Queensland’s Litter and Illegal Dumping Action Plan

October 2013
Minister’s foreword

Every day across Queensland, our parks, streets, forests and waterways are subjected to pollution from litter and illegally dumped waste.

Plastic bags, cigarette butts, glass bottles, hazardous materials and other wastes are discarded thoughtlessly. These actions impact on our local communities, as well as the environment. On a larger scale, domestic and commercial waste illegally dumped by the trailer and truck load, leaves the clean-up and costs to others.

Litter and illegally dumped waste create dirty and unsafe places that detract from the enjoyment of people using urban and green spaces.

Litter and illegal dumping costs Queensland millions of dollars each year. An environment polluted with rubbish deters visitors and impacts on the state’s tourism industry.

Littering and illegal dumping also threatens our marine animals, native wildlife and natural ecosystems. Children are at risk of injury or worse from broken glass, discarded needles, demolition waste, asbestos and rusting metal.

Items that could be recycled are wasted, and the opportunity for reuse is lost. The regrettable volumes of illegally dumped commercial waste highlight this missed opportunity and the impost on the community.

We need to put an end to this problem.

The Queensland Government’s vision is to create a state free from litter and illegal dumping—driven by the adoption of best practice in waste management and education. Collective action is required to achieve this vision.

By committing to our own responsible stewardship of the materials we consume, we can lead by example. We can influence those around us—family, friends and neighbours—to act responsibly. We can also support others to take action against those who choose not to be responsible.

This action plan focuses on building effective, robust programs and partnerships to tackle littering and illegal dumping in Queensland. It identifies those actions that will lead to improvements in the capacity of community groups, industry bodies, and state and local governments to respond to littering and illegal dumping. And it aims to generate greater awareness and support from the community.

Litter and illegal dumping is a community problem and we all have a role to play in finding solutions.

Andrew Powell
Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection
Littering and Illegal Dumping Action Plan

BROMPTON RD

NO THROUGH ROAD

Penalties up to $13,000 apply for illegal dumping of waste

Surveillance cameras in use throughout Brisbane
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Introduction

Litter and illegal dumping are the most visible indicators of pollution in our environment. The waste from litter and illegal dumping can be present in all environments from footpaths, roads, train stations, beaches, parks, waterways, natural areas and vacant blocks—it includes:

- material that is thoughtlessly dropped or left behind
- material placed beside an overflowing bin
- trailer loads that are poorly secured
- material that is actively driven to an isolated location and dumped.

Litter and illegal dumping are two very distinct activities, generally with different motivations, barriers, participants and locations. Both activities have a range of effects on our communities from unsightly aesthetics and clean-up costs, to detrimental impacts on our environment and human health. Their distinct characteristics mean that they require different approaches to their management and intervention.

The Queensland Government’s vision is to create:

‘A Queensland free from litter and illegal dumping—driven by the adoption of best practice in waste management and education’

Two goals will guide the actions needed to achieve this vision:

1. Minimise the incidents of littering and illegal dumping in Queensland.
2. Drive positive long-term change in community attitudes and behaviours to prevent litter and illegal dumping.

Successfully dealing with the issues of littering and illegal dumping means everyone needs to take responsibility for their own actions and influence those around them.

The Queensland Government is committed to working with businesses, state and local governments, private land owners, non-government organisations, schools, community groups and the public to encourage best practice in waste management.

By working across the community, the Queensland Government is seeking to reduce litter and illegal dumping and thus decrease the substantial costs imposed on society in terms of:

- human health
- environmental harm
- diversion of money to clean-up activities that could otherwise be spent more productively elsewhere.

Impacts on society

Litter and illegal dumping affects most aspects of life and society. Litter and illegally dumped waste reduces the aesthetic value and visual amenity of a place, it makes an area look dirty and uncare for, unpleasant to be in and less likely to be used by the public. This practice can also reduce environmental values since litter and waste dropped in streets, along the side of road, or in bushland can be washed into streams and rivers and ultimately pollutes land, waterways and ocean environments.

Some forms of litter, such as sharp, protruding edges (e.g. broken bottles, aluminium cans or needles) can cause damage and injury to humans and wildlife. Animals can also become entangled in waste (e.g. fishing line and plastic) leading to injury and/or death.

Litter and illegally dumped waste can be the source of pest and weed outbreaks. Piles of litter and rubbish can become the breeding ground for pests and vermin (e.g. tyres filled with water are ideal breeding habitats for mosquitoes). Illegally dumped organic matter takes seeds and stems into bushland and other spaces, spreading weeds and degrading environmental values. Dumped rubbish may smother and harm native plants, increase rates of arson and/or accelerate bushfires.

The cost to society as a result of littering and illegal dumping activity is broad and results from:

- expenditure for prevention, compliance, clean up and disposal
- lower property values because the area is less attractive to prospective buyers
- impact on tourism due to the loss of amenity.

An estimate of the amount of material illegally dumped in Queensland each year has been calculated at 20,666 tonnes. This figure was based on modelled data available from other Australian states, which formed part of the work of the Regulatory Assessment Statement—undertaken by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP) in developing the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 (WRR Act).

There is no doubt that the cost of illegal dumping is a significant burden on local government. The State of Waste and Recycling in Queensland 2012 report revealed that 55 of the 74 councils reported collecting 9,300 tonnes of litter and illegally dumped waste in 2011–12. Twelve of these councils provided financial data that estimated the cost of $670 per tonne to manage litter and illegal dumping, or over $6.2 million that could have been spent on high priority community projects.

Managing litter and illegal dumping

Litter and illegal dumping is material that has been irresponsibly discarded by people, rather than using the many options available for appropriate disposal.

The management of litter and illegal dumping currently employs a diverse range of approaches to encourage positive changes in the underlying behaviours that lead to such activities. It also involves many stakeholders including state and local governments, non-government organisations, schools, community groups and the broader community.

The introduction of the WRR Act has given all those involved in managing litter and illegal dumping the opportunity to develop a co-ordinated approach to compliance, regardless of land tenure or property ownership. Further, the WRR Act allows for community involvement through third-party reporting of littering and illegal dumping.

