



# **Attachment 1 to Item 10.5.3.**

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## **Draft Hawkesbury Litter Prevention Strategy**

Date of meeting: 6 May 2025  
Location: Council Chambers  
Time: 6:30pm



HAWKESBURY CITY COUNCIL  
**LITTER PREVENTION PLAN**  
**2025–2030**

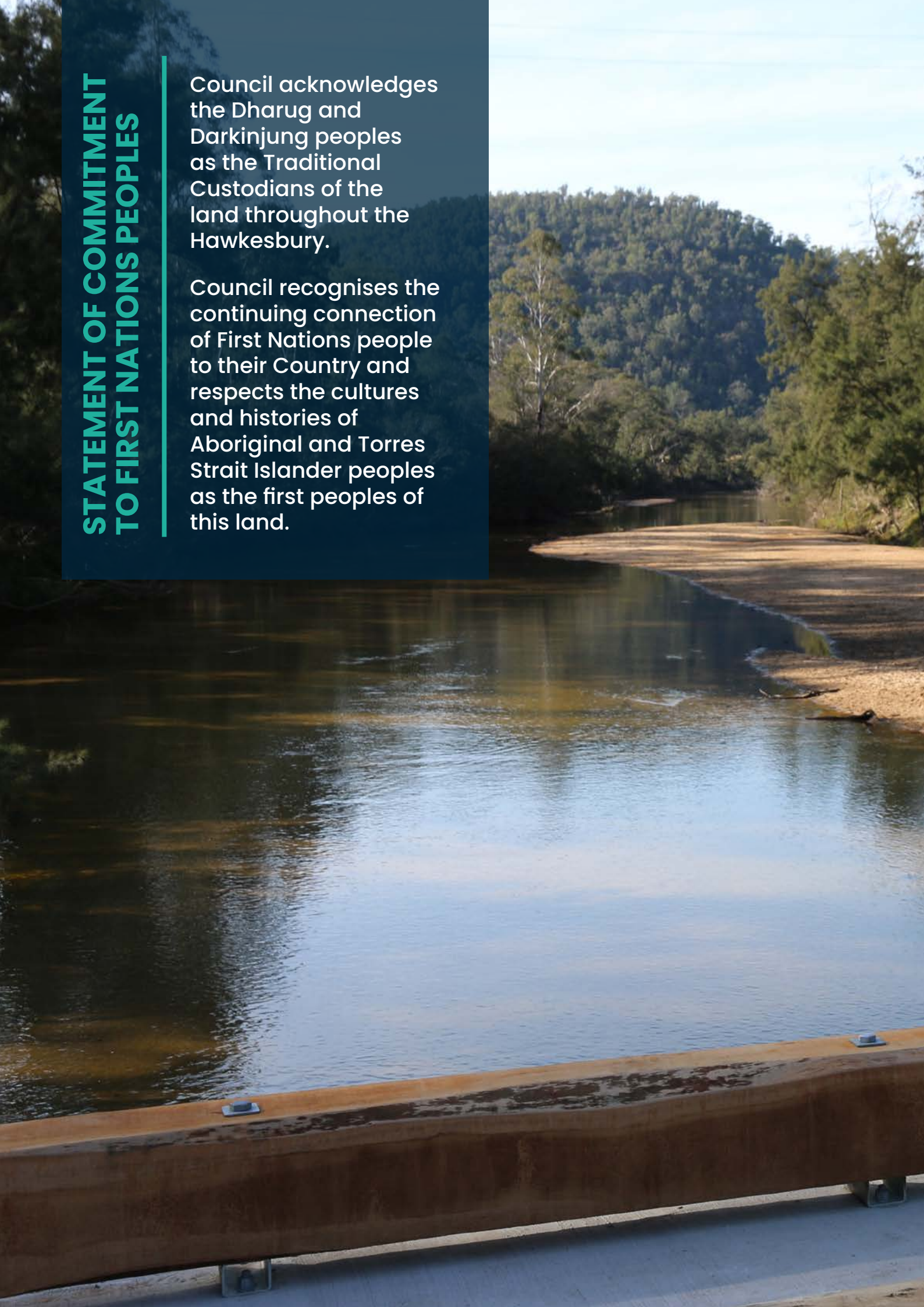




## STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

Council acknowledges the Dharug and Darkinjung peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land throughout the Hawkesbury.

