

Litter Strategy

Issues Paper

The Victorian Litter Action Alliance is the peak body for litter management and prevention in Victoria. It aims to provide a coordinated approach to preventing litter in Victoria across the state and local government, industry and community sectors. There are thirteen members of the Alliance who each play their own part in the fight against litter. For further information about VLAA visit www.litter.vic.gov.au





Message from the Minister for Environment, Water and Climate Change



The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring the environment is central to everything we do because our lifestyle and future prosperity depend on it.

Eradicating litter from our beaches, parks, streets and waterways protects our environment and delivers social and economic benefits to our communities.

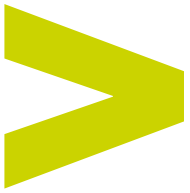
Our community demands a clean environment, and preventing litter means less waste and increased efficiency in the use of our resources.

In 2000 the Government began the most comprehensive environmental reform agenda in Victoria's history to restore and protect our natural assets. Litter is part of this reform agenda and the development of a new litter strategy represents the next step forward in not only reducing litter, but preventing it from occurring in the first place.

The strategy will include an action plan to achieve the Towards Zero Waste Strategy targets of reducing litter on the ground and littering behaviours by 25% by 2014 compared to 2003 levels.

The consultation process is your opportunity to help shape government litter policy to reduce and prevent litter in Victoria. I encourage you to use this Issues Paper, as well as the accompanying Background Paper, as a starting point for your submission.

John Thwaites
Minister for Environment, Water and Climate Change



Contents

PURPOSE OF THIS ISSUES PAPER	3
ABBREVIATIONS	3
1. INTRODUCTION	4
Background	5
Why does Victoria need a new litter strategy?	6
What is litter?	6
What do we know about littering?	6
What are the most common types of litter in Victoria?	7
What are the costs of littering?	7
Responsibilities with regard to litter	8
Current priorities	8
2. WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT LITTER IN VICTORIA	9
Towards Zero Waste – litter targets	9
The 1995 Litter Strategy	9
Current Victorian litter prevention framework	9
Enforcement	11
Communications and advertising campaigns	11
Infrastructure	12
Statewide consistency	12
3. WHAT HAS WORKED AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT	13
Developing future directions	14
4. CHALLENGES AND EMERGING ISSUES	15
Data	15
Streams of litter – gaps in action	15
Behaviour change programs	17
Sectoral gaps	18
Legislation	19
The role of enforcement	19
Coordinated action	19
Focus on market and economic instruments	20
5. HAVING YOUR SAY	21

Purpose of this issues paper

The purpose of this paper is to generate discussion, ideas and solutions to the issues presented. We would like to hear from local governments, manufacturers and other industries including their peak bodies, government departments and agencies, community and environmental groups, individuals and others, about how we can develop and implement an improved litter strategy to reduce and prevent litter in Victoria.

A Background Paper to this Issues Paper has been prepared and provides more detailed information on all of the material covered. It is available for download at www.sustainability.vic.gov.au or by mail on request to the contact listed in section 5.

The development of a new litter strategy for Victoria is supported by the Victorian Litter Action Alliance and is being led by Sustainability Victoria in partnership with the Environment Protection Authority Victoria and the Department of Sustainability and Environment.



Abbreviations

EPA VICTORIA Environment Protection Authority Victoria

NPC National Packaging Covenant

RWVG regional waste management group

TZW *Sustainability in Action: Towards Zero Waste Strategy*

VLAA Victorian Litter Action Alliance

VLAA SURVEY 2004 Victorian Litter Action Alliance *Litter Prevention and Capacity Building Survey 2004*

VLAA SURVEY 2006 Victorian Litter Action Alliance *Litter Prevention and Capacity Building Survey 2006*

VLR Victorian Litter Report



1. Introduction

Littering is an expression of a wasteful society.

Since the mid 1980s, litter prevention and management has received increasing attention in Victoria and nationally because of its impact on the environment, its association with other anti-social behaviour and because most materials that are littered represent a loss to recycling and reuse in a society that aims to reduce its waste and its environmental impact overall.

Internationally, it is recognised that highly littered areas along with poorly maintained infrastructure, such as broken windows and graffiti can be directly linked to an increase in other anti-social behaviour, including crime. Therefore, in taking action to prevent littering behaviour, where possible, and to improve the management of litter overall, the potential benefits extend well beyond the immediate visual impact of the litter itself.

Clean environments lead to a better quality of life for people with less detrimental environmental impact, less crime and less anti-social behaviour. They are also good for animals, birds and aquatic life, with less risk of harm from litter or from eating it. Litter free environments are good for economic prosperity with businesses preferring to do business in clean cities, and people preferring to live in clean neighbourhoods.

This paper examines past and current efforts to reduce litter in Victoria, identifying our successes and areas where further action is required, and seeks the views and ideas of the Victorian community, businesses, industry and government in determining the best ways to significantly reduce litter in Victoria over the next five to ten years.

Clean environments lead to a better quality of life for people.



BACKGROUND

In Victoria, the 1995 Litter Reduction Strategy provided a clear framework for state and local governments and other land managers to reduce and prevent litter. This is being achieved through education, the right infrastructure and systems, supported by regulation and enforcement of the litter laws to communicate the seriousness of litter offences. During the past ten years Victoria has continued to adopt best practice solutions to address specific litter problems.

Local governments play the central role in litter management through provision of litter bins, litter traps, street and beach cleaning, and running targeted litter prevention programs. Local governments alone reported over \$58 million expenditure on litter management in 2004–05, increasing to over \$70 million when extrapolating data for illegal dumping and roadside litter. Local governments are the front line for litter and they are who the community turns to with their concerns about litter in our environment. Many local governments have a municipal litter strategy or are part of a regional strategy under the auspice of their regional waste management group (RWMG).

