

Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation

Draft Illegal Dumping Prevention Strategy 2022-2027

NSW Litter Prevention Strategy 2022-2030

Submission to LGNSW



Submission

To: Susy Cenedese – Strategy Manager Environment, LGNSW
From: Roger Stephan – ISJO
Date: 9 October 2022
Subject: Consultation on draft NSW Government strategy:
1. NSW Illegal Dumping Prevention Strategy 2022-2027
2. NSW Litter Prevention Strategy 2022-2030

Dear Susy

Thank you for your recent correspondence relating to consultation on two important draft NSW Government strategies.

The ISJO has worked closely with the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) in providing waste and environmental strategy outcomes over the past eight years and will continue to facilitate local programs and deliver and support grant funded projects in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region.

Over the past few months, ISJO staff have been involved in the co-design of the Draft Strategies through consultative processes involving the EPA including public forums, subject related workshops, program logic modelling and one-to-one interviews. We will also be attending the EPA consultation session on 12 October 2022.

We therefore welcome and thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the LGNSW submissions on these strategies.

Should you require further information or clarification of any of the points we have raised please do not hesitate to contact me by phone or email.

Regards



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NSW Illegal Dumping Prevention Strategy 2022-2027: Consultation Draft

Approach 1: Moving towards a circular economy

The EPA will:

- explore opportunities for behaviour change campaigns that promote re-use, repair and second-hand market opportunities and spread messaging about responsible donations
- continue to work with charitable recyclers and other organisations to support their work in encouraging responsible donation
- support councils and not-for-profit groups working to increase re-use, repair and recycling of household items
- conduct an audit of items dumped on the kerbside to determine the composition of dumped items and estimate the proportion that are reusable and recyclable

The ISJO agrees in principle that a move to a circular economy through opportunities promoting re-use, repair and second-hand markets will provide alternatives for disposal of bulky household items and potentially lead to a reduction in illegal dumping of these types of items.

Assessment of the operational capacity of charitable recyclers and not-for-profit groups will be required if they are to be the largest contributor in this market. Costs and overheads associated with reuse, repair and recycling of items will also need to be factored into point of sale prices which will influence

turnover. For example a bedroom dresser could be given away for free, but with \$30 worth of repairs and overheads it's on sale for \$150. Viability and volume will be key considerations.

Approach 2: Collaboration and capacity building

The EPA will:

- continue to partner with councils to develop approaches to reducing dumping of household items on the street
- continue to build our illegal dumping resource kit, so we can learn from each other
- continue to deliver training and capacity building in project and intervention design and regulation skills, guided by stakeholders' needs
- work with councils and public land managers to establish a cross tenure community of practice to showcase innovations, streamline cross-agency processes and enable place-based illegal dumping prevention approaches
- hold illegal dumping seminars to share best practice and illegal dumping approaches

This approach is integral in delivering strategic outcomes and as such ISJO supports the inclusion and delivery of all suggested actions.

Approach 3: Services, infrastructure and clean-up

The EPA will

- continue to support our partners to combat illegal dumping through illegal dumping grant programs
- evaluate our Clean-up and Prevention grant program to inform future focus areas
- continue to support community recycling centres so the public can safely dispose of problem waste
- work with councils to investigate and develop evidence-informed asbestos disposal options that can be altered to suit different local government areas
- work with councils to develop fit-for-purpose household bulky waste services and facilities

The ISJO supports this approach having administered and delivered five regional clean-up and prevention grants over the past six years and supported local Council delivery of an additional five projects.

Regional groups and Councils understand local issues, the environment and their communities and have a thorough understanding and corporate knowledge of requirements to support local prevention of illegal dumping including, as examples, required infrastructure or financial constraints.

These grants are therefore essential, especially in large land managed areas with multiple land managers and their continuation will be both appreciated and strategically effective.

Approach 4: Behaviour change, awareness and engagement

The EPA will

- continue to roll out our award-winning social media campaign to warn property owners about the risks of accepting free fill that may contain asbestos or other contaminants
- support councils' education and behaviour change campaigns through grant funding

- build on our partnerships with charitable recyclers and not-for-profit organisations to support campaigns to promote responsible donation and enhance demand for second-hand items
- continue to promote Community Recycling Centres and problem waste drop-off events
- continue to support the use of illegal dumping prevention collateral by partners

Again, ISJO supports this approach as critical to behaviour change.

Regional social media campaigns have been successful in raising awareness and are seen as a proactive wide-reaching medium. The ISJO has also historically cross-promoted Community Recycling Centres and CleanOut events for disposal of problem household waste items and will continue to see efficiencies in this.

