

Litter

What is litter?

Litter is any material that has been left where it is not meant to be. It is unsightly and can cause harm to people, wildlife and our waterways. It encourages pest animals as well as the spread of germs and disease. Wasteful and costly to clean up, litter affects the way tourists view our state.



A diver displays litter retrieved from Constitution Dock in Hobart.

Litter includes

- cigarette butts
- bus tickets
- drink containers
- apple cores
- take-away food packaging
- material falling from an unsecured load
- leaves swept into the gutter

Litter is usually thought of as small items, but it also includes abandoned vehicles, household rubbish dumped on the roadside or in the bush, and furniture left on the street by people moving house.

Cigarette butts formed 42% of all the litter counted in Tasmania in KAB National Litter Index 2006

QUESTIONS

- What are the "Dirty Dozen" litter items for Tasmania?
- Conduct a survey of your school grounds and compare the "Dirty Dozen" litter items that you find with the state statistics.
- Create a "litterbug" from the "Dirty Dozen" list.
- Who is Ian Kiernan and what is his connection with litter?
- What are "container deposit schemes", "reverse vending machines" and what's their connection with litter?
- What's the Great Scrap Round Up? What other resources can be recovered from common litter items?



Resources

Clean Up Australia Kids Clean Up Kit

- www.cleanup.com.au
- www.kabq.org.au
- www.planetark.com.au



Impacts of litter

Litter takes many forms and has a range of effects. Many of the materials we casually throw away don't break down - they last in the environment for a long time.

QUESTIONS

- How long do different materials take to decompose?
- Conduct an experiment to compare the biodegradability of different litter items.



Resources

FAQs at www.abc.net.au/science/planetlayers



Litter travels

Rain that falls on roofs, roads and other hard surfaces creates runoff called stormwater. In towns and cities this is channelled by downpipes, drains and gutters into pipes that feed into the natural drainage system of creeks and rivers where it is carried to

the coast. Litter in stormwater can clog drains, affect water quality and impact on plants and animals that live in and along the waterways and coast.

59% of all marine litter is from land-based shoreline and recreational activities

QUESTIONS

- What are some of the measures that can be taken to keep litter out of the stormwater system?
- How is water quality affected by the different types of litter e.g. dog faeces, leaves, car oil?
- How are freshwater and marine life affected by litter?



Resources

Stormwater stencilling kits on loan to schools from Stormwater Management Officer, Todd Milne, Environment Division. Phone 6233 3595
Marine Debris and Waterwatch monitoring kits on loan from Sustainable Living Tasmania 6234 5566
A Gutful of Plastic poster is available as PDF file www.deh.gov.au/coasts
www.environment.nsw.gov.au/stormwater/hsieteachguide/index.htm



30% of domestic waste and around 75% of litter is comprised of packaging



Students who have collected ring pulls for the recovery of titanium for use in artificial limbs for landmine victims



What is being done about littering in Tasmania?

New litter laws coming soon

Tougher laws to be introduced into Tasmania this year reinforce that littering is illegal and those people who litter will be caught and fined. A single fine has been replaced by a range of fines based on the type and amount of litter deposited and whether the offender is an individual or an organisation. Special provisions in the legislation target certain types of littering such as littering from a motor vehicle and incorrect delivery of items commonly known as junk mail.

Members of the public will be able to report littering offences to a telephone hotline or on the internet. An infringement notice will be served to the offender. The public will be informed about the new laws and penalties and how to make a report to the hotline.

Community action and education

Local government, industry organisations and community groups involved with clean-up days provide the primary focus on litter prevention and litter education.

QUESTIONS

- How have the following organisations been involved with litter reduction community action and education in Tasmania?
Tasmanian Conservation Trust;
Tasmanian Litter Reduction Taskforce; Council resource recovery "tip shops; local environmental groups such as Coastcare, Landcare and Waterwatch



Resources

www.tct.org.au
www.southernwaste.com
www.taslandcare.org.au
Community Care groups at www.landcareonline.com
www.cleanup.com.au
www.kabq.org.au



Personal Action - putting the I in action

Put Litter in the Bin!, "Do the right thing", "Think Globally Act Locally". Take responsibility for the litter you make and in all situations - at home, at school, in the community.

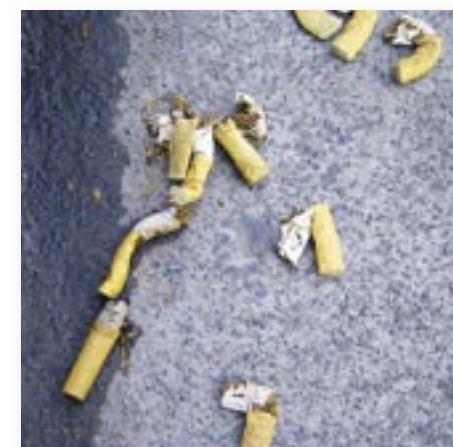
ACTIVITIES

- Investigate litter and its impacts on your school and local environs.
- Act on what you have learned:
 - present (by a report, computer presentation or performance) the key litter issues for your school/local area.
 - devise an action plan to make your school/local area a litter free zone.
 - spread the word - share what you have learned and done with other schools and the wider community.
- Become a Sustainable School - plan and implement a Sustainable School Program
- Take the Up2me Schools Environment Challenge
- Get involved with r.u.MAD ?

Resources

- Sustainable Schools Program planning tool and sample under Teachers' Resources at www.sustainablelivingtasmania.org.au
- Litter Program Co-ordinator, Environment Division, DTAE - Annie Beecroft
- Up2me Schools Environment Challenge - contact Sustainable Living Tasmania Phone 6234 5566
- SWSA - Clean Schools Challenge co-ordinator - Shaun Cousins
- Sustainable Schools Teachers' Network - Nel Smit, Woodbridge District School
- Molesworth Environment Centre co-ordinator - Rachel Viney

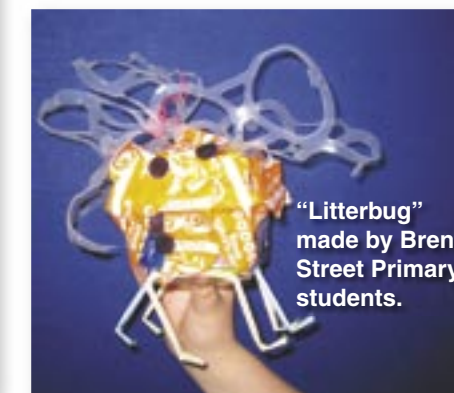
- www.deh.gov.au/education/aussi/index.html
- www.sustainableschools.com.au/sustainableschools/key/
- www.sustainablelivingtasmania.org.au
- www.up2me.com.au
- www.rumad.org.au
- Links from r.u.MAD? website
- Waste and recycling display at Roundhouse, Botanical Gardens



This feature was prepared by the Department of Tourism, Arts and the Environment as part of the Litter Program of the Living Environment Program.

environment living program

Tasmania
Explore the possibilities



"Litterbug" made by Brent Street Primary students.