queenslanders, can work together to combat litter and illegal dumping, building on the work that is underway and the results that have been achieved and providing a coordinating response to these issues.

Fast facts



Littering and illegal dumping are activities where waste material is not appropriately disposed of, deliberately discarded or carelessly managed, ending up in the wrong place.



Cigarette butts are the most commonly littered item in Queensland, followed by takeaway food packaging and drink containers.



It is estimated that 80 per cent of marine debris comes from land-based activities.¹



Over 75 per cent of waste that is found on Australian beaches is made of plastic.²



Leaving unwanted items on the kerbside is illegal dumping. The most common reason for doing it is convenience.³



Leaving donations outside charity bins or shops is illegal dumping. Charities bear the cost of disposing dumped items.



The presence of litter and illegal dumping at a location often attracts further litter and illegal dumping.



A study by the Queensland Government found that it cost councils in excess of \$59.4 million during 2017/18 to manage littering and illegal dumping.⁴



In the past six years, over 21,000 reports of littering and illegal dumping have been received from members of the public via the Queensland Government's online reporting system.



Around 75 per cent of all the reports received in the past five years for littering from a vehicle resulted in a fine.



Helium balloons can travel up to 800km before falling to earth, often returning in pieces, some resembling jellyfish, which poses extreme risks to the animals that select them as food.

1 Hardesty, B. D., Wilcox, C., & Lebreton, L. (2016). Modelling and monitoring marine litter movement, transport and accumulation. Retrieved from <https://research.csiro.au/marinedebris/projects/modelling-monitoring-marine-litter-movement-transport-accumulation/>

2 Hardesty, D., Lawson, T., van der Velde, T., Lansdell, M. & Wilcox, C., 2017 'Estimating quantities and sources of marine debris at a continental scale', *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, vol 15 (1), pp 18-25.

3 Understanding Kerbside Dumping Behaviour in Brisbane, Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation, May 2015.

4 Arcadis Design and Consultancy on behalf of the Department of Environment and Science, 23 June 2019, Survey of Council Litter and Illegal Dumping Costs



What is litter and illegal dumping?

Litter and illegal dumping are defined on a continuum of size, scale, hazard and thought. It can be everything from an individual unconsciously leaving behind a bottle top on a picnic table, through to the concerted effort by a business to illegally dispose of tonnes of hazardous waste into the environment.

Behaviourally, littering is the discarding of items by an individual while travelling through the environment. Illegal dumping is the active collection and transportation of material to a specific location where it is dumped, and where the act of dumping is the reason for the travel.

Queensland's *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011* (the WRR Act) is the main piece of legislation that provides definitions and provisions for the management of litter and illegal dumping, and establishes the offence penalties which operate across all land tenures and waterways.

The WRR Act categorises litter and illegal dumping offences by volume, each with varying penalties:

- littering under 200L, including littering from a vehicle or vessel
- dangerous littering under 200L*
- illegal dumping—200L or more, to less than 2500L
- illegal dumping—2500L and over.

*Dangerous littering is litter that causes, or is likely to cause, harm to a person, property or the environment. This includes throwing a lit cigarette butt onto dry grass in high fire danger conditions, leaving a syringe in a public place, or smashing a glass bottle on the footpath.

The litter and illegal dumping problem

Litter and illegal dumping are prevalent and problematic issues with a range of negative impacts on our environment, visual amenity, economy and health.

Environmental impacts

Littered and illegally dumped wastes are a substantial source of environmental contamination. Waste in the environment can cause animal entanglement, injury and death—ingestion being a significant issue leading to increased mortality of seabirds, turtles and other wildlife.

As waste can travel, there are no limits to where littered or illegally dumped items may end up, and the impacts caused along the way. While humans are the cause of litter and illegal dumping; wind, water and also animals play a role in the movement of materials. This can result in a continued, and often unforeseen environmental impact, long after the material has left the offender.

Litter and illegally dumped waste not only contaminates our land but can result in toxic chemicals and poisonous materials entering waterways, with devastating effects to wildlife, drinking water and recreational activities such as fishing.

Additionally, illegal dumping can introduce pests and weeds into our natural areas, block waterways and roads, cause flooding (by blocking drains) and facilitate higher rates of erosion by smothering natural vegetation.