Queensland’s Litter and Illegal Dumping Action Plan will operate within the context of the WRR Act and the implementation of a new State waste management strategy. This new industry-led waste strategy is currently under development and is expected to be finalised in mid-2014. Improved management of litter and illegal dumping will be one of the focus areas of the new strategy. Collectively, these instruments will form the foundation for the management of waste, including litter and illegal dumping in Queensland (see Figure 1).
The framework

This is the first action plan developed by EHP to address the issues of litter and illegal dumping in Queensland.

The plan revolves around four core functions:

- Education and engagement with land and waterways managers and the community.
- Reactive compliance and enforcement.
- Proactive regional illegal dumping hot-spots projects.
- Litter and illegal dumping data and mapping.

In implementing this plan, EHP recognises the significant and ongoing role of local governments, the community, and special interest groups in responding to litter and illegal dumping.

While the plan identifies working in partnership with key groups as a significant component of the success of this plan, it places no direct obligations on local government or other key parties to commit to actions under this plan.

Future actions for the management of litter and illegal dumping will consist of:

**Targeted projects**—recognising littering and illegal dumping are two very distinct activities, generally with different motivations, barriers, participants and locations, which require focused and specific actions to effect change.

**Publicised acts of deterrence**—gaining the support of the community and demonstrating that the Queensland Government is serious about tackling litter and illegal dumping, to ensure that there is active and timely enforcement of the legislation across the state and this commitment is clearly articulated to the wider community.

**Diversified toolbox**—including education and social marketing campaigns to alter the behaviour of litterers and illegal dumpers, their peers and the broader community, in the suite of management tools as well as compliance and enforcement.

**Integrated and holistic delivery**—delivering integrated and multi-faceted responses from local governments, community groups, industry bodies and the Queensland Government to ensure that all parties are working together to minimise litter and illegal dumping incidents.

**Engaged public**—including all members of society (local governments, community, associations, complainants and the offenders’ peers) in an open and transparent process to develop and implement litter and illegal dumping initiatives.

**Informed actions**—basing programs, initiatives and interventions on solid research and reasoning to ensure they are well designed, adopt best practice and can be evaluated and reviewed upon completion.

To implement these future actions, the plan seeks to:

1. Establish and nurture partnerships for collective action by litter and illegal dumping practitioners.
2. Target specific issues, audiences and localities to deter and/or prevent litter and illegal dumping.
3. Raise awareness so that all Queenslanders know what constitutes littering and illegal dumping and what they can do to prevent it.
4. Build and share a portfolio of knowledge to inform decisions, management and evaluation of activities.
5. Create a skilled, capable and supported workforce working collaboratively to combat illegal activities.

The implementation of the plan will be carried out through the delivery of five interactive programs. They are:

- reactive compliance and evaluation
- education, engagement and awareness raising
- data, research and evaluation
- hotspots
- capacity building and networking.

The success of these programs will bring about a more informed and empowered community to influence behaviours around littering and illegal dumping. Furthermore, it will result in a strengthening of enforcement activity and collective action to deter potential offenders.

Through this plan, the Queensland Government will achieve:

- strengthened social norms relating to the appropriate management of waste and valuing of the state’s green and urban spaces
- demonstrated reduction in the quantity and clean-up costs of litter and illegal dumping in Queensland
- reduced environmental harm and risks to human health.
## Vision

A Queensland free from litter and illegal dumping—driven by the adoption of best practice in waste management and education

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## Goals

1. Minimise the incidents of littering and illegal dumping in Queensland
2. Drive positive long-term change in community attitudes and behaviours to prevent litter and illegal dumping

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## Objectives

1. Establish and nurture partnerships for collective action by litter and illegal dumping practitioners
2. Target specific issues, audiences and localities to deter and prevent litter and illegal dumping
3. Raise awareness so that all Queenslanders know what constitutes littering and illegal dumping and what they can do to prevent it
4. Build and share a portfolio of knowledge to inform decisions, management and evaluation of activities
5. Create a skilled, capable and supported workforce working collaboratively to combat illegal activities

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## Impacts

- A more informed and empowered community to influence positive behaviours
- Strengthened enforcement activity and collective action to deter potential offenders

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## Outcomes

- Reduced risks to human health and less environmental harm
- Strengthened social norms relating to the appropriate management of waste and valuing of our green and urban spaces
- Demonstrated reduction in the amount and clean-up costs of litter and illegal dumping in Queensland

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## Programs

- Reactive compliance and evaluation
- Data, research and evaluation
- Hotspots
- Education, engagement and awareness raising
- Capacity building and networking

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## Targets and performance indicators

Tracking progress and measuring success of projects

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**Figure 2: The framework outlined in the action plan.**
The problem: Setting the scene

What is litter and illegal dumping?

Litter and illegally dumped rubbish are forms of waste—they represent the illegal deposit of items and materials in places they are not meant to be.

In terms of litter there is a behavioural attitude and a legal definition. Behaviourally, littering is generally the thoughtless discarding of items in the environment that a person is travelling through whilst undertaking other activities. This may take several forms from leaving items behind, wedging it into the surrounding environment or flinging items (such as throwing out an item out of a car window). Illegal dumping is generally the active collection and transportation of waste to a specific location where it is dumped, and where the act of dumping is the reason for the travel. Further discussion of the motivation and barriers are addressed later in this document.

Legally the definition of litter and illegal dumping is determined by the volume of material deposited not the behaviour of the offender. The definitions of litter and illegal dumping are contained within the WRR Act. The these terms can be described as:

- Litter—the unlawful deposit at a place (including waters) of an amount of waste of less than 200L in volume\(^3\).
- Dangerous littering—the depositing of waste at a place that causes, or is likely to cause, harm to a person, property or the environment\(^4\).
- Illegal dumping—the unlawful deposit of an amount of waste that is 200L or greater in volume\(^5\).
- Unsolicited advertising material—unaddressed materials such as a circular, flyer, promotional matter, letter or other publication distributed without charge is classed as unsolicited advertising material. Newspapers (including inserts) are only identified as unsolicited advertising material when the owner/occupier of a premises has advised the publisher or distributor of the newspaper that they do not wish to receive it. The inappropriate delivery of unsolicited advertising material is not classed as littering and has its own specific legislative compliance requirements under the WRR Act\(^6\).