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring the environment is central to everything we do because our lifestyle and future prosperity depend on it.

In 2000 the government began the most comprehensive environmental reform agenda in Victoria's history to restore and protect our natural assets. Litter is part of this reform agenda. The Victorian Litter Action Alliance (VLAA) was formed in 2000 to coordinate litter prevention and management activities across state and local government, industry and community sectors. This approach, unique in Australia, enables the identification of gaps in the state's litter reduction and prevention activities, minimises overlaps, and maximises information sharing between VLAA's 13 member agencies and representative bodies. It relies on the cooperation and commitment of all members.

VLAA's emphasis has been on the identification and dissemination of best practice in litter, principally through the Litter Champion Program, which commenced in 2002 and aims to strengthen the ability of local governments and other land managers to take action to prevent and eliminate litter.

The Government zeroed in on litter in 2005 in its *Sustainability in Action: Towards Zero Waste Strategy* (TZW) targeting a 25% reduction of litter and littering behaviour to be achieved by 2014. This was followed up in the 2006 *Our Environment Our Future Sustainability Action Statement* with a new litter strategy to be developed to ensure there is less waste and our resources are used more efficiently¹.

Surveys consistently show that most of the population feel that littering is an important environmental issue, and yet people still litter². Over 80% believe litterers should be pursued and fined³ and the community expects governments to take a lead role in preventing litter. They also show that cleaner environments raise expectations for them to be even cleaner placing greater pressure on local governments and others to continually improve the cleanliness of our environment⁴.



Business waste dumped at a street rubbish bin.

WHY DOES VICTORIA NEED A NEW LITTER STRATEGY?

Changing lifestyles have resulted in more choices and the increased consumption of food and drinks away from home, often in public places, with greater potential for items to be littered. Health concerns have led to the phased banning of smoking indoors and changes in building practices have created new challenges to control litter.

Research into littering behaviours during the past decade has shown that littering behaviour is complex; there is no stereotypical litterer and people respond differently to different items and locations. Solutions to littering need to address this complexity – unfortunately a one-size-fits-all program does not exist⁵.

Ongoing challenges include the likely litter impacts of smoking bans in licensed premises from 1 July 2007, public transport litter, waste and recycling infrastructure, illegal dumping and roadside litter, funding and the reliability and adequacy of litter data including evaluation of programs.

While the 1995 Victorian Litter Reduction Strategy retains relevance today, and significant progress has been made, much remains to be done before we achieve a litter free Victoria.

Increased community expectations for an ever cleaner environment, changes to responsibilities, such as those of industry through the National Packaging Covenant (NPC), changes in structures such as the expansion of the RWMGs, as well as changes impacting on the types and volumes of litter, all call for a review of the way litter is managed in Victoria. Government policy, such as the TZW targets and the *Our Environment Our Future* commitment for a revised and updated litter strategy, recognises the importance of litter to the Victorian community and provides a way forward.

WHAT IS LITTER?

Litter is one of the most visible signs of pollution and waste of resources. Litter includes discarded cigarette butts, and a multitude of packaging such as drink containers, fast food and confectionery wrappers, dropped in streets or thrown from cars. It includes items beyond packaging such as bill posters, junk mail, building waste, the misuse and dumping of shopping trolleys, and the illegal dumping of a range of items in a range of locations, such as rubbish deposited by businesses in street litter bins, householders dumping waste in lanes, or in or near creeks and isolated pieces of land.

In Victoria, litter is defined in the *Environment Protection Act 1970* (see Background Paper).

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT LITTERING?

The amount of litter at any point in time is affected by variations in rainfall and wind as well as the usage of public spaces such as streets, parks, roads and beaches. Street cleansing and street bin emptying schedules and the amount of litter traps installed also affect the amount of litter in the environment at any point in time.

In recent years our understanding of littering has expanded, from a simple count of the number of littered items in the environment, to include the analysis of littering behaviour, assessment of context and facilities of a location, attitudes and perception, and actions comparing bin use with littering. The Victorian Government has been at the forefront of the development of a measurement tool encompassing these interrelated factors.

Data and research on litter can either be behavioural – it tries to answer the question “*Why do people litter and what would stop them?*”, or it can be based on analysing the amount of litter in the environment – “*How much litter is out there?*”. In this paper it is assumed that we need both to effectively prevent and, where necessary, manage litter.

There have been a number of studies into the nature of the litter stream and into littering behaviours in recent years, which are outlined in the Background Paper. Common themes that emerge are:

- > Cigarette butts constitute about half of the litter stream when counted by item, but less than 1% of litter volumes.
- > Illegal dumping is a very significant contributor to litter volumes despite not being a prevalent form of litter when counted by item. However, currently counts are not conducted in the type of locations where illegal dumping is most common.
- > Around a quarter to a third of the population litter.
- > Litter itself generates litter and poorly maintained environments generate litter.

There is an ongoing need to improve the quality of the information we have about littering, and to make litter data methodologies consistent, transparent and accessible to all stakeholders.

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON TYPES OF LITTER IN VICTORIA?

In Victoria cigarette butts are the most littered item, and have been since 1997⁶, when they were first included in counts, followed by beverage containers, paper (all types of paper and cardboard, takeaway food packaging), organics (food and animal faeces) and chewing gum.

A number of key aspects of litter are not currently measured by the Victorian Litter Report (VLR). These include identified priorities of local governments and RWMGs, such as illegal dumping, building sites and roadside litter.