Consideration of the content and type of campaigns is required to maintain relevance.

ISJO would like to see a revamp of some of the messaging used. For example, the “free fill” campaign is great and could be supported by campaigns such as “how to report ID” and “green waste”. Generic social media tools that meet media requirements would also be useful, e.g. shorter 15 and 30 second long animations.

Approach 5: Regulation, enforcement and legislative reform

The EPA will:

- continue to co-fund the RID program in targeted regions
- produce intelligence products to assist in identifying key target locations and entities
- continue the Waste Crime Taskforce to deter and disrupt waste crime
- provide training and support on prevention and enforcement techniques to compliance officers in local government and other public land managers
- review effectiveness and appropriateness of regulatory tools for small-scale dumping
- enhance the investigation and enforcement powers of EPA officers and increase the penalties for waste crime offences
- continue to partner with the Queensland Department of Environment and Science to develop new digital hazardous waste tracking and data solutions across jurisdictions
- assess the feasibility of additional legislative reforms to prevent illegal dumping including in the areas of waste tracking and payment structures
- continue to test with industry options for a waste classifiers accreditation scheme and extended waste transporter licensing requirements

Legislation and regulation are crucial in this regard to prevent harm to people and the environment from illegal dumping activities and this approach therefore needs to be included for strategy effectiveness.

The ISJO is cautious, however, as at the present there is no specific illegal dumping offence for Council enforcement officers to use as compared to Litter offences.

On average, ISJO Councils investigate 400 to 500 incidents per year. One action listed is “enhance the investigation and enforcement powers of EPA officers and increase the penalties for waste crime offences”.

This action ONLY includes “EPA officers”. The ISJO believes that it is imperative that the EPA works with councils to develop and implement a specific illegal dumping offence.

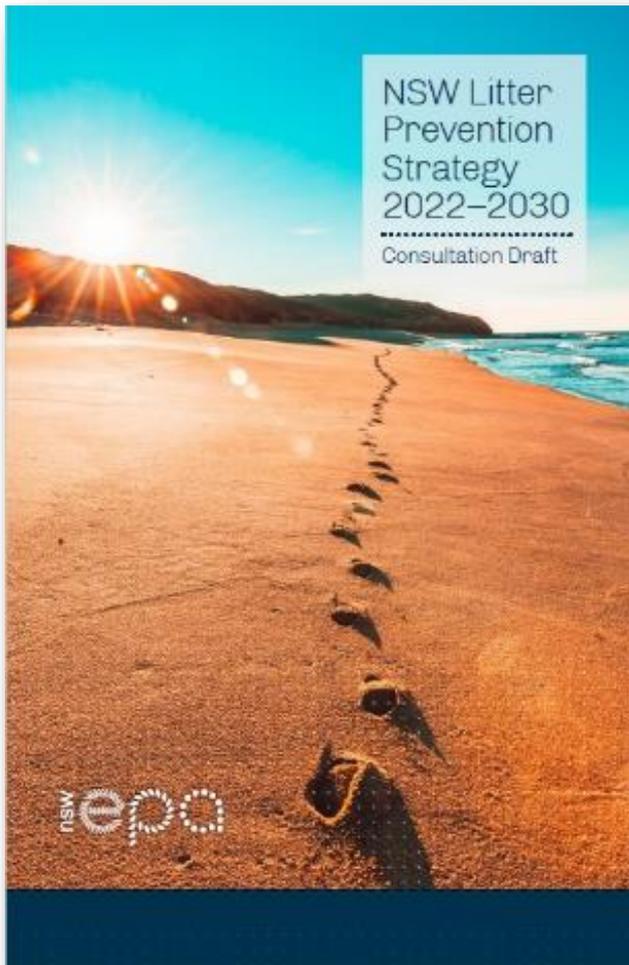
Approach 6: Growing our evidence through research, monitoring, and evaluation

The EPA will:

- continue to promote and build capacity in using the RIDonline system
- continue to improve the functionality of RIDonline in consultation with users
- work with a group of selected councils with good existing data on illegal dumping to establish a baseline to track trends across the state, including public reporting via RIDonline
- promote our cost calculator and support land managers to better capture the costs of managing illegal dumping
- conduct an audit of items dumped on the kerbside to determine the composition of dumped items and estimate the proportion that are reusable and recyclable
- continue to undertake social research into the community's knowledge, attitudes and behaviours regarding illegal dumping

The ISJO agrees with this approach and would like to also see EPA officers utilising the RID online system to report and record incidents as a means of sharing intelligence across the State.

