



# LITTER PREVENTION STRATEGIES FORSCHOOLS AND PUBLIC PLACES



The following are suggested activities to better understand litter issues in your school and to help you plan litter prevention strategies. Where possible, include the whole school community (students, teachers, other staff and parents), in the investigation of litter problems and the development and implementation of litter strategies. Remember to monitor your progress and celebrate successes too.

**Litter audit/survey** which identifies

- where litter is found in the school
- the types of litter found in the school (counted / estimated and categorised)
- the source of litter (canteen, home or surrounding area). If the majority of littered items are from a canteen, those items may require review.

**Bin survey** to map the placement of bins in the school (and the litter hotspots).

Are there bins in popular sitting or eating places? Schools may have a 'no eating on the oval policy' but find much of their litter in these areas, so a bin survey may indicate a review of policies, or bin placement.

**Bin design analysis** to determine whether improvements can be made here to reduce litter.

- Lidless bins are convenient but can lose their contents on a windy day. To prevent this problem, ensure that these bins are emptied after lunch.
- Wheelie bins are a good alternative and are easy for students to move and empty. Dirty bin lid handles can prevent students from 'doing the right thing' so consider a regular wipe down by bin monitors or consider cutting out holes in wheelie bin lids.
- Bins can sometimes blend into the environment so well that students don't see them at all! Students can work in teams to design and paint school bins. Brightly decorated bins for waste (land fill) and recycling can help to increase their visibility and usage.

**Bin management/collection systems** are closely linked to bin design, and will depend on the type of bins used in your school. Very successful systems have involved students managing smaller bins, collecting and emptying them directly after lunch and placing them out in the morning. Daily collection is preferable, as weekly waste build up can produce odours and insect problems that will deter students from using bins.

## Student ownership

We are all responsible for creating litter problems so encourage students and staff to work together in solving litter problems.

- Involve students in decision making, particularly if trialling control strategies such as; regular litter clean ups, allocated eating areas or the removal of certain canteen items (e.g. Chip Packets).
- Many schools allocate each class an area to keep clean, why not encourage students to develop a beautification plan for their allocated area, promoting ownership and pride in the school environment.
- Give positive reinforcement for good choices, such as 'golden dust pan' awards or community and environmental service awards
- Have student representatives develop guidelines for 'Litter & Waste Free' school events (e.g. fetes, excursions and sports days) and promote this initiative to the community.

## Environmental Impact Studies

How much of the litter found in your school grounds is material that could be reused or recycled?

- Contact environmental organisations such as Waterwatch and Urban Forests to find out more about your local environment and the harmful impacts of litter.
- Contact your local council to learn more about waste management and resource recovery in your area. They may even offer advice or resources for collecting your recyclables.
- Set up a system for collecting 5 cent deposit containers and raise funds for school, community or environmental projects
- Set up a Green Waste collection system in your school and create compost that can be used in school gardens.
- Participate in litter clean up events such as Clean Up Australia Day and Gutter Guardians