Plastic pollution

Litter is a significant contributor to the local and global plastic pollution problem, with plastic being one of the most commonly littered material types at a state and national level. It is estimated that 75 per cent of waste found on Australian beaches is made of plastic.

Once in the environment, plastic persists, causing direct physical impacts and less direct impacts as it breaks up into 'microplastics'. Microplastics are difficult to remove and have been found in a wide range of locations including the human food chain, with long-term impacts still to be fully determined.

The issue of plastics and how to manage them in the environment is a challenging one. As a society, we have become dependent on plastics in many aspects of our life, and benefit from its positive aspects.

As such, this plan supports the goals and initiatives of the *Tackling Plastic Waste: Queensland's Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan*, ensuring a holistic approach is taken to managing plastics.

Economic impacts

Littering and illegal dumping can result in a range of economic impacts, including:

- the direct cost of litter and dumping prevention, compliance, clean-up and disposal
- lower property values due to impacts on visual amenity
- impact on tourism due to the reduced attractiveness of specific sites⁵
- impact on legitimate waste and recycling businesses.

The true cost of managing litter and illegal dumping in Queensland is unknown and difficult to estimate. For example, the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads alone spent \$5.8 million on the removal of roadside litter and illegal dumping during the 2018/2019 financial year.

Further, a study carried out by the Queensland Government in 2019 found that local governments spent in excess of \$59.4 million in 2017/2018 on clean-ups and management of litter and illegal dumping in Queensland. Other indirect costs such as vehicle tyre punctures, personal injury and bushfires are more difficult to measure and contribute to the broader costs associated with litter and illegal dumping on our roads.

The economic costs of litter and illegal dumping are borne by local and state governments, businesses and community groups and individuals. Prevention of littering and dumping reduces or avoids these costs, demonstrating the importance of government investment in litter and dumping prevention and efforts to modify behaviour.

⁵ Corraini, N. R., de Souza de Lima, A., Bonetti, J., & Rangel-Buitrago, N. (2018). Troubles in the paradise: Litter and its scenic impact on the North Santa Catarina island beaches, Brazil. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 131, 572–579. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.MARPOLBUL.2018.04.061>

Social impacts

Litter and illegal dumping affects many aspects of everyday life. Environments with high levels of litter and illegally dumped waste have reduced visual amenity and aesthetic value. These areas are identified as dirty and uncared for and are therefore less likely to be used by the public. Areas with existing, high levels of litter and illegal dumping have been shown to attract further litter and illegal dumping and also attract other anti-social behaviours such as theft and vandalism.⁶

Human health

Litter and illegal dumping have direct human health impacts. Besides direct physical impacts, such as needle stick injuries and cuts from broken glass, poorly disposed wastes have the potential to impact on the broader community, particularly hazardous wastes such as chemicals and asbestos.

Litter and illegal dumping can attract vermin such as rats and cockroaches, while items that can hold water (e.g. tyres) provide the perfect breeding ground for mosquitos and other insects.

It is the pervasiveness of litter and illegal dumping within the local environment, its transport and cumulative impacts, which makes it a global issue. Within Queensland, the impacts on environmental values are substantial, and there is significant room for improvement in our attitudes, behaviours and performance around these issues.

⁶ James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, 1982, Broken Windows.



Actions on litter and illegal dumping so far

The Queensland Government has delivered significant initiatives to address the impacts of littering and illegal dumping across the state. These initiatives have worked to:

- understand why littering and waste dumping occur
- motivate changes in behaviour to reduce littering and dumping
- collaborate directly with local government and other stakeholders to act on incidents.



Policy and legislation

- Queensland's Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy (Waste Strategy), released in July 2019, prioritises action to reduce the impacts of litter and illegally dumped waste on the environment and communities.
- Queensland's Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan, released in November 2019, establishes actions and a strong emphasis on partnerships aimed at reducing plastic waste in Queensland.
- The ban on plastic shopping bags, introduced on 1 July 2018, has resulted in more than a 70 per cent reduction in plastic bag litter.
- Queensland's container refund scheme, Containers for Change, introduced on 1 November 2018, has resulted in more than a 35 per cent reduction in beverage container litter.
- Increased penalty units for littering and illegal dumping offences, which are now some of the strongest penalties in the country.
- Improved littering and illegal dumping reporting to inform best practice programs and policy.

