

litter prevention kit

ROADSIDE LITTER



VICTORIAN LITTER
ACTION ALLIANCE

This is one of a series of introductory guides complementing
VLAA's web site www.litter.vic.gov.au

This litter prevention kit has been prepared by the Litter Champion, a program supported by the Victorian Litter Action Alliance (VLAA) and managed by Sustainability Victoria.

Published by



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Disclaimer

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About the Victorian Litter Action Alliance

VLAA is the peak body for litter management and prevention in Victoria and aims to provide a coordinated approach to preventing litter across state and local government, industry and community sectors. Each of the Alliance members plays its part in the fight against litter. These members are:



This kit is an abridged edition of the Roadside Litter Prevention Kit published by VLAA in 2010.
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Roadside litter prevention

About

This guide won't tell you everything about preventing roadside litter, but it will give readers a snapshot of the circumstances that cause it, and how to tackle it.

If you're serious about running a roadside litter prevention program, read this guide then go to VLAA's website. There you will find the detail you need to develop a program, including resources such as forms, templates, case studies and fact sheets.

Best practice for litter prevention

VLAA's best practice model for litter prevention is a proven method for planning, implementing and evaluating a litter prevention program.

See the best practice section at the end for an overview of the program model, and to learn about the three key elements that guide successful campaigns – education, infrastructure and enforcement.



The problem

Roadside litter is a serious issue with a significant impact on amenity, health, community wellbeing and the environment.

It is also expensive, with councils spending \$1.7 million in 2007-2008 on this alone. Adding illegal dumping, and the cost was \$4.6 million.

Roadside litter gathers in gullies, nature strips and bushlands lining our roads, getting caught in trees, shrubbery and fencing, and can remain there for some time if not regularly cleaned.

Plastic bags, fast food litter and beverage containers are the most visible forms of roadside litter. Organic litter such as food scraps attract animals to the roadside, increasing the potential for injury and fatalities.

Roadside litter can be difficult to remove, and safety issues may be a concern when cleaning happens in the vicinity of traffic.

The Litter Champion

The Victorian Litter Action Alliance litter champion program has proven itself a great way to combine our efforts to tackle litter in Victoria. The Litter Champion's role is to help anyone interested in learning about or taking action on litter.

Contact the Litter Champion: t: 03 8626 8700.

Laws and enforcement

Roadside litter laws

The *Environment Protection Act 1970*, plus local laws and regulations applied by councils, constitute the laws around roadside litter.

The litter provisions in the *Act* include provisions for litter thrown from vehicles, which is a primary source of roadside litter, though illegal dumping and general litter at stops and rest bays add to the problem.

Section 45G deals with this issue specifically, stating that a registered owner of a vehicle is deemed to be guilty of a littering offence, with some exceptions such as public transport vehicles.

The *Act* covers “pollution of land” which allows EPA Victoria to investigate and prosecute instances of land pollution, such as operating illegal landfills, tipping, and the dumping of toxic materials or chemicals.

People in the business of enforcing litter and illegal dumping laws should make a point to be familiar with its provisions, and get expert advice as needed.

EPA Victoria

EPA’s **Litter Report Line** is available for anyone to use.

Those witnessing littering from vehicles can report it and the culprits will be prosecuted. Local governments can set up their own mechanisms similar to the EPA’s.

EPA’s **Litter Enforcement Toolkit** provides a thorough guide to the litter provisions in the *Environment Protection Act 1970*.

Visit www.epa.vic.gov.au.

Visible enforcement

High profile enforcement activities are an essential part of litter prevention programs.

For instance, the use of barricade tape, surveillance cameras and focusing on hotspots for direct enforcement interventions are effective tactics, and will send the message that littering is not allowed.

Safety

For maximum effectiveness, enforcement officers should work flexible hours, including evenings and weekends, though they should not work alone. Except for EPA officers and police, enforcement officers can only act within their area of control e.g. council land or waters in a municipal district.



courtesy of Noel Butcher photographs

Infrastructure

Tools for litter prevention

Infrastructure for reducing roadside litter comes in many forms.

- Permanent and movable signage to warn that the area is under surveillance.
- Using surveillance cameras (real and imitation).
- Providing public place lighting.
- Using 'under investigation' barrier tape when dumping is found on roadsides, especially with high visibility.
- Signage and bins at litter hot spots and roadside stops.
- Providing or encouraging the use of waste bags in vehicles.

