

09 Summary

Creating Cleaner, Safer Places

Working together to
remove litter from
Victoria's environment

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Since the mid 1980s, the prevalence of litter has received increasing attention because of its environmental impact and association with anti-social behaviour. In a society which aims to reduce its overall waste and environmental impact, most litter represents a loss to recycling and reuse opportunities.

Whether it is food packaging, plastic bags, cigarette butts, dog poo or syringes, litter is one of the most visible signs of pollution and its impact is substantial.

Acknowledging environmental impacts and wasted resources from littering, the Victorian Government in 2005 addressed litter as part of its *Sustainability in Action: Towards Zero Waste Strategy* (TZW) – setting a target to improve littering behaviours by 25% by 2014, compared to 2003 levels.

In 2006, the Victorian Government committed to developing a new Victorian litter strategy to achieve the TZW target.

This new strategy represents the next step in litter prevention and litter management and sets the directions to support Victoria to achieve its commitments.

Objectives

The objectives of the strategy are to prevent litter and improve litter management practices to meet the TZW littering behaviour target and achieve clean and safe public places.

The objectives will be achieved by government, industry and community sectors working together to meet their shared responsibility to achieve a litter-free Victoria.

What does the strategy cover?

The strategy outlines where we've come from, what we have achieved and what we need to do. It sets out a vision for how we can get there together.

Creating cleaner, safer places for all Victorians to share is the focal point for this strategy. Accordingly, it targets our shared places including train stations, parks and sporting grounds, forests, beaches, streets, roadsides and shopping centres. It also targets particular littering activities which may not always occur in public spaces, but nevertheless have a cost, such as building site littering and illegal dumping.

The strategy provides information about littering and litterers and notes the importance of shared responsibility and partnerships, with all players – all levels of government, industry, business, communities and individuals – working together to remove litter.

A recent example is the joining of Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria (KABV) with Sustainability Victoria. This creates an opportunity to engage a wider range of regional and metropolitan communities to prevent and remove litter under the iconic Keep Australia Beautiful (KAB) brand.

The strategic directions outlined in this document build on the broad range of current litter management practices and programs, and include expanded and new actions to fill identified gaps to move towards meeting the TZW target.

The three key inter-related elements of this strategy are:

- education
- infrastructure
- enforcement.

To change littering behaviour, all three elements must be in place and be complementary. They need to be adaptable to local conditions and need to include incentives, communication activities and evaluation. These elements characterise Victoria's approach to litter prevention.

An integrated strategy

The strategy outlines four areas for future directions:

- 1 a coordinated statewide approach
- 2 improved litter prevention and management
- 3 behavioural change
- 4 improved measurement and reporting.

Achieving cleaner, safer public places requires complementary action across all these areas.

The first action area, **a coordinated statewide approach**, provides the umbrella for future action on the prevention, management and removal of litter.

The second and third action areas, **improved litter prevention** and **management and behavioural change**, provide the opportunity for coordinated, targeted action for each of the public places identified as priorities in this strategy.

The fourth action area, **improved measurement and reporting**, supports the overall strategy and provides the critical information we need to inform, evaluate and monitor all future actions under this strategy.

A summary of the major actions that form the core of *Creating Cleaner, Safer Places* is outlined below.

1 Statewide action to reduce litter from Victoria's environment

Litter actions	Description	Places
Victoria Litter Action Plan	This plan will integrate the current and proposed actions of governments, industry and the community to prevent and manage litter in our public places. It will aim to maximise outcomes by coordinated, joint action and reduced duplication.	The plan will cover the range of public places across metropolitan and regional Victoria.
Whole-of-government approach	This approach aims to ensure that stakeholder roles are clear, duplication of work is avoided, and litter is considered in the planning of, where appropriate, new government policy and initiatives.	The approach will be implemented across a range of government departments in partnership with land owners.
Investigate establishing a central public reporting system for the public to report littering and illegal dumping	This central reporting system could draw together existing systems and provide a central point for reporting littering.	This system will cover all forms of littering in parks, forests, streets and roadsides, rivers and beaches.
Investigate establishing an illegal dumping database for authorities to compile information about illegally dumped materials	This database could help better quantify the extent of the problem and associated management costs, and assist in new strategies to prevent illegal dumping.	This database will include all forms of illegal dumping in parks, forests, streets and roadsides, rivers, beaches and other public places.
Work with local governments to establish a regional illegal dumping squad for councils	The aim of this initiative is to partner with regional local governments to trial an illegal dumping squad, supported through statewide enforcement provisions.	The primary focus of this initiative is on places where most illegal dumping occurs.