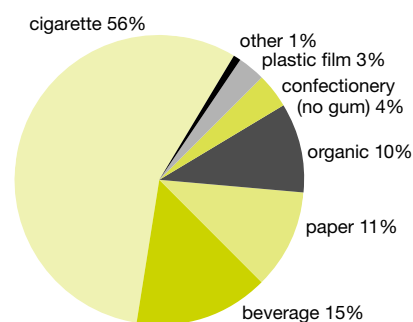
WHAT ARE THE COSTS OF LITTERING?

Local governments bear the main costs of littering, its management and clean up. These costs are social and environmental as well as financial, which are difficult to accurately estimate. Victorian councils alone spend around \$72 million⁷ per annum on providing a litter management and clean up service in Victoria, with 95% allocated to litter management and 5% to litter prevention⁸.

A significant proportion of litter management expenditure borne by local governments includes sweeping streets and providing a street litter bin service. Street litter bins contain rubbish disposed of correctly while street sweeping and



Victorian Litter Report 2005 – Litter Count



Breakdown of Materials in
Victorian Litter Report 2005



Leaf and tree litter at risk of being washed into the stormwater drain.

litter traps capture waste that has not been disposed of correctly, that is, it is littered in the streets and if not swept up, is blown or washed into the stormwater system. Both street sweeping and litter traps capture much organic matter, such as leaves, that are not litter, so it is difficult to estimate the proportion of litter that is collected as part of this service. Even if litter was eradicated street sweeping and litter traps would be required to collect natural refuse.

Much of the cost of litter is not financial, as the social and environmental costs of degraded environments, injured wildlife and aquatic creatures, and impacts on liveability such as reduced community safety and ownership of neighbourhoods, are difficult to measure in dollars.

RESPONSIBILITIES WITH REGARD TO LITTER

Victoria's Environment Protection Act enshrines the principle of shared responsibility; that protection of the environment is a responsibility shared by all levels of government, industry, business, communities and the people of Victoria.

As with any law, all individuals, government agencies and businesses have a legal responsibility to comply with the Environment Protection Act and any applicable local laws. This includes a responsibility to clean and remove waste from the land under their control and to ensure that litter does not result from business operations or individual actions.

The State Government is responsible for the statutory framework for litter including regulation and penalties, data collection and policy. A range of government bodies are involved in this including Sustainability Victoria, EPA and the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

Local governments⁹ are required to promote the social, economic and environmental viability and sustainability of the municipal district, to ensure that resources are used efficiently and effectively and services are provided in accordance with the Best Value Principles to best meet the needs of the local community, and to improve the overall quality of life of people in the local community. Maintaining clean communities and providing efficient waste collection services are part of these responsibilities and are often a top priority for residents.

While manufacturers may have specific responsibilities under individual NPC Action Plans to reduce the litter impacts of their products, packaging continues to be highly represented in the litter stream. (See the Background Paper for further details on the NPC, an industry and government agreement which has been the leading instrument for managing the environmental impacts of consumer packaging in Australia since 1999.)

CURRENT PRIORITIES

Litter priorities have been determined by VLAA using the VLR, Sustainability Victoria's *Local Government Data Collection*, the VLAA 2004 and 2006 *Litter Prevention and Capacity Building Surveys* of local governments and RWMGs, and other information obtained from consultation with VLAA members, local governments and RWMGs.

Analysis of this data shows that cigarette butts, illegal dumping, roadside litter and dog poo are the major problems (further details on these forms of litter are contained in the Background Paper).

Programs and resources targeting these priorities are identified in VLAA's annual business plan and Litter Champion Program.



2. What we are doing about litter in Victoria

TOWARDS ZERO WASTE – LITTER TARGETS

The Victorian Government's TZW strategy, released in 2005, is a ten year plan to reduce the amount of waste generated in Victoria, increase the amount of materials for recycling and reprocessing and reduce damage to our environment caused by waste. A key target of the strategy is to reduce litter on the ground and littering behaviour by 25% by 2014 compared to 2003 levels. Measurement to date shows we are on track to meet the target.

THE 1995 LITTER STRATEGY

The Victorian Litter Reduction Strategy has provided the directions for the prevention and management of litter since 1995. The statewide strategy identified an action plan across four broad areas: improved data, focused community education, systematic land management and product stewardship.

Outcomes of the 1995 strategy included targeted advertising campaigns by the EPA, 'If they fling it, ring it', and EcoRecycle's 'Do your bit. Bin it'; development of guidelines to reduce occupation-related littering such as the collection of recyclables; and a strong focus on protecting waterways through the installation of infrastructure and an improved management system. More detail about the outcomes can be found in the Background Paper.