Surveillance Cameras

Installing surveillance cameras (real or dummy) in hot spots to detect offenders can be very effective both to collect evidence and to deter would-be roadside litterers.

Moveable camera arrays are available at a reasonable cost, fully digitised and automatically activated to record littering events as they happen.

Under Investigation Barrier Tape

Highly visible marking tape or stickers are available for cordoning off and spotlighting major roadside littering incidents.

This highlights that the rubbish is 'under investigation' and sends a very strong message to motorists, especially local ones.



Signage

Roadside signage

Signage alone will not reduce roadside litter, but it can be a powerful tool in a roadside litter prevention program.

VLAA has worked with VicRoads and EPA Victoria to develop a series of VicRoads approved roadside litter and illegal dumping signs.

These signs have been designed for easy reading by passing motorists up to a speed of 110 kph, plus some designed for reading from stationary traffic.

The point is to warn, inform and motivate.

- To educate drivers that littering and illegal dumping is illegal.
- To act as a deterrent to littering and illegal dumping.
- As a call to action for witnesses to report litterers to authorities.

Research indicates that when signs appear in a series, they build the message. A sign appearing once only on a stretch of road will do little to change anything.

The signs are designed for placement of two to four at 10 km intervals, and the message can be conveyed slightly differently each time.

Safety

Any signage along roads and thoroughfares must comply with the standards set by VicRoads, and must not compromise safety or traffic flow.

VicRoads have developed a ten point safety checklist for erecting signage along roadsides, and there are permits that may be required. Visit www.vicroads.vic.gov.au for this essential information.



**EPA's new pollution
hotline 1300 EPA VIC
will replace the 1800
number in 2012.**

Communication and partnerships

Collaboration

Managing roadside litter involves a number of players.

- Managers of land adjacent to or part of a roadside or highway.
- Providers of information to the community about waste disposal.
- Those agencies with the authority to enforce the *Environment Protection Act 1970* or local laws.
- People and companies employed to remove waste or illegal dumping.
- Those involved in developing or delivering environmental programs.
- Managers of people engaged with any of the above.
- There needs to be a clear understanding across the agencies of the process of managing roadside litter.
- Align educational messages and communications with other agencies' communications.

Target audiences

Road users are your main target audience, but of course they come in a variety of types, such as holiday makers, local traffic, through traffic and transport operators.

Traffic volumes also vary during the week and significantly increase during school and public holidays.

Being clear about these considerations will help target the campaign.

Traders

Every litter prevention campaign should also target local traders, either to be supporters and advocates, or as the target for taking action – in the case of roadside litter, both of these motivations may apply.

Working with local traders to run a roadside litter prevention program is important, and you are likely to get their cooperation.

For you, traders can promote key messages for your program, and provide program materials to motorists.

They are also your eyes and ears to report road users doing the wrong thing.

Traders too want clean roadsides – clean is good for business.



Community engagement

Community engagement – speaking with and interacting with people - is the key ingredient to any litter campaign, backed up with information, communications by print and web, media, events, incentives and special promotions.

These are the platforms we use for education, and changing peoples' littering behaviour, and getting intelligence from the ground.

Key messages

The key messages for litter prevention are similar for all types, but should include these, localised in some way if possible.

- Keep your litter in your vehicle until you can recycle or dispose of it.
- Littering is illegal and should be reported.
- Litterers can be reported using EPA's pollution line 1300 EPA VIC (1300 372 842).

Adopt a Roadside

To involve broad sections of the community, Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria provides the 'Adopt a Roadside' program.



Businesses, community groups and other interested parties literally adopt a roadside and keep it litter free and in good care. Adopt A Roadside information can be found at www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/kabv

Litter Surveys

The following describes the basics of conducting litter surveys, one of the first steps in a litter prevention program.

Location

- Choose a minimum of three locations along a stretch of road, in particular with high traffic volumes, which don't have dedicated roadside parking bays, and which can comply with safety rules.
- The survey areas should be rectangular and 48 square metres. The width and breadth of the area can vary, depending on site conditions.
- If possible, the sites should include fixed infrastructure (benches, bins or signs) to act as site measurement reference points.
- Conduct most surveys where most of the people are. If 80% of people are usually around a certain area, then 80% of surveys should be in that area.