Definition of waste

Waste is defined under the Environmental Protection Act 1994 (EP Act) and includes anything that is:

- left over, or an unwanted by-product, from an industrial, commercial, domestic or other activity;

or

- surplus to the industrial, commercial, domestic or other activity generating the waste.

Waste can be a gas, liquid, solid or energy, or a combination of any of these*. 

* See section 13 of the EP Act.

What is the extent of litter and illegal dumping?

The full extent of litter and illegal dumping in Queensland is not clear due to the absence of a comprehensive data set to determine the size of the problem. Gauging the flow-on negative effects on human health, the public purse and the environment is also difficult to quantify for the same reason.

Nonetheless, there are plenty of reports to suggest the problem is widespread; of concern to members of the public; reduces environmental values and aesthetics; and the subsequent clean-up costs are costly to local authorities who would not be able to deal with the problem without community support (see Figure 3).

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3  Section 103(2) of the WRR Act.
4  Section 103(5) of the WRR Act.
5  Section 104(2) of the WRR Act.
6  WRR Act, Chapter 5 Part 2: Material that may become waste.
1. Volunteers get to do tyre-less task

*Chinchilla News and Murilla Advertiser, 12 September 2013*

An article published in these papers describes the disgust expressed by locals over the illegal dumping of garbage in the region and how it detracts from leisure activities. A clean-up effort at one site removed over one tonne of rubbish, mostly domestic. At another site, clean-up volunteers were particularly disturbed by the number of tyres littering the side of a local road, presumably washed down from an illegal tyre dump.

2. Don’t drop it: Amount of rubbish at Bargara has locals riled

*Maryborough Herald, 10 September 2013*

Leah Kidd reports on concerns raised by community members over the amount of restaurant food wrappings that litterbugs were dropping outside a fast food franchise.

3. Illegal dumping in the spotlight

*Maryborough Herald, 29 August 2013*

This article, alerts the public to the use of hidden cameras by the local council to crackdown on people illegally dumping rubbish on the Fraser Coast. The need has been driven by the fact that the council picked up 85 tonnes of rubbish illegally dumped off bush tracks, and in drainage reserves last year and spent $50,000 of rate payers money on clean-up activities. Some of the rubbish contained very dangerous material such as asbestos, oils or chemicals and thus posed a risk to the community. Much of the rubbish dumped was recyclable and some was dumped within two kilometres of the Nikenbah Transfer Station where these items could have been disposed of for free.

4. No rubbing this crew

*Townsville Bulletin, 4 September 2013*

Matthew Dunn reports on the activities of a Toolakea Beach dad and his three sons who spent six hours cleaning up their local beach after litterbugs dumped everything from TV screens, aerosol cans and broken bottles. The clean-up was initiated by the children. The problem seems to be stemming from visitors coming into the area and leaving their rubbish rather than taking it with them, spoiling the area for the locals that live there as well as the amenity for future visitors. The selfless actions of this family brought praise from the Deputy Mayor, Vern Veitch, who stated that littering is the biggest individual environmental issue that the council faces and that he was grateful for all the support provided by community organisations in helping to clean up the rubbish. He noted that it was well beyond the Council’s capacity to deal with the issue by themselves.

5. Fundraising takes a hit as rubbish left at site

*Sunshine Coast Daily, 2 September 2013*

Megan Mackander reports on the forced removal of donation bins at the Kuluin Endeavour Foundation depot—driven by the increasing demands being placed on the charity for cleaning up the mountains of junk dumped illegally at the site and the community outrage over the rubbish piles. Mrs Rudd, the Executive General Manager of the charity, stated that the removal of the bins would lead to a decrease in the amount of stock available and thus reduce the amount of funds raised to support people with disability.

6. Litterbugs beware: you’re on camera

*Bayside Bulletin and The Redland Times, 19 September 2013*

Judith Kerr reports that Redland City Council officers are capturing people illegally dumping or tossing rubbish using in-car cameras mounted on the dashboard of council vehicles. The footage will be used as evidence to fine people littering. This initiative is part of a suite of tools such as proactive patrols and education that officers are using to combat this crime.

Figure 3: Six recent articles published in local newspapers about litter and illegal dumping.
Littering and Illegal Dumping Action Plan

Litter

The National Litter Index (NLI)\(^7\) is the only consistent and ongoing measurement of litter that is currently carried out nation-wide. The purpose of the NLI is to provide insight regarding:

- The presence of litter items at sites within broadly comparable regions.
- Estimated volumes of litter objects within the litter stream, based upon a volume-per-item model.
- The contribution of objects recognised within established main material types to the overall litter stream.
- The most significant contributors to the litter stream.

In the latest report (2012–13), Queensland appears as one of the worst performers of the mainland states for the presence of litter. The overall average number of items per 1,000m\(^2\) across all 151 sites surveyed within Queensland during surveys in 2012–13 was 68 items, and the overall average estimated volume per 1,000m\(^2\) was 4.82 litres. Cigarette butts accounted for approximately 50% of all littered items, but less than 1% of volume, while plastic and paper based items account for over 66% of the volume of the material across all surveyed sites.

Littering can occur in many locations, it can vary in amount, type and rates, and places that are prone to persistent high levels of littering are described as hotspots. The NLI found that generally highway and industrial sites had the highest volume of materials and an appreciable number of litter items. Shopping and retail centres had a high count of items and small to moderate litter volumes. Beaches and car parks both contributed moderate numbers of litter items and litter volumes, while recreational parks and residential sites were associated with a small number of litter items and low to moderate litter volumes.

Illegal dumping

It is a challenge to gain accurate information on the extent of illegal dumping across Queensland due to the way it is generated, disposed of and reported. Some research, modelling and surveys have taken place, however there are limitations to the cross comparison of this data due to varying methodologies and scope limitations.