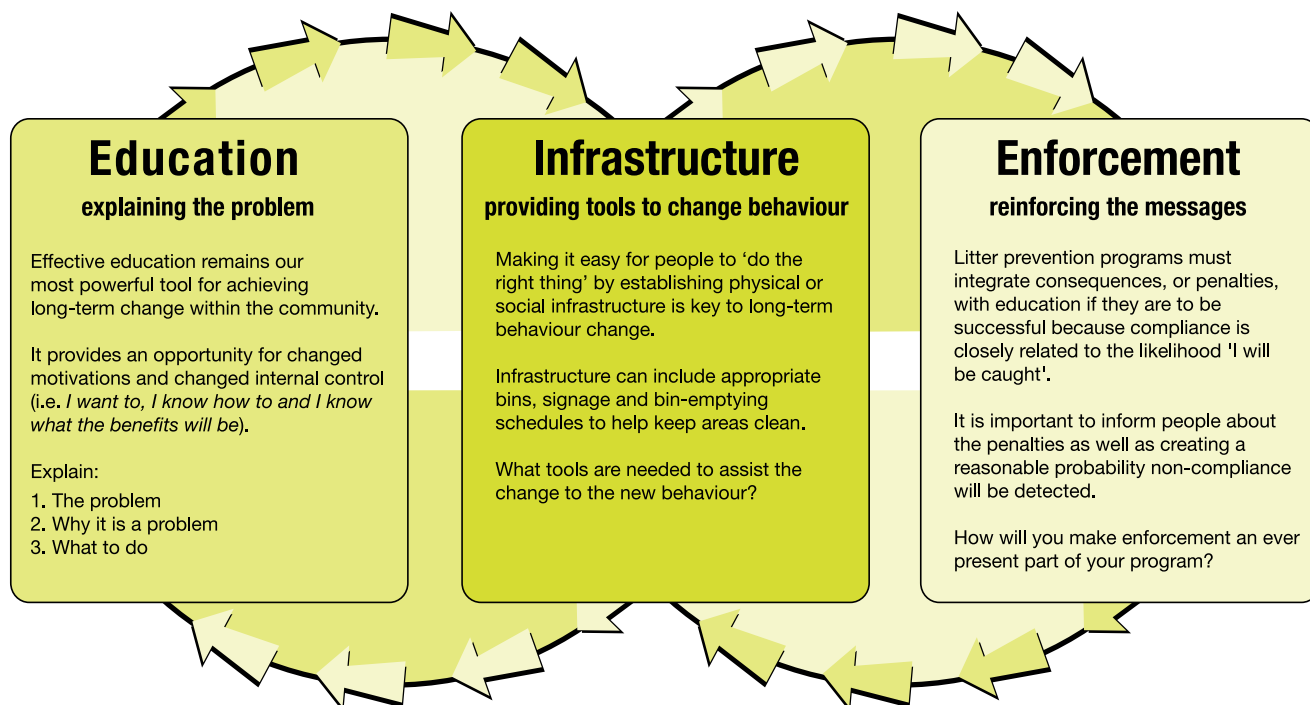
CURRENT VICTORIAN LITTER PREVENTION FRAMEWORK

The current litter prevention and reduction framework builds on the solid foundations of the 1995 strategy. It involves a complementary set of approaches including:

- > Enforcement provisions in the Environment Protection Act.
- > The principle of shared responsibility enshrined in the Act.
- > The identification and dissemination of best practice in litter.
- > Information and education programs focused on achieving behaviour change to prevent litter provided by a number of government and non-government agencies.
- > Close liaison and cooperation between key organisations involved in litter issues.
- > A range of support and resources for local governments, and other land managers, to implement best practice litter prevention programs.
- > Measurement of litter and littering behaviour to monitor the performance of programs.

Changing littering behaviours

Diagram 1 – Three critical elements



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In Victoria, there has been an increased focus on working towards a litter free Victoria by stopping litter at the source, and building the skills of local governments and other land managers to implement best practice litter prevention programs. This has been led by VLAA and its Litter Champion Program, which commenced in 2002, and the Sustainability Victoria Litter Prevention Grants Program.

In this context, there has been a strong focus on the provision of the best practice litter prevention behaviour change programs which must be based on research of the problem, include a mix of education, infrastructure and enforcement, represented graphically above, and be supported by strong communications and persuasive incentives to build individual and community ownership of the problem, and include program evaluation.

A range of initiatives have been implemented during the life of the 1995 strategy which are detailed in the Background Paper and include:

- > Development of VLAA best practice litter prevention kits on cigarette butts, building sites, dog poo, illegal dumping, evaluation and a campaign toolkit.
- > A one-stop-shop litter website.
- > Capacity building workshops based on the kits and other litter issues.
- > Development of other programs based on the best practice model including a range of programs targeting the types of illegal dumping.
- > Expansion of the Victorian RWMG structure across the state, which included a focus on litter.

ENFORCEMENT

The Victorian Government strengthened the state's litter laws in 2002 which has led to greater enforcement of the laws across Victoria and increased awareness by the Victorian community that littering is an offence accompanied by a range of penalties. These changes have virtually eradicated litter resulting from car windscreen advertising and unsolicited advertising material in letterboxes displaying a 'no junk mail' sign.

Educating the community and businesses about the litter laws is the first step in any enforcement program, followed by warnings and then the issuing of penalties to those who refuse to comply. Education is one of the most powerful tools for behaviour change, and enforcement is a very powerful educational tool.

The Victorian state and local governments have taken a strong stand on enforcement of litter and initiatives include:

- > EPA Victoria's Litter Report Line where ordinary people report littering from vehicles. Almost 22,000 fines were issued in 2004–05, up 20% from the previous year.
- > Fines issued by local governments have increased 500% over the five year period from 2000 to 2005.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS

The Victorian Government has recognised the important role of communications and advertising in litter programs, particularly that consistent statewide messages are the most effective, through running a series of campaigns to support local government programs. VLAA also continues its leadership role to coordinate communications programs and provide additional resources.

Since 1995, the focus of campaigns has moved from simply raising general awareness of littering to targeted litter programs promoting specific behaviour changes. Initiatives include:

- > EPA Victoria's Litter Report Line annual advertising campaign
- > The Victorian Government's \$1.6 million Commonwealth Games Litter Campaign
- > VLAA Litter Campaign Toolkit
- > Sustainability Victoria's \$1.3 million Butt Litter Campaign for 2007
- > A small number of programs conducted in languages other than English.

The Victorian Government's Commonwealth Games Litter Campaign lived on long after the Games.





The right infrastructure in the right place makes it easy for people to do the right thing.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Providing the right tools to make it as easy as possible for people to put their waste in the bin, or to carry it to the next available bin, even if that is at home, is one of the key elements of a litter prevention program. Two programs designed to obtain maximum infrastructure performance and efficiency to assist initiatives by local governments and others are:

- > BInS (Bin Infrastructure System) developed by the Product Stewardship Forum
- > BInStructure by Community Change.