Council recognises the continuing connection of First Nations people to their Country and respects the cultures and histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first peoples of this land.



Term	Definition
<b>ALM</b>	Australian Litter Measure
<b>BaU</b>	Business as Usual
<b>BLC</b>	Butt Litter Check
<b>Cost of Litter</b>	Study to determine how much litter management and prevention activities cost Council
<b>CRM</b>	Customer Relationship Management system
<b>CSP</b>	Community Strategic Plan
<b>FOGO</b>	Food Organics Garden Organics
<b>GPT</b>	Gross Pollutant Trap
<b>HCC</b>	Hawkesbury City Council
<b>Hey Tosser</b>	A litter prevention campaign run by the NSW EPA
<b>HNRS CMP</b>	Hawkesbury-Nepean River System Catchment Management Program
<b>HNCMG</b>	Hawkesbury-Nepean River System Catchment Management Group
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Includes signage, public place bins, event bins, commercial bins, bin cages and bin poles/ restrictors, SQIDs, GPTs, street sweepers and butt bins
<b>IP&amp;R</b>	Integrated Planning and Reporting framework
<b>LGA</b>	Local Government Area
<b>Litter</b>	Litter is any material smaller than a shopping bag (NSW EPA, 2019) that has been improperly discarded, blown away, or left in the wrong place
<b>Litter Density</b>	Number of litter items per 1000m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Litter Management</b>	Activities taken to respond to incorrectly disposed litter
<b>Litter Prevention</b>	Activities undertaken to drive correct litter disposal behaviours
<b>LLC</b>	Local Litter Check
<b>NSW EPA</b>	New South Wales Environment Protection Authority
<b>OIAA</b>	Own It and Act, the NSW EPA Strategy Framework for Litter Prevention
<b>Party Items</b>	Confetti, balloons, blowouts, streamers, party poppers, curling ribbon, bunting, candles/sparklers, party prize paraphernalia
<b>SQID</b>	Stormwater Quality Improvement Device
<b>WaSM</b>	NSW EPA Waste and Sustainable Material Strategy 2014-2021
<b>WSROC</b>	Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils
<b>WSU</b>	Western Sydney University

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The Litter Prevention Plan 2025–2030 sets a clear vision to empower Council, community, businesses, and visitors, to take informed, efficient actions towards a litter-free future. It is aligned with local, regional, and state policies and strategies.

Developed through consultation with both internal and external stakeholders, and supported by detailed data and research, the Plan identifies six priority litter items: cigarette butts, takeaway food packaging, beverage containers, snacks and confectionery items, litter fragments, and party items. Additionally, it pinpoints five critical locations for targeted intervention: recreational parks, retail precincts, roadsides, carparks, and the Hawkesbury River. The approach outlined in this Plan focus on addressing the behaviours that lead to littering in these specific areas.

Council has set targets that align with the Western Sydney Regional Litter Prevention Plan 2023–2027. Over the next five years, Council will:

- Increase investment in litter prevention from the 2022 baseline
- Include litter prevention in organisational documents that align with the IP&R framework
- Increase the number of new registrations on the Report to EPA app by 200 from the baseline established in 2024
- Decrease litter in priority litter locations by 20% across HCC from the baseline established in 2024
- Decrease cigarette butt litter in priority litter locations by 20% from the baseline established in 2024
- Decrease the percentage of self-reported HCC community members who litter.

As a small but committed Council, the Plan outlines a realistic and achievable way forward. This includes three strategic directions. Firstly, Council will establish a balanced approach to litter prevention and management within the Council. We will establish the systems and processes required to maximise efficiencies. Secondly, we will activate community and businesses so that they are empowered to take litter prevention actions. The final strategic direction seeks to harness the collective expertise of the Council and its partners to drive projects and campaigns to create positive litter disposal changes in behaviour.