Full scale survey

- Here, the selected site is cleared of all litter, which is then placed into bags or other containers and counted elsewhere.
- The site is then revisited within a specific time frame, typically one week to one month. Again the litter is removed, placed into bags and counted.
- The total litter that has accumulated between the two surveys is the **litter accumulation rate**, which is your benchmark.

Victorian Litter Report

The Victorian Litter Report (VLR) is the tool used by the Victorian government to measure progress towards reducing littering behaviour.

The VLR uses the Clean Communities Assessment Tool (CCAT). The CCAT uses a defined list of litter categories. These should be used for conducting litter surveys.

In addition to litter counts and surveys, the VLR measures the context (e.g. general state of the site), rates the quality and state of infrastructure, gauges community attitudes and perceptions, and behaviour ratings for littering and bin disposal.

Visual survey

- Here the litter is not removed, but counted by observers moving systematically across the whole of the site, noting on a record sheet every piece of observable litter.
- Because litter is not collected, a visual survey takes less time, and can supplement the data between full scale surveys.
- A trial of litter survey methodology suggests visual surveys take around 20 minutes.

Full scale and visual survey

- Here litter is removed and counted for the initial count, as in a standard full scale survey.
- When the site is revisited two weeks later, litter is counted in place as in a visual survey to establish the litter accumulation rate.
- In addition, doing a visual survey before a full scale clean up and count provides better and more accurate information.

Recording the count

- Count all visible litter in the 48 square metre area.
- Use a recording form that is consistent with the Victorian Litter Report categories for litter items, so that you can compare the state litter count with yours.

For safety's sake and better accuracy, litter surveys are best done in pairs.

A summary of the CCAT categories is as follows.

- Confectionary – chewing gum; confectionary wrappers; ice cream wrappers.
- Beverage – glass bottles and pieces; plastic bottles and cups; caps straws and utensils; paper cups; tetra boxes; aluminium cans and pieces.
- Organic – animal poo; food; wooden utensils.
- Plastic film – bags; wrappers.
- Paper – paper bags and pieces; serviettes and tissues; receipts and tickets; newspaper; advertising material; takeaway boxes; cardboard boxes and pieces.
- Cigarettes – cigarette butts; packets, wrappers, foil and matches.
- Other – packing straps; shopping trolleys; syringes; other items without a category.