Programs

- The Department of Environment and Science (the department) has contributed to research and collaboration projects with local governments, universities, charities and community groups to address specific and localised issues throughout Queensland including:
 - ▶ littering along roadsides
 - ▶ littering of cigarette butts
 - ▶ dumping at charity bins
 - ▶ kerbside dumping
 - ▶ dumping in natural areas
 - ▶ dumping of problem wastes, like tyres.

- These projects are used to develop best-practice programs, interventions, data capture techniques (e.g. litter counts/observational surveys) and behavioural analysis (e.g. understanding motivations, barriers, triggers).
- Provision of downloadable tools and materials that support interventions, education and community engagement, including outdoor signage, posters, collateral and information—each designed from applied research and evaluation.

Compliance and enforcement

- Delivery of the public reporting tool for littering and illegal dumping offences (5,133 online reports received in 2019/20 at www.qld.gov.au/litter).
- Issuing compliance enforcement actions, penalty infringement notices, and prosecutions for littering and large-scale illegal dumping (more than 3,600 actions taken in 2019/20), deterring further offences.
- Expanded application of modern spatial technologies, such as drones and GIS mapping, to improve illegal dumping compliance and surveillance.
- Cross-departmental compliance partnerships established to reduce enforcement gaps of illegal activities.
- Built a strong compliance regime, including a dedicated team of regional compliance officers to address illegal dumping.
- Delivery of a prevention and investigation training program for councils managing litter and illegal dumping.

Case study 1—Container Refund Scheme

On 1 November 2018, the Queensland Government launched a Container Refund Scheme (scheme) that aims to reduce beverage container litter and increase recycling.

To evaluate the scheme's effectiveness, a litter monitoring study was conducted across Queensland, both before and after the scheme commenced. In total, 315 sites were selected for surveying, which were divided into nine location types across five Queensland regions.

The studies found within the first 12 months of the scheme's introduction:

- an estimated 48.8 per cent reduction in beverage container litter
- cigarette butts continue to dominate the litter counts in all regions and site types
- following cigarette butts; beverage containers, straws and takeaway containers are the next three most littered items
- the total number of litter items found per 1000 square metres was considerably lower in the final (October 2019) audit than in the previous audits
- carparks, waterways, parks and docks recorded a lower beverage container litter rate in October 2019 than all previous audits
- beverage container litter is consistently highest in remote and very remote regions compared to metropolitan, regional and major regional areas.



Setting the scene: Foundation research and pilot projects

Queensland's Litter and Illegal Dumping Action Plan (October 2013) resulted in a number of critical research and pilot projects that addressed a range of behaviours and issues. These have provided valuable insights for the design and delivery of future programs and interventions.

Gillies Range Road: Litter and Illegal Dumping Prevention Project: This prevention project involved the removal of accumulated illegal dumping from the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area, which straddles this major road corridor. It was supported by a promotional campaign, installed road signage and increased surveillance activities. Partners: Wet Tropics Management Authority, Tablelands Regional Council, Cairns Regional Council, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Transport and Main Roads, Terrain NRM and local community members.

Illegal dumping in the Beerburrum Forest area: A behaviour change campaign was delivered to trial interventions such as signage and community engagement. The result of this pilot project was a proven effective framework that can be customised and used by land managers to reduce illegal dumping in natural areas. Partners: Sunshine Coast Regional Council, Moreton Bay Regional Council, HQPlantations and Crime Stoppers.

Littering on south west Queensland's highways: In partnership with six surrounding councils—the *Love Queensland. Let's keep it clean* campaign was created to encourage all road-users to help keep our highways free from litter. Partners: Balonne Shire, Maranoa, Goondiwindi, Southern Downs, Toowoomba, and Western Downs regional councils, the Australian Packaging Covenant, and the Queensland Murray–Darling Committee.

Understanding kerbside dumping behaviour: This study sought to understand why people dump material on kerbsides, and to inform the development of strategies to address these behaviours. Other information gathered included best times to intervene and how best to deliver information about the issue.

Illegal dumping at charity bins: Research was undertaken on the attitudes and beliefs of donation behaviours and the impact of the dumping problem in Queensland, resulting in the report, *Does Your Donation Count or Cost?* Partners: UnitingCare, NACRO Queensland members and Brisbane City Council.