We will seek support to implement this Strategy for the NSW EPA.



# 1. INTRODUCTION

Council's Litter Prevention Plan 2025–2030 (the Plan) outlines the Hawkesbury City Council's plan to prevent litter and preserve the natural beauty of our Local Government Area (LGA) over the next five years. The Plan will enhance Council's capacity to take ownership and plan strategically suitable initiatives for the Hawkesbury LGA. It will empower Council in litter prevention at a local level.

Litter is any material smaller than a shopping bag (NSW EPA, 2019) that has been improperly discarded, blown away, or left in the wrong place. This includes intentional littering and incidental litter, where items have escaped a bin. Items larger than a shopping bag are classified as illegal dumping, which is not addressed in this Plan.

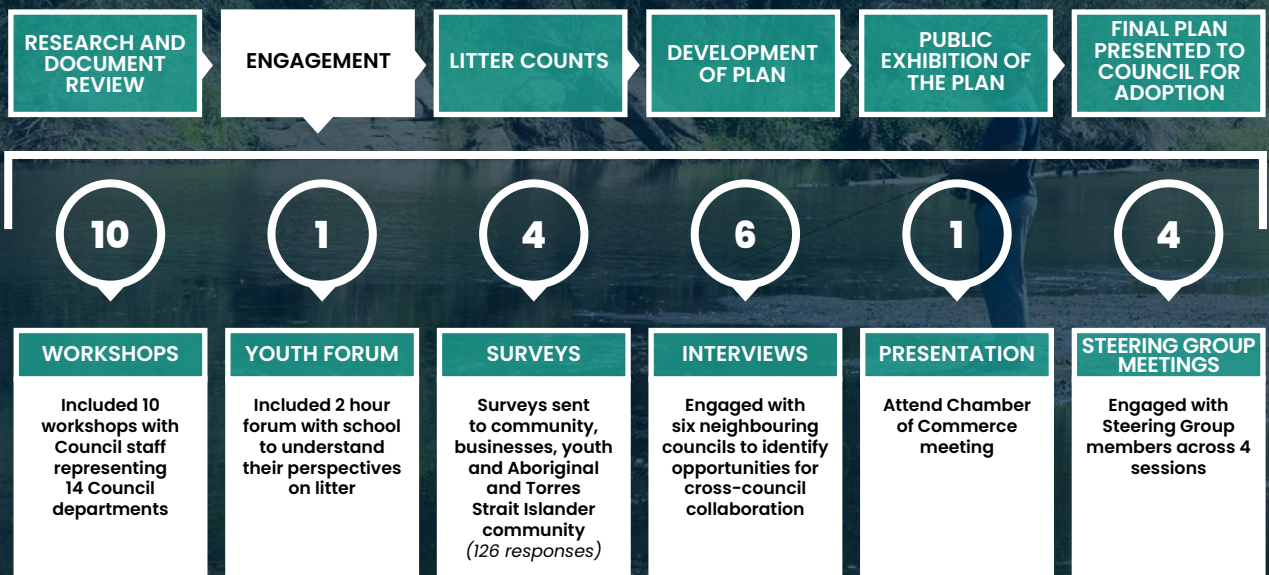
Both qualitative and quantitative data indicates that litter is an ongoing challenge in the Hawkesbury. With a growing and changing population, it is important that Council takes a key leadership role to prevent litter in the Hawkesbury.

Building upon State targets and the regional Western Sydney Litter Prevention Plan and Roadmap, our local Plan will ensure we build internal capacity to ensure we can deliver and sustain best practice litter prevention interventions.

While Council already engages in litter prevention and management actions, due to resource constraints, there has been a tendency for a more reactionary approach. The Plan outlines a vision, long term targets and the strategic direction to taken to realise them.

This Plan has been prepared following extensive consultation and collaboration with internal and external stakeholders, and through extensive desktop research. It reflects both qualitative and quantitative data captured.

## 1.1 HOW WE DEVELOPED THIS PLAN





The following provides a snapshot of the location, places, people and industry that make up the Hawkesbury.