As part of the development of the WRR Act, a Regulatory Assessment Statement\(^8\) was undertaken on behalf of EHP. The Queensland data was modelled based on data sets available from other Australian states. As a result, it was estimated that approximately 20,666 tonnes of material is illegally dumped in Queensland each year. In a recent departmental report\(^9\), 55 councils that provided data reported they had collected 9,300 tonnes of illegally dumped material during the 2011–12 financial year.

Common types of illegal dumping waste include:

- domestic household bags of rubbish and garden waste
- household goods (such as whitegoods, mattresses and furniture)
- building (construction and demolition) materials
- abandoned cars and car parts
- hazardous waste such as asbestos, tyres or chemical drums.

Illegally dumped waste is commonly found along roadsides, as well as in parklands, car parks, and vacant blocks of land, beside charity bins, industrial garbage bins or skips and also accumulates in waterways. Hotspots emerge in locations that due to proximity to urban areas, relative isolation, good vehicular access and limited apparent ownership, become areas that are attractive to large scale and repeat dumping activity.

In urban areas in particular, the dumping (leaving behind) of furniture at multiunit dwellings is a significant issue. This has come about in part due to the availability of inexpensive furniture, the short lifespan of this material and the relative anonymity of the person doing the dumping.

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Underlying motivations and barriers

There are many underlying motivations and barriers leading to littering and illegal dumping. Understanding the reason for the unwanted behaviours is a key to effectively combatting the issue.

Littering

Based on research undertaken on behalf of the Beverage Industry Environment Council (BIEC), there does not appear to be a single littering ‘type’. Peoples’ behaviour has been found to be influenced based on location, materials and group size. For example a person:

- may litter in one location but not in another location (e.g. a cigarette butt)
- may litter an item such as a cigarette butt in a location but correctly dispose of other items at this same location
- who does not normally litter at that location may litter in the presence of a group of peers.

It is rare to find anyone that litters all material types in all locations. This study also found that gender did not seem to have an influence on behaviour. One trend that appears to have changed from earlier studies, where littering was often associated with young adults, is that across all age groups people are more likely to litter as the groups get larger.

In previous studies, there were large differences between the way people reported and described their behaviour and their actual behaviour, as seen by the observers. Almost half of the people who had been observed littering within the previous five minutes told interviewers that they had not littered in the last 24 hours or that they could not remember the last time they littered. There is no clear line between those who litter and those who dispose of items appropriately. Many people both littered and used bins in the space of an hour.

There are a number of reasons that people give for littering:

- laziness—could not be bothered
- lack of infrastructure and/or facilities (no bins close by; no ashtray available)
- habit and forgetfulness
- inconvenience in continuing to hold the material
- too busy
- perception of what is littering (e.g. apple core thrown into a garden bed, or placing it beside an overflowing bin)
- assume that people are employed to manage the site (e.g. consider it reasonable to litter at a football game or a cinema because cleaners will clean up the mess).

Illegal dumping

While littering behaviour can happen in full view of other members of the public (streets, parks and waterways), illegal dumping generally occurs in more remote locations or at times where other people may not be present (late at night). Offenders often go to extraordinary lengths to illegally dispose of materials. Illegal dumping is often premeditated and is undertaken in such a way as to avoid detection and potential fines. Nonetheless, illegal dumping may also occur in broad daylight using facilities meant for other purposes (e.g. industrial and charity bins).

Businesses and individuals that illegally dump waste may do so due to:

- lack of repercussions from illegal dumping
- a desire to avoid disposal fees at landfills
- laziness (perceived time and effort required for correct disposal)
- lack of awareness of the availability of waste and recycling infrastructure
- perception of what is illegal dumping (e.g. depositing household items beside charity bins)
- poor planning/disorganised (needing to dispose of materials after hours)
- assumption that people are employed to manage the site (e.g. clean-up responsibilities related to tenure)
- perception it will be available for someone else to recycle (e.g. kerbside dumping of household items).

Illegal dumping behaviour can be reinforced when offenders see the materials being removed by the council or other land managers.

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The plan

The Litter and Illegal Dumping Action Plan sets out a new framework that will guide EHP’s focus and actions over coming years. As this is the first plan, much of the effort will go into building a solid foundation in raising the community’s awareness, the risk to offenders and the capacity of enforcement officers. An important feature is building knowledge through research and data collection, including establishing a baseline for measuring performance.

The success of the plan is dependent on public engagement. Industry, local governments, non-government organisations, community groups, schools, research agencies and the general public all playing an important role in reducing litter and illegal dumping activities. The Queensland Government will work in partnership with all practitioners to enhance and add value to existing programs, and where appropriate, provide a coordinating and integrating role.

The choice to litter or illegally dump materials, to report these actions to the authorities, or to confront someone on this behaviour is a personal decision. Therefore, all members of the community have a role to play in reducing litter and illegal dumping through their personal actions and choices. Only through empowering and engaging the community will Queensland achieve long-term behaviour improvement towards littering and illegal dumping.
The approach

The Litter and Illegal Dumping Unit (LIDU) within EHP has been established—supported by a coordination group—to provide oversight on the implementation of this action plan.

The Queensland Government has committed to develop and fund LIDU over a four year period (2012–13 to 2015–16). With the introduction of the WRR Act and the creation of LIDU, Queensland now has the potential to better meet the expectations of the broader community on the management of litter and illegal dumping.

This action plan outlines five program areas (see Figure 4) to deliver the Queensland Government’s mandate. These programs offer a range of strategies for addressing the barriers and/or reasons used by people who engage in littering and illegal dumping. The programs may be broad (e.g. statewide campaign) or specific (e.g. location or activity). The programs can also aim to change, deter and prevent inappropriate behaviour through a range of strategies:

**Increase the effort**—people illegally dump because they perceive that it is an easier option than disposing of it appropriately. By making access more difficult through the use of gates, fences or landscaping, people have to increase their effort to find an appropriate location to dump.