Further information about these research and pilot projects can be found on the Queensland Government website, www.qld.gov.au/litter.

What's next?

Keeping Queensland Clean sets a clear direction and provides actions for sustainable, long-term change. It uses a combination of compliance and enforcement, community engagement, education, partnership building and program development to reduce litter and illegal dumping in Queensland.



Headline actions

Development of the **Litter and Illegal Dumping Management Framework**, which will provide data to accurately map the sources, movement and the final location of waste in the environment. The Framework will be used to prioritise future actions and develop effective, targeted intervention programs.

Community and Sustainability Action Grants for localised work to reduce and remove litter and marine debris.

\$3.6 million **Illegal Dumping Partnerships Program** for councils to increase capacity to act on and prevent illegal dumping, including 31 new regional (council-based) compliance officers.

\$1.4 million **Illegal Dumping Hotspot Grants Program** for councils to support projects that prevent or reduce illegal dumping in hotspot areas, including anti-dumping infrastructure and surveillance equipment.

Increased compliance across Queensland, including the use of seven drones to help combat major illegal dumping incidents, and increasing the government's compliance capacity statewide.

A litter and illegal dumping **Community of Practice** has been established that builds the capacity of local and state governments to more effectively and consistently manage littering and illegal dumping across jurisdictions.

The **supply of single-use plastic** straws, cutlery, bowls and plates, stirrers and expanded polystyrene takeaway food and drink containers will be **banned in Queensland from 1 September 2021**. Some businesses are exempt from the ban to ensure that Queenslanders with disability or health needs are able to access the items they need.

Keeping Queensland Clean: the Litter and Illegal Dumping Plan

Goal **To reduce litter and illegally dumped waste in Queensland, through coordinated, evidence-based actions and collaboration.**

This plan is a foundation measure of the Waste Strategy. It provides the framework to deliver best practice compliance, enforcement and prevention programs that address littering and illegal dumping in Queensland. The plan also provides a proactive approach towards behaviour change and education for littering and illegal dumping issues.

The actions under this plan are designed to work in partnership, across the levels of government and in conjunction with business and the community, to ensure litter and illegal dumping issues are targeted in a systematic and collaborative way.

In addition to the Waste Strategy, the actions under the plan have been informed by:

- legislated requirements in relation to litter and illegal dumping
- learnings from the Queensland's Littering and Illegal Dumping Action Plan (2013)
- input from stakeholders via consultation and collaborative projects
- available research and data collected on the type, incidence and quantities of littered or illegally dumped materials
- identified priority wastes, such as plastics, tyres and cigarette butts
- Queensland Government and Commonwealth Government policy commitments and plans, such as the *National Waste Policy: Less Waste More Resources (2018)*, *Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan (2018)*, and *Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan*
- international conventions and agreements such as MARPOL, UN Global Programme of Action for the Marine Environment from Land Based Activities, and the UN Clean Seas Initiative.

The plan further aligns with the *Tackling plastic waste: Queensland's Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan 2019* with common goals and initiatives for a comprehensive approach to reducing and managing plastic pollution. The two separate plans enable delivery of programs towards common goals through best practice management of littering, illegal dumping and plastic pollution.



Partnerships and collaboration

The plan is built on partnerships and collaboration with a number of critical stakeholder groups. Each group has unique responsibilities for managing litter and illegally dumped waste, and capabilities to create positive change.

State government departments

The various departments within the Queensland Government are major infrastructure, land and waterway managers and have powers under their own respective legislation to issue fines for littering and illegal dumping. Some examples include the Department of Resources and the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy.

As land managers, they are responsible for the clean-up of littered and illegally dumped wastes on their land, which draws funds and resources away from other crucial areas.

The department is a major land manager for Queensland's national parks, forestries and conservation estates, and is the administering body for the WRR Act. The department has taken a multi-pronged approach to address litter and illegal dumping, with action areas across policy and legislation, compliance and programs.

Under the WRR Act, all Queensland Government departments are required to report annually on their waste management activities (including the management of litter and illegal dumping). In recognition of this requirement and in consideration to the various priorities and activities across the portfolios, the department will work closely with other state departments to ensure consistency in managing and reporting on littering and illegal dumping activities.

The department is also establishing partnerships with other Australian state jurisdictions to share information and resources, and collaborating to ensure actions facilitate an Australia-wide approach in meeting national priorities in litter and illegal dumping management.