Organisations that have used these programs have increased bin use, reduced littering and saved money through achieving more efficient bin placement and servicing. More information on infrastructure is contained in the Background Paper.

STATEWIDE CONSISTENCY

As identified in the 1995 strategy, consistent statewide approaches provide greater effectiveness of programs, compared to ad hoc local solutions which may not be effective and often waste resources through 'reinventing the wheel', a lack of best practice and other inefficiencies. Consistency has been achieved through the development of codes of practice, guidelines and model contracts or standard contract clauses. Initiatives include:

- > Local Government Recyclables Collection Service Model Contract
- > Landfill Litter Controls
- > Urban Stormwater Best Practice Environmental Guidelines
- > Roadside Signage Guidelines
- > Building Sites Code of Practice for Litter and Stormwater Pollution Control.



3. What has worked and areas for improvement

Victoria's behaviour change approach to litter prevention and reduction has proven to be most effective when the best practice principles are followed. As stated above and discussed in greater detail in the Background Paper, this includes programs that combine solid research; the right mix of education, infrastructure, enforcement, communications, incentives, community participation and evaluation; and that are delivered consistently across the state. The most successful programs are judged on the results of their evaluation and the benefits to the community and the organisation, mostly local governments.

Success has been achieved through VLAA's Litter Champion Program which has proven to be very effective in building the capacity of local governments and other land managers to implement effective litter prevention programs. VLAA litter prevention kits were developed for the identified priorities of cigarette butts, building sites, dog poo, illegal dumping, evaluation and running a campaign. Extensive promotion of the kits, supported by skills-based workshops, has resulted in wide-ranging implementation by local governments and RWMGs, as confirmed by the 2004 and 2006 VLAA surveys.

The push to target specific litter items or behaviours has successfully shifted the main focus of litter prevention programs away from general litter programs favoured in the past. These targeted programs successfully reduced litter and there is consistency between the focus of these programs and the state's litter priorities. In addition, the most commonly implemented programs of local governments and RWMGs reflect the priority issues for which resources had been developed – cigarette butts, illegal dumping, plastic bags, coastal and roadside litter and dog poo.

Funding, such as Sustainability Victoria's litter prevention grants, has assisted program implementation to address priority items, particularly when supported by associated capacity building activities¹⁰.

Overall, the behaviour change model has been demonstrably successful in Victoria and organisational change has occurred. For example, organisations where education, investigation and enforcement is part of everyday business for litter priorities such as illegal dumping and bill posting, have shown sustained success resulting in ongoing cost savings in litter management and improved environments. However, these successes have not been replicated across the state.

Analysis of programs and issues has identified areas that require further improvement, and these are listed in greater detail in the Background Paper. Further knowledge is required in some areas in order to develop programs to address problems, for example, a lack of data to quantify the extent of a problem, or improved evaluation of programs to determine their effectiveness. Increased coordination of all agencies involved in litter could achieve more effective outcomes. Anticipation of new litter problems accompanied by plans



Case Study

The City of Greater Dandenong runs a program to stop illegal dumping in residential streets. The education and investigation programs involves quarantining the dumped rubbish with high visibility barricade tape or stickers stating that the 'dumped rubbish is under investigation'. Seventy five per cent of items are removed within 72 hours of taping, the community have embraced the program and report dumping, and the council saves over \$200,000 per year in cleaning up dumped rubbish. This system of education and warnings does not have to result in the issuing of fines to be effective and highlights the important role of each of these elements in the enforcement process. This successful program, based on those run in NSW, has been adopted by other councils across the state.

**Key issues for consideration**

While considering the remainder of the paper please consider these overarching questions:

1. Who is responsible for cleaning up and preventing litter?
2. Who should coordinate programs?
3. How should programs be funded?
4. Given finite resources, what is the best method to determine priorities?

to reduce their impacts, such as the current cigarette butt litter campaign coinciding with the smoking ban in licensed premises, provide a good opportunity for this.

Unfortunately, time-limited programs, while reducing and preventing litter for their duration, have not resulted in the sustained behaviour change of individuals, or achieved organisational change. Equally, we have many examples of effective programs which, for whatever reason, have only been implemented by a small number of councils but would bring major improvements if systemised and delivered across the state.

While there has been a shift in focus from clean up to prevention, this has not translated widely into funding for prevention programs. The use of enforcement has improved but could be used more widely across the state, particularly for intransigent problems.

Analysis of what has and has not worked, shows that Victoria's approach, focusing on behaviour change, with targeted resources for identified priorities, is most successful when program delivery is consistent across the state, is ongoing, involves simple solutions that are part of everyday business, is supported by long-term capacity building; and where enforcement has a strong presence.

DEVELOPING FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The 1995 strategy has provided solid foundations for the litter framework for Victoria which has resulted in much success. The need to develop an Action Plan to achieve the Victorian Government's Towards Zero Waste target to reduce litter and littering behaviours by 25% by 2014, coupled with a range of challenges and emerging issues, as well as increased knowledge of best practice from Australia and around the world, all signal the need for an up to date Litter Strategy for Victoria.

A review of what we have done, what has and has not worked, and the identification of gaps, challenges and emerging issues, provides the ingredients for the new litter strategy. The objective of any new litter strategy would be to meet the TZW target through the implementation of a range of initiatives ranging from supporting greater effectiveness of local governments in their litter programs, raising awareness through to behaviour change, and enforcement, across the community, business, industry and government sectors assessed by performance based measurement. The Background Paper includes details on initiatives from interstate and overseas that might be applicable to Victoria.

The new strategy will ensure Victoria not only achieves its commitments, as reflected by attaining the TZW litter target but cultivates a culture within the Victorian community, industry and business sectors that does not tolerate littering behaviour or the generation of litter from business practices. It would ensure change is entrenched across all sectors and litter is prevented, avoiding the need for continual clean up, so that change is sustained well beyond 2014.