**Increase the risks**—people litter or illegally dump (or continue to) because they perceive that there is little risk of getting caught for their behaviour. The perceived risk can be increased by actions such as introducing lighting, cameras, regular patrols, reducing the anonymity of spaces, promoting the outcomes of enforcement or providing the broader community the power to report it.

**Reduce the rewards**—litterers and illegal dumpers achieve several types of rewards including financial and reduced effort rewards from their activity. Compliance and enforcement, for example issuing fines and requiring offenders to clean up dumped materials reduces the rewards to offenders.

**Reduce provocations**—litterers and illegal dumpers may do so as they perceive it is too difficult to legally dispose of material. Unclean or overflowing bins, limited landfill opening times or peer pressure all influence people’s behaviour.

**Remove excuses**—laziness, lack of infrastructure (e.g. bins, landfills), claimed ignorance of the rules, ‘no-one cares’ or ‘everybody does it’ are reasons that may be given for littering and illegal dumping. By developing a range of education and awareness strategies, these norms or assumptions can be addressed and the community can start to become better informed of their options.

Each of the programs is informed and influenced by the other program areas as well as other waste management activities. This integration allows for a holistic approach to meeting the goals of this plan (see Figure 4). It also makes the plan flexible, allowing it to adapt to changing circumstances and to take advantage of new opportunities as they arise such as research discoveries, technological advances or legislation amendments.

Figure 4: Litter and illegal dumping model
The programs

The five programs that form the basis of this plan are:
1. Reactive compliance and enforcement.
2. Education, engagement and awareness raising.
3. Hotspots—proactive compliance.
4. Data, research and evaluation.
5. Capacity building and networking.

For each program, a target articulating a measure of a desired outcome and a brief description has been provided. This is followed by a table that sets out the approach for successful delivery of each of the five programs.

Each program is broken down into two key parts—the actions to achieve the goals of the plan and the corresponding performance measures designed to track progress and gauge success. The approach may involve actions that directly relate to the delivery of goals or actions that enable the goal to be achieved.

Evaluation of the performance of the program is a key component of delivery. Key performance indicators, and an established baseline (to be developed in this initial phase), will be used to determine if long-term behavioural change has been achieved. It will also inform decisions on the future directions for programs addressing littering and illegal dumping.
1. Reactive compliance and enforcement

Target: Increase the risk of getting caught and reduce the rewards by working with the broader network of enforcement officers within local government and across EHP. Work with other Queensland Government land managers to provide co-ordinated, consistent, timely and transparent enforcement actions.

Compliance and enforcement are integral tools in the management of litter and illegal dumping. Their use highlights to the broader community and the offenders that this is behaviour that the Queensland Government takes seriously and will take necessary steps to tackle it. The WRR Act provides a regulatory framework for managing waste and enforcing compliance action against littering and illegal dumping incidences in Queensland.

LIDU works in collaboration with the broader network of enforcement officers operating in Queensland. Members of LIDU carry out reactive compliance activity, continuously improve existing systems to make it easier for people to report littering and illegal dumping activity, develop standard tools, processes and protocols for evidence collection, and promote the outcomes of compliance and enforcement activity to governments and the broader community.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Performance measure</th>
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| **R1.** Conduct reactive compliance and enforcement activity for litter and illegal dumping under the WRR Act to escalate the risk of being caught. | **R1a.** The number of Penalty Infringement Notices (PINS) for littering and illegal dumping issued by authorised officers is increased.  
 **R1b.** Compliance and enforcement actions are completed within statutory limitation. |
| **R2.** Develop standard tools (e.g. manuals, guides, templates, forms and witness statements) to assist in administering compliance and enforcement activities in relation to litter and illegal dumping. | **R2a.** A range of standard tools are developed to assist in the administration of compliance and enforcement activities. |
| **R3.** Share the toolbox with relevant stakeholders with delegations under the WRR Act. | **R3a.** Stakeholders with delegations under the WRR Act are aware of and use the tools developed to assist in their administration of compliance and enforcement activities. |
| **R4.** Adopt and facilitate the development of innovative products (e.g. Smart Devices, GIS mapping) to enable ease of reporting by the community of illegal practices for litter and illegal dumping. | **R4a.** Adoption of innovation products appropriate to business needs  
 **R4b.** Number of projects seed funded to support the development of innovative products. |
| **R5.** Develop and pilot a method for members of selected community groups to undertake initial reporting and evidence collection through their involvement in environmental conservation/clean-up programs. | **R5a.** Development of a method to collect evidence by members of the community.  
 **R5b.** Pilot project supported to test the effectiveness of the method for evidence collection. |
| **R6.** Promote successful prosecutions/ PINS to increase sense of risk of being caught. | **R6a.** Increased community knowledge of litter and illegal dumping laws.  
 **R6b.** Members of the public are more aware of their capacity to report littering and illegal dumping offences. |

- see it
- report it
- stop it
2. Education, engagement and awareness raising

Target: To initiate and drive behavioural change by removing excuses through awareness raising, sharing information and communicating to a wide audience about littering and illegal dumping.

Education and community engagement are critical steps in combatting littering and illegal dumping and represent the first step in initiating behavioural change. There is uncertainty surrounding community knowledge about the management of littering and illegal dumping and what role they can play in bringing about better outcomes.

