

LITTERING

Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011

THE PROBLEM WITH LITTERING

Every year an enormous amount of money, volunteer hours and energy is spent in cleaning up litter. Littering is unpleasant, unhealthy and against the law. Some of the problems include:

- » litter building up next to roads, blocking gutters and finding its way into creeks, rivers and onto beaches
- » plastic waste choking and suffocating birds and marine life
- » soil and garden waste spreading pests and weeds
- » organic matter, such as dog waste, food scraps, leaves and grass clippings polluting our waterways, contributing to algal blooms and disturbing sensitive eco-systems.

WHAT IS LITTER?

Litter is defined as the deposit of waste at a place that is an amount less than 200L. Common types of litter include cigarette butts, plastic drink bottles, fast food wrappers, material from a trailer that is poorly secured, grass clippings swept into the gutter and fishing line.

CONSEQUENCES OF LITTERING

The *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011* includes a range of offences for litter and illegal dumping, including:

- » general littering
- » littering from a vehicle
- » dangerous littering
- » illegal dumping
- » failing to clean up waste.

Local governments and the Department of Environment and Science (DES) have a shared responsibility for enforcing these laws. Authorised officers from Council and DES can issue on-the-spot fines and compliance notices for littering and illegal dumping offences.

Compliance notices may require the offender to collect, transport, store, treat or dispose of the waste. A person or corporation who is requested to clean up their litter or illegally dumped waste and does not comply with this request, may face legal action and substantial financial penalties.

LITTERING FROM VEHICLES

Littering laws provide everyone with the ability to report littering and illegal dumping from a car, trailer or boat. If you

witness someone littering or illegally dumping waste from such a vehicle, you should report it and an authorised officer will investigate and may issue a fine.

WHAT IF THE BIN IS ALREADY FULL?

Everyone should take responsibility for their waste. For example, when eating lunch in a park, if there is no bin close by, or it is already full, take your rubbish with you and throw it away when you find a bin. If you think the park needs more bins, please contact Council and let us know.

PREVENTING LITTERING

There are a number of ways to stop litter from ruining our environment:

- » Dispose of litter and rubbish in bins designed for that purpose. If you can't find a bin, take your rubbish home and dispose of it there.
- » Do not throw your rubbish from a moving vehicle. Apart from endangering people you may face heavy fines.
- » Remember that stormwater drains flow straight to our waterways. Don't throw any litter in the street or gutter as it may end up in our waterways, beaches and the Great Barrier Reef.
- » Dispose of unwanted chemicals responsibly; never pour them into gutters or drains. Paint, solvents, garden pesticides and herbicides are poisonous to wildlife. Council can advise you of the best way to dispose of these.
- » Never dispose of plastic bags carelessly – they are one of the biggest killers of marine life. Use a reusable cloth bag when you are shopping or choose cardboard boxes instead of plastic bags whenever possible.
- » Create less rubbish by purchasing products with less wrapping or biodegradable packaging.
- » Take a litterbag with you when walking your dog and pick up after them. Droppings can wash into our waterways and contaminate them.

MORE INFORMATION

If you require further information, visit Council's website townsville.qld.gov.au, or call Council's Customer Service Centre on 13 48 10.