It would achieve a clean and safe environment through the prevention of litter, improved litter management practices and the coordination of local and state government programs with integrated litter prevention strategies in key government initiatives.



4. Challenges and emerging issues

This section outlines some of the challenges and emerging issues that have been identified through the Victorian Litter Report, Sustainability Victoria's *Local Government Data Collection*, the VLAA *Litter Prevention and Capacity Building Surveys 2004 and 2006*, and other information obtained from research and analysis, direct contact with VLAA members, local governments and regional waste management groups.

Greater detail of all these items is contained in the Background Paper.

DATA

It was noted in the 1995 Strategy that the limited availability of reliable data on the litter stream causes uncertainty about the precise nature of litter. Systematic monitoring of litter is needed to measure performance and ongoing refinement to assist in the preparation of maintenance regimes and contingency plans by local governments and to inform state policy development.

Efforts since 1995 have improved the measurement of litter. However, there is room for further work to improve the adequacy, analysis and quality of the data, as well as the evaluation of programs. A full discussion is available in the Background Paper.

STREAMS OF LITTER – GAPS IN ACTION

The following areas identify what has currently slipped through the gaps or which need strengthening. They are drawn from the research mentioned above and are not meant to be definitive. The purpose of this paper is to seek your views on gaps.

Packaging

Improvements in design for the environment have been made through the NPC, such as moving away from polystyrene to paper and other types of packaging. However, further work with the packaging sector is required to ensure the spread of these changes occurs across the sector.

Roadside litter

Roadside litter has been of concern for some time and is the sixth most commonly implemented program reported in the 2006 VLAA survey. The cost to local governments of cleaning up road side litter increased by nearly 170 % in 2004–05 compared to the previous year while the tonnage collected doubled¹¹.

Illegal dumping

Illegal dumping is the second biggest litter problem to councils and RWMGs, and a major issue for other land managers as reported in the 2006 VLAA Survey. Waste and hazardous materials are dumped illegally on roadsides, outside houses and multi-unit dwellings, on open land, around charity bins, as well as commercially¹².



Key issues for consideration

1. Why does litter need to be measured?
2. What is the best way to meet these needs?



Belongings no longer wanted dumped illegally in a residential street.



Key issues for consideration

3. What are the gaps or areas for improvement in individual litter streams?
4. What should be done to address them?

Reductions in illegal dumping have occurred at councils, such as Greater Dandenong, where education, investigation and enforcement programs operate as part of everyday business, supported by enlisting the help of the community to report illegal dumping and make it socially unacceptable. Cost savings and community improvements have also resulted from such programs. However, this model needs to be implemented more broadly across the state as the extrapolated figure for the cost to councils of cleaning up *both* roadside litter and illegal dumping in 2004–2005 was \$18 million up from \$8 million the previous year.¹³

Infrastructure

A significant proportion of the surveys and data indicate a need for improved infrastructure to prevent littering. Technological advances in waste and infrastructure also need to be considered.

The mX newspaper

mX is a free newspaper that is handed out to commuters on weekday afternoons. The littering of mX and the lack of recycling of mX has been a source of constant complaints to ministers, government departments and the media by individuals as well as councils and other organisations.

Cigarette butts

The Government has introduced phased legislation banning indoor smoking since 2001 to protect individuals from the effects of passive smoking. Prior to the introduction of state legislation, many employers, such as the state government, introduced policies banning smoking in workplaces as far back as the 1980s. The increase in the number of smokers outdoors has led to increased cigarette butt litter¹⁴. The smoking ban in licensed premises from 1 July 2007 has the potential to increase cigarette butt litter.

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAMS

The 1995 strategy has guided Victoria's behaviour change approach to litter prevention and management. Effective behaviour change programs require a long term commitment as behaviours cannot generally be changed by running one time-limited program. Programs that rely on external funding tend to be one-off, often resulting in high levels of litter reduction during the program, changes which tend not to be sustained after the program is finished.

Capacity building

Building the capacity of local governments and other land managers to implement effective litter prevention programs has been achieved through the development of program resources, the provision of skills-based workshops, promotion of successful pilot programs, key success factors, the litter website and ongoing support.

Funding

Effective programs are more likely to be implemented when supported by incentive funding and capacity building events or when organisational change has been achieved, like at the City of Greater Dandenong, and funding is part of the annual council budget. Councils currently spent 95% of the total litter budget on litter management and 5% on litter prevention yet litter prevention is the clear priority within the current policy settings in Victoria.

Communications

Local government litter prevention activity is best supported by statewide campaigns, communications and resource materials to achieve consistency and reduce duplication.

Community and individuals

As stated in the beginning, litter is a serious issue with widespread impacts on the community and liveability. The community want less litter and an ever cleaner environment. There are many opportunities to enlist the community to share the responsibility to prevent and reduce litter. This involvement needs to be built upon so that the burden for litter does not fall on one body. A range of actions can be taken to harness the energy of the community to ensure a clean environment and to make litter socially unacceptable. These include ensuring neighbourhoods are kept litter free, reporting litter problems, such as illegal dumping and litter spillages from waste collections, to the relevant authority, reporting litterers to the EPA, and encouraging others to do the right thing, such as dog owners to pick up after their dogs.



Key issues for consideration

5. What strategies are likely to control cigarette butt litter resulting from the smoking bans?



Key issues for consideration

6. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the behaviour change approach to prevent and reduce litter?
7. What further strategies would be effective?



Key issues for consideration

8. What is the right mix for expenditure on litter prevention and litter management?
9. How should litter prevention and management be funded?