LIDU aims to increase awareness in the community and empower them to respond to littering and illegal dumping. Further, given the many stakeholders involved in management of this issue, LIDU will seek to bring consistency in messaging to remove uncertainty and ambiguity. It will also allow for local adaptability and implementation, recognising that there are many different facets to littering and illegal dumping and what suits one situation may not be effective in another situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Performance measure</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E1. Promote the tools to allow the public to report illegal activities through the Litter and Illegal Dumping Online Reporting Services (LIDORS).</td>
<td>E1a. The number of reports for littering and illegal dumping activities are increased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2. Implement a social marketing campaign to raise awareness about litter and illegal dumping.</td>
<td>E2a. Demonstrated shift in the behaviours of Queenslanders in relation to littering and illegal dumping.</td>
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<tr>
<td>E3. Work in partnership with key stakeholders in the development of educational campaign materials for specific audiences to influence positive behaviours surrounding litter and illegal dumping.</td>
<td>E3a. Marked decrease in industry specific levels of litter and illegal dumping in Queensland. E3b. Increased community knowledge of litter and illegal dumping law as demonstrated by shift to the adoption of acceptable practices of waste disposal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4. Develop appropriate generic awareness raising and marketing materials to deliver statewide as well as specific messages to influence positive behaviours surrounding litter and illegal dumping.</td>
<td>E4a. Reduced litter and illegal dumping levels in Queensland. E4b. Increased community knowledge of litter and illegal dumping laws, alternative options to breaking the law and the impacts of these practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E5. Promote and adopt innovative products (e.g. smart devices) that enable members of the public to report on illegal practices more easily and to assist officers to carry out their enforcement role more effectively.</td>
<td>E5a. The number of reports for littering and illegal dumping activities are increased. E5b. More PINS issued for non-compliance activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Hotspots—proactive compliance

Target: Increase the effort and reduce the hassles that lead to littering and illegal dumping by supporting local governments, relevant Queensland Government departments and key stakeholders in the identification, development and implementation of littering and illegal dumping hotspot programs.

Hotspots are areas that are susceptible to persistent high levels of littering or illegal dumping. LIDU will support the development and implementation of hotspot programs with key stakeholders. The aim of these hotspot programs is to provide strong community engagement and targeted compliance activity. It will also market and promote the outcomes of this work to the broader community. Localised communication strategies to address knowledge, attitudes, norms and behaviours of people living in, working with, and making use of, open spaces near hotspots will form an integral part of each hotspot program.

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<th>Action</th>
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| **H1.** Roll out three hotspot projects per year over a three-year period in partnership with key stakeholders that address specific issues, audiences and/or localities. | **H1a.** Three hotspot projects are delivered each year over a three-year period.  
**H1b.** Each project to provide a pre and post measurement of waste, community attitudes and use of space and intended behaviour towards littering and illegal dumping to determine success. |
| **H2.** A summary report and associated communication material (e.g. fact sheets) is produced telling the story of the hotspot projects for dissemination to stakeholders, including publication on EHP’s website. | **H2a.** Summary report and associated material is made available to stakeholders to inform their decision-making on managing litter and illegal dumping. |
| **H3.** Develop a Hotspot Handbook to assist the Queensland and local governments in managing litter and illegal dumping hotspots. | **H3a.** Hotspot Handbook is prepared and published on the EHP website.  
**H3b.** Queensland and local government officers involved in managing litter and illegal dumping are made aware of the publication.  
**H3c.** Adoption of the methods described in the Hotspot Handbook by Queensland and local government officers involved in managing litter and illegal dumping. |
4. Data, research and evaluation

**Target:** Develop a database system to allow for the collection, collation and reporting of information from state and local governments’ operations. This information will inform program development and assist long-term evidence-based decision-making in littering and illegal dumping prevention activities.

Information on litter and illegal dumping is scarce and what does exist is held by many different organisations. LIDU will develop and maintain a database system, in liaison with data custodians, to store available information of litter and illegal dumping activities. It will not duplicate existing systems but provide pathways for data integration with the purpose of providing a central repository of information that meets the business needs of a broad range of stakeholders and customers. LIDU will also take a lead role in the analyses and dissemination of this information, including the establishment of a baseline for measuring progress for a variety of key performance measures.

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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
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| D1. Develop an evaluation methodology to evaluate the performance of the litter and illegal dumping programs to determine future directions and assist with improving business delivery. | D1a. Methodology is established.  
D1b. Baseline is established on the rate and extent of litter and illegal dumping activities across Queensland, including litter and illegal dumping composition.  
D1c. A set of key performance indicators are developed that allow the evaluation of the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of the litter and illegal dumping program.  
D1d. Data obtained is used as basis for evidence-based decision making. |
| D2. Develop and maintain a database system that:  
1. collects relevant data and allows for the analysis, interpretation and reporting of information to inform decisions about litter and illegal dumping  
2. meets the needs of a range of users and informed by their requirements and feedback on testing  
3. allows for the integration of information collected by other customers of a variable nature (e.g. level of illegal practices, finances/costs, programs, performance measures, etc). | D2a. Development of a database system to meet business needs, informed by user testing.  
D2b. Collection of evidence that demonstrates that the database system meets the needs of all users (e.g. adoption, use, integration of external data and user satisfaction). |
| D3. Sponsor research projects that build knowledge about the behaviours associated with litter and illegal dumping. These projects will enhance prevention, develop evaluation methodologies and analytical techniques including data mapping; and develop technologies to aid efficiency of service delivery. | D3a. Research projects to build a greater understanding of litter and illegal dumping and deliver technologies and methods to improve the management of litter and illegal dumping. |
| D4. Explore partnership arrangements for the collection, analysis, interpretation and reporting of LID information that informs decision making. | D4a. Productive partnerships established and partners contribute to the effective monitoring, reporting, evaluation and review of litter and illegal dumping management.  
D4b. Memorandum of Understanding developed with key stakeholders to support data sharing. |
5. Capacity building and networking

Target: To ensure the best use of resources across Queensland and local governments, and other stakeholders, by providing training and support and building a culture of evidence-based practice in compliance, enforcement, community education and behaviour change.

EHP recognises that there are a significant number of stakeholders involved in the management of all facets of litter and illegal dumping. However, the actions of individual groups are often undertaken in isolation to other segments of the community or government. This can lead to duplication of effort in the development of programs, stagnation of ideas and reduced levels of support.