Local government

Local government plays a critical role in waste management (including litter management) through the provision of street bins and stormwater litter traps, street cleaning, landfill operations and local anti-litter awareness and education programs. Local government invest considerable funds and resources to meet the expectation of their communities around waste and litter management.

Local governments can also take on significant responsibility for managing litter and illegal dumping by taking on the powers delegated under the WRR Act to conduct investigations, compliance and enforcement activities.

Non-government organisations and community groups

A range of non-government organisations, businesses and community groups provide strong support in the management of littering and illegal dumping through clean-ups, community engagement, education and data collection.

Individuals

Individuals, collectively, have the greatest ability to reduce litter and illegal dumping. Whether it is the decision not to litter or illegally dump waste, to report it, or to educate others about these issues, how each individual behaves makes a huge difference.

Strategic priorities

All actions in the plan align with the strategic priorities set out in the Waste Strategy, which sets the course for Queensland to become a zero-waste society, where waste is avoided, reused and recycled to the greatest possible extent.

The key strategic priorities of the Waste Strategy, which the plan addresses, are outlined below:

Strategic Priority 1—Reduce the impact of waste on the environment and communities

Reducing the amount of litter and illegally dumped waste entering our environment reduces pressure on wildlife, ecosystems, human health and amenity.

A healthy environment supports our economy and contributes to our general health and wellbeing, now and for future generations.

Strategic Priorities 2 & 3—Transition to a circular economy for waste and build economic opportunity

Waste that has been littered or illegally dumped in the environment is a lost resource. Preventing wastes from entering the environment and ensuring they are disposed of correctly increases the opportunity for recovery and recycling—creating new products, industries and jobs.

Enabling the change

The Waste Strategy identifies **five key enablers** to facilitate change and underpin actions for stakeholders. This plan uses these enablers to formulate its program areas and actions.

- Robust **partnerships and collaboration**, and a **sound knowledge platform**, will drive innovation, investment, information sharing and the uptake of opportunities.
- A strong **policy and legislative framework** will provide certainty, consistency and a clear policy direction to support a shared approach from government, business and community in tackling litter and illegal dumping.
- Effective **compliance management** will reduce litter and illegal dumping incidents and ensure that business and the community are managing and disposing of their waste appropriately.
- Comprehensive **education** programs will ensure litter and illegal dumping becomes a priority for the community and industry, and will drive changes in expectations, knowledge and behaviour.
- Good **governance** will ensure that opportunities and barriers to change can be managed transparently to deliver optimal anti-litter and illegal dumping outcomes.

Enabler 1: Partnerships and a sound knowledge platform

*Robust **partnerships and collaboration**, and a sound **knowledge platform**, will drive innovation, investment, information sharing and the uptake of opportunities.*

Litter and illegal dumping appear in all facets of the community, and as such, there are a significant number of stakeholders involved in preventing and responding to unmanaged waste in a variety of locations. Community participation is vital, but needs to be guided to avoid inconsistencies in approach and improve valid data collection.

The department recognises the need to increase capacity and quality data capture through supporting a broad range of stakeholders to share information, skills and knowledge. The department will develop programs to strengthen relationships and networks between stakeholders, encourage and support best practice and evaluation, and increase the capacity to effect positive change.

Shared knowledge, data and research is a critical component in evaluating the success of program efforts and understanding the changes in littering and illegal dumping trends. The department will continue to support broad scale research on strategic litter and illegal dumping issues with effective evaluation to guide best practice management, which will be made available to stakeholders.

Partnerships and sound knowledge platform

Opportunities for Queensland Government

- Develop the Litter and Illegal Dumping Management Framework to plot waste flows in the environment, identify priority intervention points, evaluate policy and program gaps, identify priority wastes, and act as a translation tool for multiple data sources.
- Build a community of best practice for the management and prevention of litter and illegal dumping. Interested community groups, local government and state agencies will be able to access research reports, case studies of tested interventions and downloadable resources.
- Based on prior pilot programs and ongoing data analysis, develop best practice toolkits to address key litter and illegal dumping issues like roadside litter prevention, illegal dumping in forested areas and kerbside dumping, with relevant support materials for consistent program delivery by community groups, local government and state agencies.
- Develop grant programs, such as the Illegal Dumping Hotspot Grant Program, to support local governments and non-government organisations to undertake intervention projects that target changing behaviours that contribute to the problem.