2 Improved litter prevention and management

Litter actions	Description	Places
Street sweeping guidelines for councils	Guidelines and training for councils should improve street sweeping efficiencies and reduce costs.	Statewide – streets and roadsides.
Build local government capacity in street bin management guidelines	Extending this training to more councils will result in greater efficiencies and cost savings.	Statewide – streets and roadsides.
Increase the number of local government litter enforcement and education officers and continue to use existing networks	KABV will work with local governments and waste management groups to identify opportunities to increase litter enforcement activity undertaken by councils. This will help EPA Victoria's full-time Litter Enforcement Program Officer and provide training to improve the litter enforcement capabilities of staff in local governments. Existing council education and enforcement officer networks will also continue to be a successful way for councils to share information and knowledge and work together on litter.	Statewide – this initiative will strengthen action.
Install bins for recyclables and better bins for rubbish at railway stations and major tram stops	KABV will work with train and tram operators to encourage the extension of this initiative to major tram stops and V/Line stations.	Metropolitan and major regions; train stations and major tram stops.
Regional and rural illegal dumping, litter and public place recycling projects	The Sustainability Victoria Regional TZW Support Program (2008-11) funds regional and rural Victoria to implement a range of projects targeting illegal dumping, public place recycling improvements and litter prevention and management.	Rural and regional Victoria parks and sporting grounds, rivers, train stations, streets and roadsides.

3 Behavioural change

Litter actions	Description	Places
Awareness campaign	In consultation with a range of partners, the government will examine the potential of a targeted awareness campaign to further increase awareness of the impacts of littering and its potential role in supporting statewide and local action, particularly targeting illegal dumping.	It is envisaged such a campaign will target littering in all Victorian public areas, with a particular focus on the growing area of illegal dumping.
KABV's Tidy Towns, Sustainable Communities and Clean Beaches Awards	These awards are held and promoted annually to recognise and celebrate sustainability and environmental initiatives (including those addressing litter) in rural and regional Victoria, metropolitan Melbourne, and bay and coastal communities.	These awards showcase action by Victorian communities in relation to all our public places.
Provision of educational litter materials as part of ResourceSmart Schools	Through the ResourceSmart Schools Waste Program, a greater emphasis will be placed on litter and its impacts.	Victorian schools – with strong messages about the impact of littering in our public places.
Litter prevention kits (for roadside litter in particular)	The Roadside Litter Prevention and Resource Recovery Kit aims to influence the behaviour of road users and prevent litter and increase resource recovery from roadsides. This kit has the potential to be rolled out across Victoria and nationally.	Statewide – roadsides.
Adopt a Roadside	This program provides an opportunity for individuals, organisations and businesses to help maintain sections of roadside within Victoria's road network.	Statewide – roadsides.
Clean Site	KABV's Clean Site is an education program for builders and tradespeople which aims to manage environmental impacts from residential construction, including litter, washings and sediment and waste management of recyclable materials.	Statewide – building sites, waterways.
Stationeers	Since 1994, KABV's Stationeers – Right on Track Program has fostered community support and participation to improve the appearance and surrounds of railway stations by removing litter, establishing and improving landscapes, discouraging vandalism and generally encouraging public awareness of the broader value of the station.	Regional and metropolitan train stations.

4 Improved measurement and reporting

Litter actions	Description	Places
Annual Victorian Litter Report (VLR)	Sustainability Victoria will report annually on progress against the TZW litter target to provide a clear picture of progress towards the littering behaviour target and other measures.	Assessments will be conducted at more than 200 locations throughout Victoria, including public places.
VLR local tool	Sustainability Victoria will make the VLR methodology available to local governments and other organisations to enable them to independently undertake litter measurement. This template tool will enable these land and product managers to undertake assessments beyond those conducted as part of the VLR.	This tool will be available statewide.
Data collection and training	Sustainability Victoria will encourage development and uptake of best practices and tools to measure and monitor local program performance from an infrastructure, education and enforcement perspective.	This will be undertaken statewide.
KAB's National Litter Index (NLI)	Sustainability Victoria will continue to support the conduct of KAB's NLI (a national litter count).	These litter counts are conducted at a range of sites in Victoria, including public places.
Local Government Data Collection Survey	This survey is undertaken annually. Work is also underway to improve regional data collection and reporting with funding from the Sustainability Fund.	Statewide.
Litter strategy template	The Metropolitan Waste Management Group's (MWMG) SMART litter group has produced a litter strategy template used by a number of councils for their 2009-10 budgets. Through this strategy, KABV will work with the MWMG to roll it out to other councils.	This tool has the potential to assist local governments across Victoria to address littering within their municipalities.

Operating from within Sustainability Victoria, KABV will team with key partners in delivering these statewide approaches: DSE, VLAA, Department of Transport, local governments, schools, train and tram operators, land managers and waste management groups.

The future

In partnership with key stakeholders, including the Victoria Litter Action Alliance (VLAA), Sustainability Victoria will develop an action plan in 2009-10. This plan will integrate the current and proposed government, industry and community action to prevent and manage litter in our public places. It will aim to maximise outcomes by coordinated joint action and reduced duplication.

Creating Cleaner, Safer Places – Working together to remove litter from Victoria's environment forms an integral part of the Victorian Government's overall commitment to delivering on TZW by 2014.

This strategy can only be delivered by drawing on the skills and actions of everyone. It is an invitation to all Victorians who care about having clean and safe public places in which to live, work and relax, to join with the government to achieve a litter-free Victoria.

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