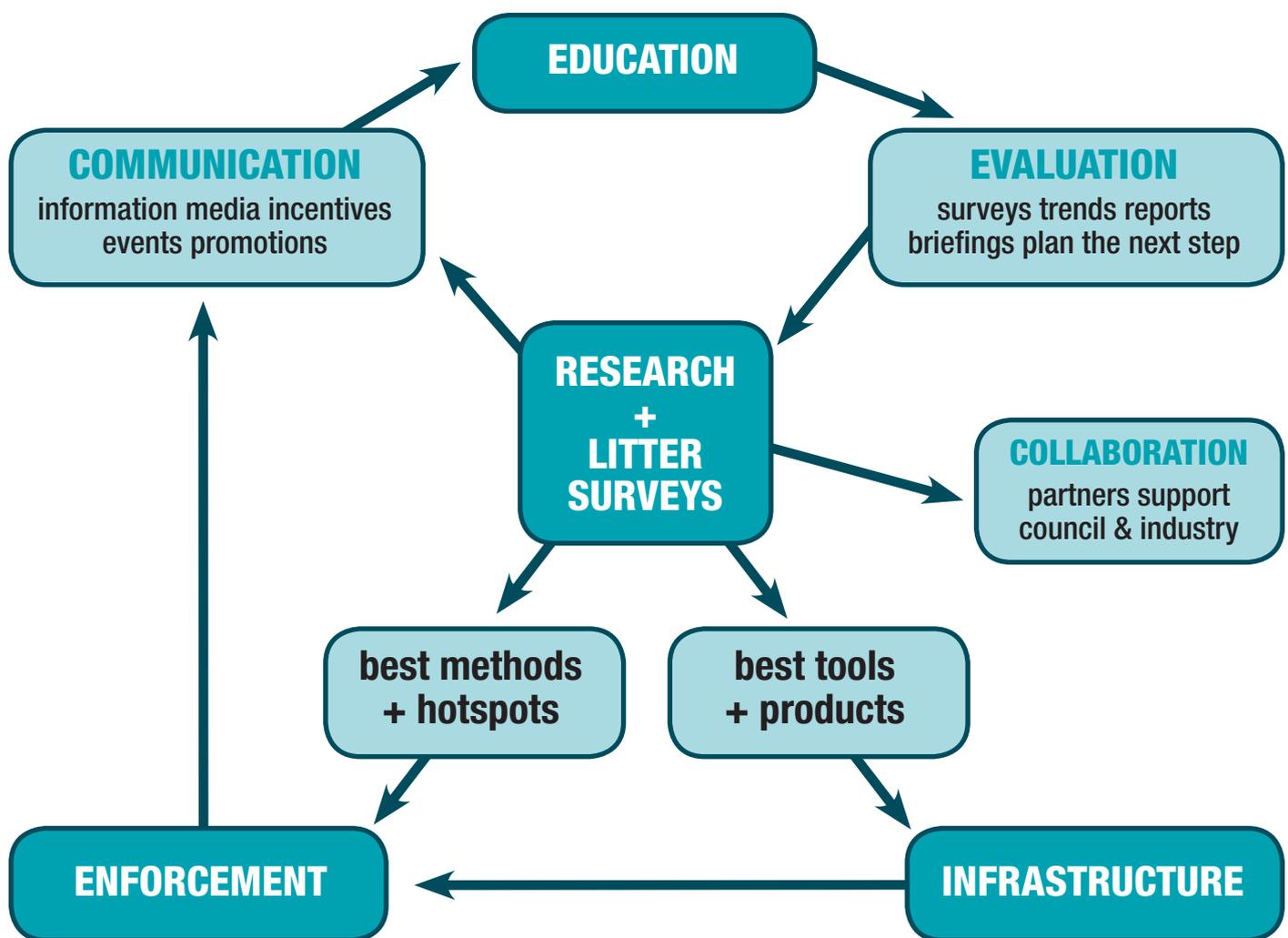
Best practice in litter prevention

VLAA best practice programming model

For any litter and waste prevention program, the three key elements of education, infrastructure and enforcement are central to success.

These underpin the other components of best practice – research, incentives, working together, good communication, and to complete the loop, monitoring and evaluation.

VLAA developed its best practice programming model in 2007 to set a consistent standard for planning a litter reduction program.



Best practice in litter prevention

AT THE VERY START

1. Research – understand the problem

You need to be fully versed in existing knowledge about behaviours, impacts and proven tactics for litter prevention, as well as understanding the characteristics of the location and behaviours you are targeting.

You also need to establish on-the-ground base line information, i.e. carry out litter counts and surveys, and then periodically repeat the exercise.

IMPLEMENTATION

2. Education – explaining the problem

Education is our most powerful tool for achieving long-term change in the community. It can change peoples' motivations and build their capacity to do the right thing. The aim is to imbed a way of thinking – "I know how to, I want to, and I know what the benefits are".

3. Enforcement – reinforcing the message

Enforcement is not just about catching and prosecuting people. Public knowledge that littering laws are being enforced and will result in fines and possibly public shame is what makes this component work. But of course, enforcement must also actually happen, not simply be promoted.

4. Infrastructure – the tools of change

Making it easy for people to 'do the right thing' by establishing physical infrastructure is another key to long-term behaviour change and reducing litter. Infrastructure can include appropriate bins, signage and as part of the enforcement equation, surveillance cameras and 'under investigation' barrier tape.

5. Incentives – persuading people to change their behaviour

Rewards, privileges and other incentives are a powerful way to encourage people to dispose of their waste appropriately and responsibly.

6. Working together – support and collaboration

Working in a coordinated manner within your council or organisation, engaging with the local community, and gaining the cooperation and support of key sectors such as business and traders, goes hand in hand with litter prevention. This starts at the beginning when planning a program, and will be the key ingredient for sustainable success.

7. Good communication – every step of the way

A strong communications plan publicising each phase of your program helps build support in the community, and is another avenue for educational messages. Communication within your teams, with partners and your own senior management is also important to maintain this essential 'back room' support throughout.

THE LOOP

8. Monitoring and evaluation – what have we achieved?

Monitoring the program during and after implementation tells you how well the litter reduction program is going, based on the base lines established at the beginning, and the targets you set yourself.

This forms the basis for 'doing it again', but with the hindsight of considerable experience.

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This kit is presented as an introduction. Always go to the VLAA web site www.litter.vic.gov.au for full details and resources for running a litter prevention program. Please contact the Litter Champion litterchampion@sustainability.vic.gov.au or phone 03 8626 8700 for more assistance.

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