- Engage local governments and community members through survey tools and feedback mechanisms to improve understanding of the community's perception of litter and dumping issues, refine program design and evaluate program actions.
- Collaborate with other state agencies to target shared litter and dumping issues, refine reporting requirements and deliver education, data collection and interventions.

Opportunities for local government

- Engage in and contribute to cooperative partnerships that take actions to reduce and prevent litter and illegal dumping.
- Support and participate in a community of best practice for the management and prevention of litter and illegal dumping.
- Share knowledge, research, case studies and data to support a community of best practice.

Opportunities for Queenslanders

- Engage in partnerships.
- Support citizen science activities concerning litter and illegal dumping.
- Utilise materials to deliver localised interventions.

Case study 2—Litter and illegal dumping behaviour change and data

Litter and illegal dumping are two very distinct activities, generally with different motivations, barriers, participants and locations. Their distinct characteristics mean that they require very different approaches to their management and intervention. To effectively combat the issues and implement change, it is important to understand the motivations and barriers.

The learnings from behaviour-change projects and research on littering and illegal dumping are being used to create a knowledge platform for best practice prevention and compliance programs.

A wide range of litter and illegal dumping data are collected from local and state governments, community groups and through departmental monitoring programs, including data from waste disposal sites, statewide litter counts and independent research. This data is crucial in the development of programs and compliance interventions and in the evaluation of that change.

This knowledge, and that gained from future programs, support the development of the Littering and Illegal Dumping Management Framework, an action of this plan. The framework will provide an online scientifically robust understanding of the movement of litter and illegally dumped waste from its source to a final location, and the consequent impacts on environmental values.

Understanding the nature, extent and values of habitats is integral to their effective management. The Litter and Illegal Dumping Management Framework will guide the prioritisation of actions to inform targeted interventions based on the potential impact and risk of different types of waste in the environment. This will ensure actions and programs have the most effective outcome for Queensland. For example, we already know that the majority of waste plastic in the oceans comes from land-based sources. Targeted interventions to stop the movement of waste into waterways, such as through improved storm water management, may be prioritised based on evidence.

The Queensland Government will continue to invest in the improved collection and analysis of litter and illegal dumping data and accurate, standardised stakeholder reporting.



Enabler 2: Compliance management

Effective **compliance management** will reduce litter and illegal dumping incidents and ensure that business and the community are managing and disposing of their waste appropriately.

The Queensland Government will continue to build the capacity of local and state government compliance officers, and invest in education and training, grants programs and partnerships to support consistent and effective compliance activities.

By raising the risk of offenders being caught and actively prosecuting offenders, a strong message is sent that litter and illegal dumping behaviours are neither acceptable nor tolerated.

Compliance management

Opportunities for Queensland Government

- Invest in compliance, to enforce the relevant provisions of the WRR Act and support a reduction in litter and illegal dumping, including the delivery of the Local Government Illegal Dumping Partnership Program.
- Develop training programs that build capacity within state and local compliance and enforcement officers through training, engagement and the development of new tools and systems.
- Deliver targeted compliance and intervention activities at potential littering and illegal dumping hotspots in partnership with landowners.
- Engage in compliance initiatives with cross-jurisdictional partnerships to address cross-border issues.
- Develop a platform that improves information and data collection, sharing, and networking across state and local government for both compliance operations and streamlining public reporting.

Opportunities for local government

- Accept delegation and administer the provisions of the WRR Act.
- Undertake consistent and targeted compliance and enforcement actions within local government boundaries.
- Ensure staff and contractors are aware of their obligations in relation to the management of waste, including litter and illegal dumping.
- Educate and encourage community members to report littering and illegal dumping incidents.
- Report details of litter and illegal dumping data required by the WRR Act.

Opportunities for Queenslanders

- Report littering and illegal dumping incidents via the public reporting system.
- Ensure day-to-day activities do not lead to littering or illegal dumping occurring.
- Practice responsible waste disposal.

Case study 3—Illegal dumping in Buccan Conservation Park

Buccan Conservation Park is approximately 116 hectares of open eucalyptus forest located in South East Queensland's Logan City Council area. The park is state owned and managed by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS). The park protects seven regional ecosystems and three species of conservation significance; the glossy black-cockatoo, koala and short-beaked echidna. The priority for park management is to mitigate any threats to these values, including through fire and pest management.