LIDU seeks to strengthen the networks between the many stakeholders involved in litter and illegal dumping to provide significant flow-on benefits through knowledge exchange and problem solving. Furthermore, LIDU will continue to build capacity by supporting training programs for local governments and other land and waterway managers across the state, and provide grants to buy equipment that supports compliance and enforcement activities. LIDU will also encourage the uptake of delegations by eligible officers and establish a Queensland Government working group to progress the litter and illegal dumping agenda across the Queensland Government.
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<tr>
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<th>Performance measure</th>
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| **C1.** Build capacity by supporting training programs (e.g. authorised person training and illegal dumping investigations and policy development training) for local governments across the state. | **C1a.** Litter and illegal dumping officers are well trained and able to carry out the duties required for investigations and compliance actions in a standardised way.  
**C1b.** The training provided has adequate coverage across all local governments.  
**C1c.** Local government officers are satisfied with training provided as determined through a training satisfaction survey.  
**C1d.** The number of local governments preparing litter and illegal dumping action plans increases over time. |
| **C2.** Support training of public and private land and waterways management staff, non-government organisations and community groups to enable them to conduct initial evidence collection to assist with investigation and compliance. | **C2a.** A series of training events are carried out for public and private land and waterway management staff.  
**C2b.** The evidence collected meets investigative standards.  
**C2c.** The training provided meets expectations as determined by a customer satisfaction survey. |
| **C3.** Support litter and illegal dumping managers with the provision of equipment grants that deter would-be offenders by increasing the risk of detection. | **C3a.** Provide grant funding to local governments for the supply of cameras to be used to detect litter and illegal dumping activities.  
**C3b.** Evidence provided by local governments that the use of cameras has reduced litter and illegal dumping activities. |
| **C4.** Establish a community of practice for practitioners involved in litter and illegal dumping management, including Queensland and local governments and non-government organisations, to provide a vehicle to exchange knowledge, offer support, investigate common issues and opportunities to network. | **C4a.** Establish a community of practice for litter and illegal dumping practitioners in Queensland.  
**C4b.** Deliver training sessions to enhance program design and evaluation skills.  
**C4c.** Survey participants of the community of practice to determine if the objectives are being achieved. |
| **C5.** Encourage local governments to take up powers under the WRR Act and assist those officers with delegations to carry out their duties effectively through proactive coaching, advice and support tools. | **C5a.** The majority of local governments take up their delegations under the WRR Act.  
**C5b.** Customer satisfaction survey indicates that the coaching and advice provided by LIDU meets their requirements.  
**C5c.** Production of manuals, fact sheets, guides and handbooks to assist with the transfer of knowledge. |
| **C6.** Establish a Queensland Government working group to progress the litter and illegal dumping agenda and influence all departments to shift activities from clean-up to compliance and ultimately prevention. | **C6a.** The Queensland Government working group is established and meets quarterly.  
**C6b.** Queensland Government departments adopt a more unified approach to dealing with litter and illegal dumping and there is a shift toward a coordinated approach across all departments. |
| **C7.** Develop internal mechanisms to share information and advice across the areas in EHP that deal with litter and illegal dumping. | **C7a.** Flows of information are seamless and advice is readily accessible by all areas in EHP that deal with litter and illegal dumping.  
**C7b.** The number of collaborative initiatives generated within EHP increases over time. |
## Timeline

A general overview of the timeline for the delivery of projects described in this action plan is provided in Table 1—highlighting the different stages of development over four years, from 2012–13 to 2015–16.

### Table 1: Timeline of the stages of delivery for the plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1—Establishment of LIDU</th>
<th>Stage 2—Consolidation, knowledge and partnerships</th>
<th>Stage 3—Delivery of projects</th>
<th>Stage 4—Evaluation and future directions</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Business and program arrangements finalised</td>
<td>• Action plan articulating EHP programs released</td>
<td>• Suite of projects rolled out to deliver front-line services, including:</td>
<td>• Benefits realised through fostering a performance driven culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Litter and Illegal Dumping Unit (LIDU) established</td>
<td>• Database to meet business needs under development</td>
<td>‣ campaigns to support actions to educate and change behaviours and report illegal activities</td>
<td>• Success of the program, in collaboration with partners, evaluated and reviewed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Draft of litter and illegal dumping action plan prepared for consultation</td>
<td>• Data collection, storage and protocols for sharing information under investigation</td>
<td>‣ interventions funded to assist in detection of illegal activities</td>
<td>• An options paper on future directions in managing litter and illegal dumping developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A hotspot project trialled at a green space site</td>
<td>• Community of practice to exchange knowledge established</td>
<td>‣ training and supporting material provided to local governments</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Experts contracted to fill knowledge gaps</td>
<td>‣ hotspot projects developed that target specific issues, audiences and localities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Litter and Illegal Dumping Partnership Program established</td>
<td>‣ reported litter and illegal dumping activities investigated.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Improved reporting tools made available to the public</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Build capacity through training and provision of advice and supporting material for authorised officers under the WRR Act

Carry out compliance and enforcement on all reported incidents of litter and illegal dumping
The role of key stakeholders

EHP recognises that there are a significant number of stakeholders involved in the management of all facets of litter and illegal dumping. The Action Plan's success will depend on partnerships, relationships and networks that the department builds with its stakeholders.

**EHP**

EHP administers the WRR Act and the EP Act.

The WRR Act defines littering and illegal dumping, offences, investigative powers and the ability to delegate powers under the Act to other entities such as local government. The WRR Act relates to all land tenures including private, council and state land as well as Queensland waters. EHP manages litter and illegal dumping under two operational areas:

- Environmental Services and Regulation (ESR) Division manages the Litter and Illegal Dumping Online Reporting System, issues Penalty Infringement Notices for littering cases (where vehicle or vessel details are available) and investigates contested infringement notices. ESR through the Litigation Unit also conducts prosecutions against people and companies that breach EHP legislation. Cases of large scale illegal dumping (environmental harm) or illegal landfilling are also managed by ESR under the EP Act.
- Conservation and Sustainability Services (CSS) manages illegal dumping and littering cases that require further investigation. LIDU within this division has the role of developing and implementing programs to deliver on the four core functions identified in this action plan.

With the formation of LIDU, EHP is expanding its role from enforcement of the WRR Act into additional areas such as capacity building of local governments, and data capture to better understand the problem.

Through other mechanisms, such as EHP’s Everyone’s Environment funding program, and funding of non-government organisations such as Healthy Waterways, the department supports community action such as recycling, clean up, water quality monitoring and debris data collection.