## 2.1 OUR POPULATION

The population is approximately 68,000<sup>1</sup>. The LGA has experienced a population growth of approximately 6,000 people since 2006<sup>2</sup>. The population is projected to grow to 85,050 by 2036.

Hawkesbury is made of 65 towns and villages with:



**47%  
PEOPLE**  
LIVE WEST OF THE  
HAWKESBURY RIVER



**53%  
PEOPLE**  
LIVE EAST OF THE  
HAWKESBURY RIVER

Key demographics from Census data include:



**91%  
PEOPLE**  
AUSTRALIAN  
CITIZENS



**7.1%  
PEOPLE**  
SPEAK A LANGUAGE  
OTHER THAN ENGLISH  
AT HOME



**53.6%  
PEOPLE**  
TRAVEL TO WORK IN  
A PRIVATE CAR



**1%  
PEOPLE**  
USE PUBLIC  
TRANSPORT



**18.4%  
WORKERS**  
TECHNICIANS AND  
TRADE WORKERS



**58%  
PEOPLE**  
BOTH WORK  
AND LIVE IN THE  
HAWKESBURY

<sup>1</sup>Census data 2021

<sup>2</sup>Census data 2021



Additional key demographics from Census data include:

- **69%** of our total population are adults with the highest proportion (18%) aged 35–49, followed by ages 50–59 (14%)
- Largest changes in age structure between 2016–2021 Census saw an increase in seniors aged **70–84 years**
- **70%** of households are owned, which indicates a settled area with low transiency
- **86%** live in a house, while **12.4%** are in a medium density dwelling.

## 2.2 OUR LAND USE

The Hawkesbury City Local Government Area is unique in the Western Sydney region. It is peri-urban, and with 2,800 square kilometres of land, it's the largest LGA in metropolitan NSW.

The Hawkesbury LGA has mixed land use, including residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and military. It's predominately comprised of national and state parks, with more than 70% of the LGA being National Parks.

The agricultural lands that surround the Hawkesbury's towns and villages represent the oldest rural land holdings under continuous cultivation within Australia. This land is mainly located in the north of the LGA. Vegetables (47.2%) and nurseries and cut flowers (44.6%) represent the largest value of agricultural production.

The main population centres are Windsor and Richmond.

As Sydney continues its urban sprawl, Hawkesbury LGA will become the location for an additional 1,300 new homes by 2029. This growth aims to meet state planning targets for housing and align with the national Housing Accord<sup>3</sup>.

Developments are already underway west of the Hawkesbury River and are subdivisions of rural land. New housing development is being realised at Redbank Estate at North Richmond and another at Vineyard.

While we have a green LGA, our urban areas have between 5% and 20% urban coverage. Our Urban Greening Strategy 2023 aims to protect our current coverage and increase it in urban areas.

Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants Programs (formerly known as West Invest) is a state government initiative that has brought funding (\$98 million) into the Hawkesbury for a wide range of projects. These include Richmond Swimming centre, North Richmond Community Precinct, Turnbull oval in North Richmond, Kurrajong to Kurmond Cycleway. Once complete, these projects will bring visitors and site users from near and far.

Combined, Hawkesbury is on the cusp of a major transformation: more people, different people, more housing estates, more visitors, more infrastructure. This will create a changing landscape that will be impacted by population growth.

<sup>3</sup> NSW Planning, Hawkesbury Council Housing snapshot.

## 2.3 OUR RIVER

The Upper Hawkesbury River flows through the LGA for a total length of 76km. Major tributaries that flow into the Upper Hawkesbury are the Colo, Nepean, Macdonald, and Grose Rivers, each with diverse ecosystems.

The Hawkesbury-Nepean catchment is the longest coastal catchment in NSW. The Hawkesbury River flows a total of 470km, from south of Goulburn, through the Hawkesbury LGA, out into Broken Bay and the Pacific Ocean.