The close proximity to suburban housing and the restricted visibility the environment provides has been known to entice illegal activities. As the park saw increases in illegal entry and dumping, QPWS rangers installed covert surveillance equipment.

On 12 August 2019, surveillance captured images of a black utility vehicle with partial licence plate details entering the park with a full covered load and then exiting empty. Upon subsequent investigation, authorised officers found waste dumped within the park, consisting of general household waste, nappies, clothing and green waste. Other identifying information in the pile directed officers to two alleged offenders.

An authorised officer issued show cause notices to both alleged offenders, which outlined the details of the alleged offence and what is required for a response. As no response was received from either alleged offender, two penalty infringement notices for 16 penalty units (\$2,135) were issued for contravention of Section 104(1)(a) of the WRR Act, illegal dumping less than 2,500 litres.

The penalty infringement notices have since been referred to State Penalty Enforcement Registry, where a payment plan has been entered into by the recipient.

Due to the concerns of the waste impacting wildlife and the conservation park's environment, QPWS was required to clean the area and remove all waste at their own cost.



Enabler 3: Education programs

*Comprehensive **education** programs will ensure litter and illegal dumping becomes a priority for the community and industry, and will drive changes in expectations, knowledge and behaviour.*

Education, engagement and awareness raising are critical steps in combatting littering and illegal dumping and represent the first steps in behaviour change practices.

There is an identified need to ensure information is presented clearly and accurately to reduce any uncertainty concerning litter and illegal dumping management, and the role of individuals and stakeholder groups in supporting better outcomes for Queensland.

Some littering and dumping behaviours are perceived as acceptable, however result in, or contribute to, littering and illegal dumping. These include activities such as leaving a cup under a seat at an event, throwing an apple core on a roadside or dumping green waste in bushland. These behaviours unfairly shift the burden of managing littered or illegal dumped waste to the business, charity and government sector.

Ensuring clarity in information and messaging, the department aims to increase public awareness and empower the community to respond effectively to all forms of littering and illegal dumping. The department will work with local governments and other stakeholders to bring consistency to the messaging and limit the risk of public confusion.

Education programs

Opportunities for Queensland Government

- Develop and deliver a community of best practice framework and support materials for all Queensland stakeholders that will ensure a consistent approach is taken in interventions and message delivery.
- Design and deliver an information campaign that sends a consistent litter and illegal dumping message across Queensland.
- Deliver an education campaign to increase awareness and use of the online public reporting tool.
- Engage targeted businesses and stakeholders to raise awareness about litter and illegal dumping, its impacts on those stakeholders and the environment, and consider options for intervention and prevention. The release of balloons into the environment and recreational fishing waste litter are key areas of action.

Opportunities for local government

- Support the delivery of education and engagement activities through existing networks.
- Utilise resources, research and materials provided to support consistent messaging and information delivery.
- Improve community understanding about recycling, waste avoidance and impacts of litter and illegal dumping.

Opportunities for Queenslanders

- Find better ways to dispose of waste, and not litter or illegally dump.
- Share information and knowledge on litter and illegal dumping alternatives and the reporting tools.
- Encourage others to dispose of their waste appropriately and not litter or illegally dump.
- Engage in community clean-up events and pick up litter when present.

Case study 4—Love Queensland, Let's Keep it Clean

Queensland has some 186,859 kilometres of public roads, many of which have significant problems relating to roadside litter. During 2014/2015 the Queensland Government implemented a pilot project to investigate behaviours and trial targeted options to reduce the incidences of roadside litter in the Darling Downs and Surat Basin areas.

The project was delivered in partnership with six councils (Balonne, Maranoa, Goondiwindi, Southern Downs, Toowoomba, and Western Downs), the Australian Packaging Covenant, and the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee and saw the design and release of the *Love Queensland. Let's keep it clean* campaign.

The campaign was designed to achieve broad, sustainable behaviour change in the communities, while focusing on, not only the requirements of the region, but also the ability to deliver key messages over a range of scales and regions.