Key issues for consideration

10. How can communications be maximised across Victoria?



Key issues for consideration

11. What are the roles and responsibilities of individuals with regard to litter?



Inappropriately stored commercial waste at the rear of an inner city fast food outlet.

SECTORAL GAPS

The commercial sector

Businesses in shopping strips have been identified as a large contributor to the litter stream and stormwater pollution, yet to date this sector has received little attention. Litter is largely caused by poor storage of materials out the back as well as front of shop practices.

There is a strong need to develop strategies and infrastructure for the commercial sector to reduce its contribution to landfill, to improve packaging to reduce littering, and to provide clear expectations of waste management practices to this sector.

Transport sector

Transport hubs, railway lines, tram stops and station platforms are all locations identified as litter hot spots in surveys and complaints by individuals and organisations such as councils. Transport locations recorded the highest littering rate (40%) of all locations in the VLR 2005 and were second (47%) only to events in 2003.

Improvements have been made since System Upkeep Plans specifying cleaning regimes were introduced for Connex and Yarra Trams. However, further work is required to reduce, and in particular prevent, litter in these locations.

Key issues for consideration

12. What do you think are the responsibility of industry in terms of managing their business operations or infrastructure they manage?



LEGISLATION

Both state and local legislation exists to regulate the control of litter.

The benefit of a consistent statewide approach is that it sends one set of messages about objectives and acceptable standards, it provides uniformity of requirements and greater efficiency in promoting change through statewide campaigns across all sectors. It also makes it easier to develop and deliver community and industry-wide capacity building programs and provides a shared vision across municipalities and state agencies for achieving environmental protection objectives, thereby increasing the potential for collaboration and information sharing.

THE ROLE OF ENFORCEMENT

There is strong community support for fining litterers with surveys showing around 80% of Victorians believe it is appropriate to impose fines on those that litter¹⁵.

Fines are set at a level to reflect the severity of the offence which includes a component of the consequence/s and the danger to society. Victorian penalties are indexed annually to the Consumer Price Index. Increasing the penalties for litter is often cited as a tool to deter litterers.

In Victoria the authority issuing the fine collects the revenue. This provides an incentive to councils to police littering in their municipality. Some Australian states have a separate schedule of litter fines for corporations and individuals and this is something that could be considered in Victoria. See the Background Paper for the Victorian fine schedule and information about other states.

Over 40% of local governments run an enforcement program as part of their normal every day business. Many other local governments actively promote the EPA Litter Report Line as their main enforcement tool.

COORDINATED ACTION

The 1995 Litter Reduction Strategy identified the need for a number of statewide codes of practice and consistent and coordinated action to assist land managers in litter management. A number of initiatives have been implemented and litter management might benefit from the development of codes of practice, including performance and monitoring measures, for street sweeping/cleaning, street bin placement and servicing and product design.

Victoria lacks a whole-of-government approach to litter. Historically, litter has been treated as a waste issue. However, it also has a variety of social, environmental, visual and financial dimensions. There is an opportunity to integrate litter prevention into other, related programs to achieve a joint benefit. For example, neighbourhood renewal, public transport, public place planning and furniture, including recycling and rubbish bins, and community safety.

In a whole-of-government approach in the United Kingdom, litter is integrated across other government areas under 'local environmental quality'. These links have led to more effective and efficient across-government action to address litter and environmental crime, compared to when the portfolio sat in waste.



Key issues for consideration

13. Are there any areas not adequately covered by the existing legislation?
14. Are there any areas where enforcement and prosecution could be strengthened?



Key issues for consideration

15. What do you think about the penalties and level of fines for litter?



Key issues for consideration

16. What codes of practice or guidelines, if any, might assist in the prevention and reduction of litter?
17. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of a whole-of-government approach to litter and how could this be achieved?



Permanent litter signs on the Monash Freeway.



Key issues for consideration

18. Are there any economic instrument/s that might help reduce and prevent litter in Victoria?

FOCUS ON MARKET AND ECONOMIC INSTRUMENTS

Economic, or market-based, instruments can be price-based such as up-front charges or advance disposal fees, deposit-refund schemes, user charges, environmental taxes, subsidies and tax concessions, or they can be quantity-based, for example, providing limits to the quantity of waste to landfill. Many of these instruments aim to attach a price, or value, to commonly discarded items in order to encourage people to take more care in their use and disposal.

They are one set of a range of policy implementation tools that encourage behaviour through market signals rather than through prescriptive regulation. They are intended to make those people or businesses responsible for causing environmental damage bear the cost of the impacts of that behaviour, and those who benefit from environmentally damaging behaviour pay according to the proportion of the benefits that they receive¹⁶.

Examples include the Victorian Landfill Levy, allocation of revenue back into recycling systems and landfill bans and the National Oil Product Stewardship Scheme.



5. Having your say

To assist the Victorian Government to develop a new litter strategy for Victoria a number of issues have been identified throughout this paper. Comments are invited in relation to these issues, as well as broader comments, to inform the development of the new litter strategy.

The purpose of this paper is to generate discussion, ideas and solutions to the issues presented. We would like to hear from local governments, manufacturers and other industries including their peak bodies, government departments and agencies, community and environmental groups, individuals and others, about how we can develop and implement an improved litter strategy to reduce and prevent litter in Victoria.

A Background Paper to this Issues Paper has been prepared and provides more detailed information on all of the material covered. It is available for download from the Sustainability Victoria website or upon request by telephoning 03 8286 8700 or emailing litterstrategy@sustainability.vic.gov.au

The public consultation commences on Monday 5 March 2007 and closes at 4.00pm on Friday 13 April 2007. A series of forums to discuss the Issues Paper will be held during this time.

Submissions must be made using the Submission Guide which includes a 'Cover Sheet' as well as a list of the key issues for consideration identified in Sections 3 and 4.