Currently, there are six Councils working together to deliver the Hawkesbury-Nepean River System Coastal Management Program (HNRS CMP). This Program is being hosted by Hornsby Shire Council. The development of the HNRS CMP has five stages. The following stages have been either fully or partially completed

- Scoping Study
- Assessment of the risks, vulnerabilities and opportunities – litter has been identified as a stressor to the river system
- Identification of management options
- Preparation of the CMP.

Once the CMP is adopted, the final stage is to implement, monitor, evaluate, and report the Program.

A unique element of the Hawkesbury is that its river systems can be used recreationally, including for swimming and boating. This feature attracts visitors from all over the Greater Sydney region.

Council assets include:

- 3 boat ramps available for public use
- 67 bridges
- Footpaths and cycleways that intersect with the foreshore of the river
- Parks (and carpark) for recreation that are adjacent to the river
- 20 GPTs to stem flow of litter into the river via runoff
- 1 streetsweeper to reduce litter in gutters and reduce the volume of litter entering the stormwater system.

However, the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley (the Valley) is an incredibly complex floodplain with one of the highest flood risks in Australia.

The Valley is considered one of the most dangerous floodplains in Australia, flooding six times between 2020-2022, and again in 2024. Every flood is different – past events can't predict future events – and floods in the Valley are likely to be more frequent and get much worse.



*Images: Flooding of the Hawkesbury River and floating debris washed up on Dangar Island in Sydney's north.*





## 3.1 HISTORY OF LITTER PREVENTION

Hawkesbury has been involved in litter management and litter prevention projects for some time. Table 1 below provides a summary.

In 2011 and 2012, Hawkesbury developed and delivered a Litter and Illegal Dumping Plan and Implementation Program which resulted in litter reduction outcomes.

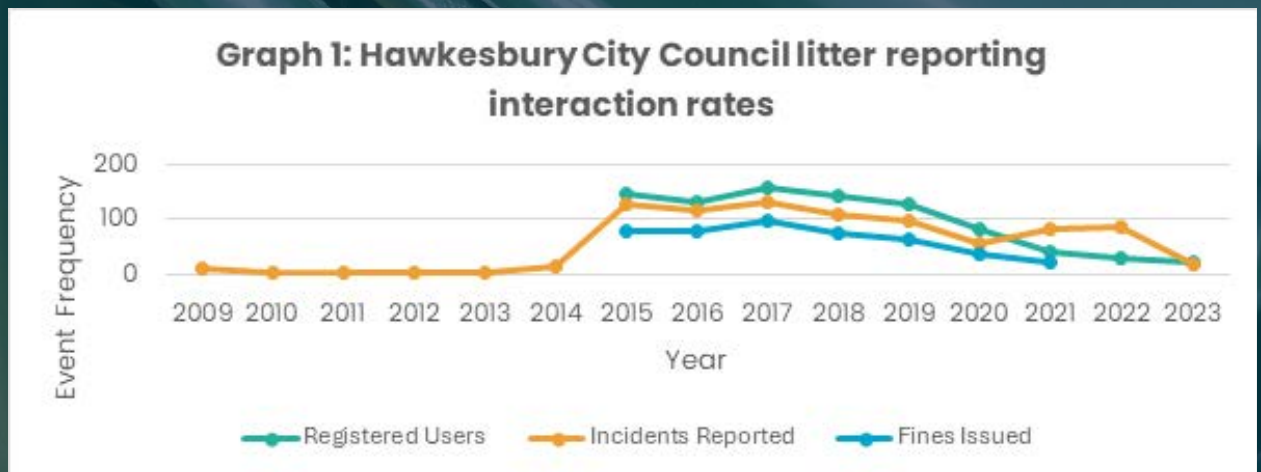
We continue to support the annual Clean Up Australia Day events, and we run a school waste education program which includes a topic on litter.

We have always participated in regional litter prevention opportunities. In 2015 we supported the development of WSROC 2016–2021 Regional Litter Plan and participated in projects. Currently we are participants in the delivery of the 2023–2027 Western Sydney Regional Litter Prevention Plan, once again supporting a WSROC lead collaborative approach to litter prevention in our region (see page 15 below).