Since the implementation of the project, the 'Love Queensland, Let's keep it clean' message has been successfully applied to a variety of materials and projects, including; the 'Illegal dumping in the Beerburrum Forest area' and the 'Gillies Range Road: Litter and Illegal Dumping Prevention Project'.



Enabler 4: Policy and legislative framework

*A strong **policy and legislative framework** will provide certainty, consistency and a clear policy direction to support a shared approach from government, business and community in tackling litter and illegal dumping.*

The WRR Act provides a strong legislative framework, including clear definitions and penalty systems for litter and illegal dumping across all land tenures in Queensland. Powers under the WRR Act are delegated from the state to local government.

The ability to delegate these powers to local governments and other state departments allows for a strong, shared compliance framework. It is important for broader government policy and legislative frameworks to support a proactive and consistent approach to combating litter and illegal dumping. This reduces the risk of confusion from mixed messages, inconsistent responses and compliance actions across communities.

The WRR Act also gives power to individuals to report littering and illegal dumping from vehicles or vessels to the Queensland Government. Empowering Queenslanders to report offences further builds capacity for change and sends a strong message to those who choose to litter or illegally dump.

Policy and legislative framework

Opportunities for Queensland Government

- Review and update legislation to ensure effective management and administration of the provisions regarding litter and illegal dumping incidents.
- Review of internal policies and procedures to ensure best practice in all management areas to reduce the likelihood of litter and illegal dumping in areas such as compliance operations, land management and operational waste management.
- Seek consultation and incorporate feedback from state and local government on policy reviews to ensure effective operations within the legislative framework.
- Encourage the acceptance and increase opportunities across state and local governments to administer the litter and illegal dumping provisions of the WRR Act.
- Develop the Australian Litter Measure (AusLM) that aims to deliver, for use by all Australian states and territories, a litter measurement methodology that provides accurate and transparent information that informs litter management policy and program development and evaluation.

- Provide support and guidance on the implementation of the Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan to deliver positive litter and illegal dumping outcomes; e.g. fishing waste, plastic bag ban and container refund scheme.

Opportunities for local government

- Accept delegation under the WRR Act to enable broader, consistent enforcement actions across council boundaries.
- Ensure council policies, bylaws and local laws support a proactive approach towards managing litter and illegal dumping.
- Implement relevant council policies such as a waste strategy and associated actions plans.

Opportunities for Queenslanders

- Abide by the policy and legislation in force.



Enabler 5: Governance

*Good **governance** will ensure that opportunities and barriers to change can be managed transparently to deliver optimal anti-litter and illegal dumping outcomes.*

Littering and illegal dumping is a complex issue that impacts a wide array of stakeholders. As such, the jurisdictional responsibility for actioning these events can vary dramatically. In recognition of this, the department will engage with other organisations to work collectively to address the issues.

The department values utilising groups of key stakeholders as an overarching steering committee, where assistance is provided to oversee strategic cross-jurisdictional actions and identify opportunities to work collaboratively on specific litter and illegal dumping concerns.

The Queensland Government recognises the current litter and illegal dumping data limitations in Queensland and endeavours to strengthen and improve the data available by working closely with communities, businesses and local, state and the federal governments. By implementing the collection and reporting of quality data, we can allow for a more accurate and transparent understanding of the full costs, impacts and implications; track our ability to make effective change; and build better responses in managing the problem.

Governance

Opportunities for Queensland Government

- Develop waste management plans for all state entities that are impacted by litter and illegal dumping.
- Develop a State Government Litter and Illegal Dumping Governance Group with membership of key state government departments—to collaborate and provide guidance in managing litter and illegal dumping actions and plans.
- Consider development of a governance body with local government to guide implementation of the Illegal Dumping Partnership Program.
- Build advisory and steering committees to ensure the effectiveness of program design and delivery; such as the Litter and Illegal Dumping Management Framework Advisory Group.
- Initiate and build better data collection and reporting practices to evaluate program effectiveness and build key performance indicators for litter and illegal dumping management, including attitudinal surveys, implementation of AusLM, and standardised reporting tools.

Opportunities for local government

- Ensure grant and partnership funding is administered in line with legislative and contractual requirements.
- Conduct relevant and strategic litter and illegal dumping reduction and collection programs.

Opportunities for Queenslanders

- Ensure grant and partnership funding are delivered and reported on accurately and transparently, in compliance with the agreement requirements.