**Queensland Government**

Queensland Government departments such as the departments of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing (NPRSR), Natural Resources and Mines (DNRM) and Transport and Main Roads (TMR) are major land and waterway managers, and have powers under their own respective legislation to combat littering and illegal dumping. These respective pieces of legislation have varied powers, offences and penalties and are limited to specific land tenures under their respective control.

As land managers these departments are also responsible for the clean-up of waste on their land.

A Queensland Government led Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been established with all relevant authorities involved in dealing with the dumping of asbestos. It covers the handling of issues over a broad range of scenarios from incidents in the workplace and at home to illegal dumping and declared disasters.

**Local governments**

Local governments can accept the delegations under the WRR Act which allow them to have the same powers of enforcement as EHP, in relation to litter and illegal dumping. A majority of local governments have already accepted this delegation. Historically local government has played a central role in waste management (including litter management) through the provision of street bins, street cleansing operations, landfill operation, stormwater litter traps, as well as anti-litter awareness and education programs. Acceptance of the WRR Act delegations by local governments allows for a standard response across the state towards compliance.

Local governments will continue to play a significant role in the management of litter and illegal dumping.
Non-government organisations

A range of non-government organisations conduct a broad range of activities that support the better management of litter and illegal dumping. Key groups, such as Keep Queensland Beautiful (KQB), have had an enduring role in the education of Queenslanders about litter and illegal dumping. KQB’s education programs includes Do the right thing, Tidy Towns and Clean Beaches, as well as other litter focused programs that address roadside littering and cleaner greener schools.

Clean Up Australia Day provides a key focus on community action against litter and illegal dumping in Australia. In 2013 an estimated 550,330 people volunteered across 7,341 sites and removed an estimated 16,150 tonnes of waste. Besides promoting, engaging and coordinating the community in direct action they also have a wider education role on the impacts of litter and illegal dumping on the community and the environment.

Healthy Waterways is a peak waterway management group situated in South East Queensland. It is a not-for-profit, non-government organisation that is funded by both state and local governments as well as industry and community groups. Healthy Waterways conducts a range of activities from ecosystem health monitoring, provision of independent scientific advice, capacity building for the water industry and education of the broader community. The organisation has a strong focus on waterway litter initiatives such as community education and engagement as well as the on-ground removal of waterway litter.

Tangaroa Blue Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation focused on the health of the marine environment and coordinates the Australian Marine Debris Initiative—an on-ground network of volunteers, communities, organisations and agencies around the country monitoring the impacts of marine debris along their stretch of coastline. Tangaroa Blue also provides support to communities, organisations and schools including training, logistical support, educational resources and analysis of debris.

Other groups such as Queensland Litter Prevention Alliance, Queensland Waste Educators Group (QWEG) and catchment care groups also have a role to play in the education of the public around litter. Along with these groups we need to work together with all parties active in litter and illegal dumping issues to provide consistent and targeted messaging.

Land managers, business and community groups

A varied group of stakeholders’ activities and operations are affected by litter and illegal dumping. While this is not a core function of these entities, every day they have to contend with and manage the impact of litter and illegal dumping on their operations. Signage patrols, clean up and disposal all place a financial and management burden on their operations. These stakeholders are often operating in isolation in their management of litter and illegal dumping including:

- Queensland Government owned places/structures (e.g. national parks, education, stadiums, hospitals, road reserves)
- statutory authorities (e.g. Ergon, Energex, SEQ Water, QRail)
- industry and business
- shopping and retail centres
- private land managers
- charities (e.g. Lifeline, Endeavour Foundation).

Schools

Schools play a vital role in behavioural change through education and awareness. Sustainability education has featured in Queensland schools for more than 30 years, and has been creatively incorporated into learning curriculums and school facilities. Programs targeting litter and illegal dumping behaviours will be developed in conjunction with the Department of Education, Training and Employment and align with the Australian Sustainability Curriculum Framework.

Communities

The most diverse group of stakeholders and those that can have the greatest impact is the community. The decision to litter or illegally dump, to report the activity to authorities, or to tell a friend, relative or stranger that it is unacceptable behaviour is made by the individual.

The WRR Act allows for individuals within the community to report offences and provide witness statements in relation to littering and illegal dumping offences. Therefore, the community is the primary group that needs to be engaged, educated and empowered to support individual responsibility and to move Queensland towards long-term improvement in behaviour.
Research and consultancy sector

Understanding the behaviours underpinning litter and illegal dumping and applying new research findings, methods and innovative technologies are all vital to reducing the problem. Furthermore, research is needed to fill significant knowledge gaps in what we know about litter and illegal dumping—from how big is the problem, to who is involved in helping in clean-ups.

Evaluating the success of initiatives put in place to address litter and illegal dumping will also help build knowledge about the motivations behind this behaviour as well as inform decision-making.

The research and consultancy sector has an important role in helping build a clearer picture about litter and illegal dumping. From understanding the motivations for the behaviour, to influencing behavioural change, developing techniques to deter, and preventing these activities, and adapting innovative discoveries to aid detection and reporting—this sector plays an important role in progressing effective evaluations.

Conclusion

The EHP Litter and Illegal Dumping Action Plan sets the direction for tackling this significant social, economic and environmental issue through a clear vision and five program areas.

In this initial phase of delivery, much of the effort will go into building a solid foundation for raising the community's awareness, the risk to offenders, and building the capacity of enforcement officers. It will be enabled by an improved knowledge base through data collection and sharing arrangements, research into behaviours, new technologies and analytical methodologies, and the establishment of a baseline and key performance indicators to track and measure performance.

Partnerships will be essential in delivering this action plan—with community groups, industry associations and Queensland and local governments all having significant roles to play in its implementation. Achieving better outcomes is reliant on partnerships, networking, shared learning and education.

Dealing with this issue is everyone's business. Only through empowering and engaging Queenslanders will we achieve long-term behavioural improvements towards littering and illegal dumping.
Littering and Illegal Dumping Action Plan

www.ehp.qld.gov.au

› see it
› report it
› stop it