We have installed more than 20 GPTs, we have one street sweeper, and we are proud of the litter picking team who ensure our open spaces are clean. We have a structured servicing regime for our public place bins, which includes daily servicing in high profile, high use locations.

Our residents can report litter through an online portal on the Council website, and we note this is often illegal dumping, as opposed to litter complaints.

Since 2015, 878 Hawkesbury residents have registered to the Report to EPA program. This has enabled them to report littering incidents from vehicles. When promotion of the program was at its peak in 2017, 131 reports of littering were made to the EPA, and 98 infringement notices were issued in that same year. See graph 1 below which shows annual registrations, reports and issued fines.



*NOTE: Graph 1 demonstrates the HCC resident interaction with Report Littering APP and the resultant fines issued in any one year. The event frequency shows new registrations, new reports and new fines issued for each year. It is not an accumulative tally. Note that one registered user might report multiple incidents or none.*



Council engages in enforcement activities through regulatory staff, as part of their standard procedures. In the past, HCC has engaged in enforcement blitzes.

- As part of the Hey Tosser! campaign in 2015, HCC did an enforcement blitz. 45 fines and 47 cautions were issued over 577 hours.
- As part of the WSROC Regional Litter Plan 2016–2021, in 2018 HCC did an enforcement blitz targeting cigarette butt litter.
- As part of the WSROC Regional Litter Plan 2016–2021, in 2019 HCC did an enforcement blitz targeting takeaway food packaging.

Title	Year	Description
<b>Cover Your Load</b>	2011, 2012	Council developed banners and roadside signs to encourage people to cover their truck loads.
<b>Adopt-a-Road</b>	2012	HCC aimed to increase the number of groups who had 'adopted' a road to keep clean. Council ran a promotional campaign by running articles in newspapers.
<b>Follow Dat Truck – in the Hawkesbury</b>	2011	Council staff monitored and followed Demolition and Earthworks transporter vehicles to do a blitz on illegal transportation of waste, illegal dumping, and littering from uncovered loads.
<b>Hey Tosser! campaign</b>	2015	Targeted litter hotspots with new 120L bins to replace existing bins at North Richmond Shopping Centre Car Park, and at Windsor Street, Richmond. Enviropoles were also installed at some sites across the LGA. This was supported by a promotional campaign, including signage, stalls at events, and newspaper ads. Council also engaged with a McDonalds and recommended a new bin be installed in the carpark. McDonalds instead put daily cleaning of the carpark on their roster.
<b>Bin Your Butts</b>	2018	A WSROC led program to reduce cigarette butts in Western Sydney. Butt bins were installed in key locations. Hawkesbury also had street performers to promote the message.
<b>Responsible Café's</b>	2018	HCC partnered with the Responsible Café's initiative to reduce the use of single use takeaway cups. Council provided free reusable cups to residents at the 2018 Hawkesbury Show.
<b>Zero Litter to River</b>	2021	HCC partnered with Sam Bonus, Hawkesbury's Young Australian of the Year 2021, to campaign about the effects of litter on the marine environment.
<b>Clean Up Australia Day</b>	ALL	HCC participates in this event every year by promoting it, providing residents with access to information, and collecting litter from volunteer sites.
<b>Education campaigns</b>	ALL	Council offers a free Primary School Waste Education Program. It introduces students to a range of waste management issues and solutions. Schools select their own incursion topics from a list, with one of the available courses focused on reducing litter.

### 3.1.1 HISTORY OF LITTER COLLABORATION

#### HAWKESBURY CITY COUNCIL + WSROC

Council participated in the 2016–2021 Western Sydney Regional Litter Plan, alongside nine councils.

The Regional Litter Plan supported the NSW EPA target to reduce litter by 40%. Hawkesbury indicated that their key litter items were cigarette butts and takeaway food packaging, both of which were addressed in the Plan.

The objectives of this Plan were to:

- increase the perceived risk of getting caught littering from vehicles
- promote litter prevention to senior Council staff and elected representatives
- reduce cigarette butt litter in retail locations
- reduce volume and cost of cleaning up takeaway litter in recreational parks.