All submissions must contain the completed 'Cover Sheet', clearly indicating a contact name and details, and noting if the submission is to be treated confidentially. Anonymous submissions will not be accepted.

Submissions on the Issues Paper will be accepted up until 4.00 pm on Friday 13 April 2007. Submissions need to be marked **Submission to Victorian Litter Strategy** and can be:

- > Mailed to:
Karen Cosson
Sustainability Victoria
Urban Workshop
Level 28
50 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne 3000
- > Emailed to:
litterstrategy@sustainability.vic.gov.au
- > Delivered to:
Karen Cosson
Sustainability Victoria
Urban Workshop
50 Lonsdale Street
Level B1 Mailroom (entry via Little Lonsdale Street)
Melbourne 3000



Closing date for submissions

4.00pm Friday 13 April 2007



Download the:

- > Issues Paper
 - > Background Paper
 - > Submission Guide
 - > Public Consultation Schedule
- at www.sustainability.vic.gov.au

Endnotes

- ¹ Department of Sustainability and Environment, 2006, *Our Environment Our Future: Sustainability Action Statement 2006* Action 10.5, Melbourne.
- ² Community Change, 2001, *Measuring Environmentally Desirable Behaviour in Australia: Littering Behaviour Study III*, A Beverage Industry Environment Council report, Pyrmont, Sydney.
- ³ Sustainability Victoria, 2005, *Litter Campaign Market Research*, report prepared by Open Mind Research Group; EPA Victoria, 2006, *Litter Report Line Advertising: Metropolitan & Regional Campaign Evaluation*, report prepared by Quantum Market Research; Gippsland Regional Waste Management Group, 2006, *Community Attitudes and Behaviours for Sustainable Waste Disposal in the Gippsland Region*, reported prepared by IPSOS Consultants; New South Wales Environmental Protection Authority, 2002, *'Don't be a tosser' Campaign Evaluation*.
- ⁴ Sustainability Victoria, 2005, *Victorian Litter Report 2005*, report prepared by Community Change, Melbourne.
- ⁵ Community Change, 2002, *Littering Behaviour Study Five, National Benchmark 2002*, Beverage Industry Environment Council report, Pyrmont, Sydney.
- ⁶ *ibid*
- ⁷ Local governments reported a total expenditure of \$58,406,675 for litter maintenance (street litter and butt bins and litter traps), street sweeping services and cleaning up bill posters, illegally dumped rubbish and roadside litter. Not all local governments were able to provide data on all clean up services: 25% provided illegal dumping costs and 20% provided roadside litter costs totalling around \$4.5 million. This figure was extrapolated to estimate the costs of these two activities for the whole state, resulting in a figure of \$18 million. When added to the other reported expenditure (\$53,963,634 excluding the reported costs for these two activities) the total expenditure by local government is almost \$72 million.
- ⁸ Sustainability Victoria, 2006, *Analysis of Litter Prevention and Management in Victoria*, report prepared by Hyder Consulting, unpublished.
- ⁹ *Local Government Act 1989*.
- ¹⁰ Victorian Litter Action Alliance, 2004, *Victorian Litter Action Alliance Litter Prevention and Capacity Building Survey 2002–2004*, Melbourne.
- ¹¹ Sustainability Victoria, 2006, *Analysis of the 2001–2005 Trends of the Sustainability Victoria Local Government Data Collection*, unpublished.
- ¹² Victorian Litter Action Alliance, 2006, *Victorian Litter Action Alliance Litter Prevention and Capacity Building Survey 2004–2006*, Melbourne.
- ¹³ Sustainability Victoria, 2006, *Analysis of the 2001–2005 Trends of the Sustainability Victoria Local Government Data Collection*.
- ¹⁴ Victorian Litter Action Alliance, 2006, *Victorian Litter Action Alliance Litter Prevention and Capacity Building Survey 2004–2006*, Melbourne.
- ¹⁵ Sustainability Victoria, 2005, *Litter Campaign Market Research*, report prepared by Open Mind Research Group; EPA Victoria, 2006, *Litter Report Line Advertising: Metropolitan & Regional Campaign Evaluation*, report prepared by Quantum Market Research; Gippsland Regional Waste Management Group, 2006, *Community Attitudes and Behaviours for Sustainable Waste Disposal in the Gippsland Region*, reported prepared by IPSOS Consultants.
- ¹⁶ Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, 2006, *Changing Behaviour. Economic Instruments in the Management of Waste*, PCE, Wellington.

Key issues for consideration

Please consider these overarching questions

1. Who is responsible for cleaning up and preventing litter?
2. Who should coordinate programs?
3. How should programs be funded?
4. Given finite resources, what is the best method to determine priorities?

Quick reference to the 18 key issues identified in the paper

1. Why does litter need to be measured?
2. What is the best way to meet these needs?
3. What are the gaps or areas for improvement in individual litter streams?
4. What should be done to address them?
5. What strategies are likely to control cigarette butt litter resulting from the smoking bans?
6. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the behaviour change approach to prevent and reduce litter?
7. What further strategies would be effective?
8. What is the right mix for expenditure on litter prevention and litter management?
9. How should litter prevention and management be funded?
10. How can communications be maximised across Victoria?
11. What are the roles and responsibilities of individuals with regard to litter?
12. What do you think are the responsibilities of industry in terms of managing the business operations or infrastructure they manage?
13. Are there any areas not adequately covered by the existing legislation?
14. Are there any areas where enforcement and prosecution could be strengthened?
15. What do you think about the penalties and level of fines for litter?
16. What codes of practice or guidelines, if any, might assist in the prevention and reduction of litter?
17. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of a whole-of-government approach to litter and how could this be achieved?
18. Are there any economic instrument/s that might help reduce and prevent litter in Victoria?

Notes:

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