At present local officers are unable to assist EPA investigations due to the inhibitor of one way data sharing. This limits the ability of Council authorised officers to provide local knowledge and other means to assist the EPA in its own operations.



NSW Litter Prevention Strategy 2022 – 2030: Consultation Draft

Targets:

- Congratulations on the move from measuring by volume to number of littered items
- ISJO is also supportive of the separate cigarette butt litter target as a highly littered item as well as support for the EPR scheme attached to it

Approach 1: Source control

The ISJO agrees with this approach in principle as a supporting mechanism to prevention of harmful litter, for example single use plastics which do not degrade and can impact the natural environment.

However, banning items and voluntary phase outs do not prevent an item being littered. Material design to minimise packaging and components of packaging may assist in reducing the number of items with the potential of being littered, for example a beverage container that is designed so that the lid remains attached to the bottle.

In terms of source control, product stewardship and EPR mandates may assist in reducing littered items, just as the CDC scheme has.

Approach 2: Diversion to a circular economy

The ISJO agrees with an approach supporting product stewardship and EPR schemes and also supports behaviour change where incentivised schemes are used to collect and recover resources from potentially littered material types. However, reduction in litter will be a result of these schemes not necessarily the key driver for them. Per Approach 1, the organisations and communities who will be key in implementing this litter prevention strategy and action plan do not have influence over these drivers and as such could be seen as being a supporting mechanism, rather than a key approach.

As highlighted in the draft strategy, vaping devices are the perfect example and require a multi-agency whole of government approach much like the ban on lightweight single use plastic bags.

Approach 3: Education, awareness and engagement

Information is critical and must be continually delivered and reinforced for any behaviour change program to be effective.

This strategy is no different.

The key audience to date has been the general community with messaging relating to behaviour and potential regulation. This is familiar however the 'Tosser' messaging requires review. It can promote negativity and can be difficult to use and/or interpret for younger audiences and CALD communities.

The call to action of 'Don't be a Tosser' is not as clear as the Keep Australia Beautiful campaign of 'Do the right thing'. There should also be a focus on other partners with potential for either their items or processes to lead to littering, e.g. takeaway food retailers, industrial / commercial precincts, etc. This needs to be driven by the NSW Government as liaison with these sectors is not always in the remit of local Councils.

Approach 4: Regulation and enforcement

Reporting and regulatory approaches should continue to support litter prevention in NSW with communities encouraged to report littering from vehicles. However, without additional resourcing and enforcement powers for local officers, education about littering fines and a presence in high pedestrian traffic areas at specified hotspots will be the only regulatory activities delivered.

It is simpler, less confrontational and more lucrative for a general Council Ranger to issue a parking fine than it is to fine a pedestrian who just dropped a cigarette butt.

We agree, therefore, with the approach of promoting the perception of the risk of being fined.

Approach 5: Infrastructure and clean-up

The ISJO agrees with and is supportive of further funding for infrastructure and clean up to maintain clean places.

As suggested, infrastructure not only needs to be place specific and suitable, it also needs to be driven by a capacity assessment to determine and drive systemic maintenance and monitoring of not just the proposed infrastructure, but also the surrounding environment.

For example, local Councils install bins and collect litter, but is this part of a wider embedded strategy for litter prevention and clean places? Does this approach change for land owned by other agencies but maintained by Councils? What about community driven or commercial activities?

Collaboration and an understanding of the common goal is required, both internally with Councils and across external stakeholders and the community. The ISJO is supportive of the proposed funding streams and integration of the Own It & Act Framework.

Approach 6: Targeted programs to stop litter dispersal

Targeted litter prevention programs are integral and should continue and be expanded as required.

The reporting and collection of data from these programs should inform success and learnings need to be considered and accessible, e.g. confirming that the AMDI data is compatible and accessible alongside the other multiple EPA facilitated data frameworks and databases.

Approach 7: Monitoring, evaluation and research

The ISJO agrees that litter monitoring and program evaluation are critical but can often be overlooked.

Datasets should be used to inform key project deliverables however historically have not been available due to either data not being collected and recorded or data being inaccessible.

The number of datasets proposed within the strategy framework may have the potential to lead to confusion and concern regarding accuracy.

Will this data be accessible at a local level?

Requirements of the local litter checks are important to inform but can be arduous for multiple site projects. It is suggested therefore that prior to any projects being funded, organisations are advised as part of their strategic Own It & Act approach that they need to have a pre-determined period worth of data collected to support the application and to monitor against.