#### The 2016–2021 Plan included nine targets:

- Six were met or exceeded
- Two were partly achieved

## 2023–2027

In 2023, WSROC and seven participating Councils (including Hawkesbury), supported the development of the Western Sydney Regional Litter Prevention Plan 2023–2027 and subsequent Roadmap.

WSROC received a \$450,000 grant to implement this strategy. They will employ a regional litter prevention officer to support participating councils.

Hawkesbury City Council will continue to collaborate with WSROC and neighbouring Councils to deliver upon litter prevention targets in this Plan.

## 2027 TARGETS

- The self-reported percentage of community who litter will be less than 40%
- Takeaway containers/packaging litter in target litter locations will decrease by 5% across the region
- Cigarette butt litter in target litter locations will decrease by 5%
- The number of new registrations to report to EPA via the litter portal will increase by 1000 across our region
- Participating Councils will increase investment in litter prevention from the 2022 baseline.





## 3.2 KEY LESSONS AND LEARNINGS

When reflecting on our past actions and achievements, there were three key lessons:

1. Having access to the expertise of regional coordinators and other Councils via WSROC is important. It allows Council to deliver strategic and localised litter prevention programs with limited resources. It has built our knowledge and capacity.
2. With limited internal resourcing and funding, it has been difficult to sustain projects or expand upon them.
3. We must transition to a strategic approach to litter prevention to create meaningful and sustained change.





## 4.1 OUR POLICY AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The objectives and actions within this Plan will guide Council's approach to litter prevention over the next five years.

The Plan aligns with Council's wider goals, as outlined below. It will also make contributions towards regional objectives, and statewide litter targets.

### 4.1.1 Local

Key Policy Plan	Summary of Relevant Details	Key targets/actions relevant to Council
<b>Community Strategic Plan 2022-2042</b>	<p>Emphasises maintaining well-regarded leisure and recreational facilities, where the community likes how the city looks and feels and is proud to live here.</p> <p>Focuses on the importance of sustainability, and encouraging the community to reduce, reuse, recycle.</p> <p>Places value on protecting our waterways and wetlands.</p>	<p>Community outcome 1: Great Place to Live</p> <p>Community outcome 2: Protected Environment and Valued History</p>
<b>Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2023</b>	<p>Details the wider framework for sustainability within the Hawkesbury, achieved through Council and community actions.</p> <p>Highlights the threat litter has on our water-based ecosystems, and the opportunity to continue to inform the community on the actions they can take to reduce litter.</p>	<p>Theme 1: Natural Environment: Water</p> <p>Theme 3: Sustainable Living: Waste minimisation and resource recovery</p>
<b>Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2022-2032</b>	<p>Addresses the strategy for waste management within the City. Aims to protect the natural environment by minimising waste and increasing resource recovery. Specifically mentions reducing litter.</p>	<p>Theme 1: Resource-responsible citizens</p> <p>Theme 3: Environmental Stewardship</p>
<b>Net Zero Emissions and Water Efficiency Strategy 2021</b>	<p>Outlines how to achieve a climate resilient community with economic benefits for both Council and community.</p>	<p>Theme 4: Towards a zero-waste community</p>
<b>NSW EPA Own It and Act Strategic Framework</b>	<p>Allows Councils to identify organisational gaps, drivers, and goals to build internal capacity and embed long term litter prevention.</p>	<p>Build organisational wide commitment to litter prevention</p> <p>Improve monitoring and evaluation processes</p> <p>Set a clear litter prevention vision.</p>

## 4.1.2 Regional

Key Policy Plan	Summary of Relevant Details	Key targets/actions relevant to Council
<b>Hawkesbury Nepean River System Physical and Ecological Processes Abridgement Report 2022</b>	<p>Developed as part of the Hawkesbury-Nepean River System Coastal Management Program.</p> <p>Provides an overview of the physical and ecological processes that exist in the Hawkesbury-Nepean River system, including current and potential threats and stressors.</p>	<p>Recreational fishing, passive boating, swimming, and stormwater runoff were identified as stressors.</p> <p>Recreational fishing, passive boating, and swimming specifically mention that recreational use generates litter that threatens the ecosystem.</p> <p>Stormwater runoff was identified as a threat due to litter being washed into the river.</p>
<b>Western Sydney Regional Litter Prevention Plan 2023-2027</b>	<p>Outlines the strategic direction of the region, as lead by the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC), in preventing litter.</p>	<p>The self-reported percentage of community who litter will be less than 40%</p> <p>Takeaway containers/ packaging litter in target litter locations will decrease by 5% across the region</p> <p>Cigarette butt litter in target litter locations will decrease by 5%</p> <p>The number of new registrations to Report to EPA via the litter portal will increase by 1000 across our region</p> <p>Participating Councils will increase investment in litter prevention from the 2022 baseline.</p>

## 4.1.3 State

Key Policy Plan	Summary of Relevant Details	Key targets/actions relevant to Council
<b>NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041</b>	To support their targets, the NSW Government has committed to financially supporting local litter prevention programs to be delivered across the state.	<p>30% reduction in plastic litter items by 2025</p> <p>60% reduction in all litter items by 2030</p> <p>50% reduction in cigarette butt littering behaviour by 2030.</p>
<b>NSW Litter Prevention Strategy 2022-2030</b>	Provides the framework the NSW EPA use to prioritise funding, and to take action to reduce litter.	<p>It includes 7 key approaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Source control</li> <li>Diversion to a Circular Economy</li> <li>Education, awareness, and engagement</li> <li>Regulation and enforcement</li> <li>Infrastructure and clean-up</li> <li>Targeted programs to stop litter dispersal</li> <li>Monitoring, evaluation, and research.</li> </ul>
<b>NSW EPA Own It and Act Strategic Framework</b>	Completion of the OIAA Rubric process allows Councils to quantify organisational strengths and weaknesses.	<p>Completion of the OIAA SWOT</p> <p>Setting organisational targets to report against annually.</p>







Litter is a deeply complex problem, and often there are widely varied reasons for an individual littering. There is also no 'typical' litterer.

Litter is defined as an item or a cluster of items that are no bigger than a shopping bag.

The litter problem in Hawkesbury is outlined in the following section.

## 5.1 COST OF LITTER

According to the NSW EPA, litter management costs the NSW economy more than \$162.6m per year<sup>4</sup>. Local government agencies bear the largest cost of litter management, paying \$135.3m (83% of the total litter management costs for the state).

As part of their partnership with WSROC, Hawkesbury has completed two cost of litter studies. The baseline study was completed across the 2014/15 financial year, and a second assessment was done for the 2021/22 financial year.

For the findings below, public place waste refers to waste that was correctly disposed in public place waste and recycling bins. Litter refers to waste that was not placed into bins and was therefore disposed incorrectly and cleaned up by Council.

Despite commitment to the process, it is reported that it was difficult to obtain some data. The consultant who prepared the Cost of Litter Report filled data gaps with assumed knowledge. Costs are therefore considered indicative.

Regional findings<sup>5</sup> indicate that since 2014/15:

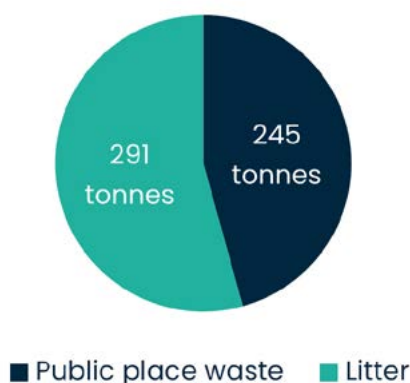
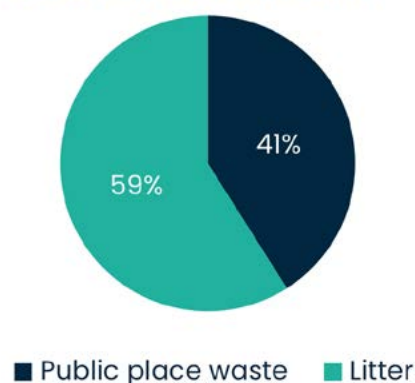
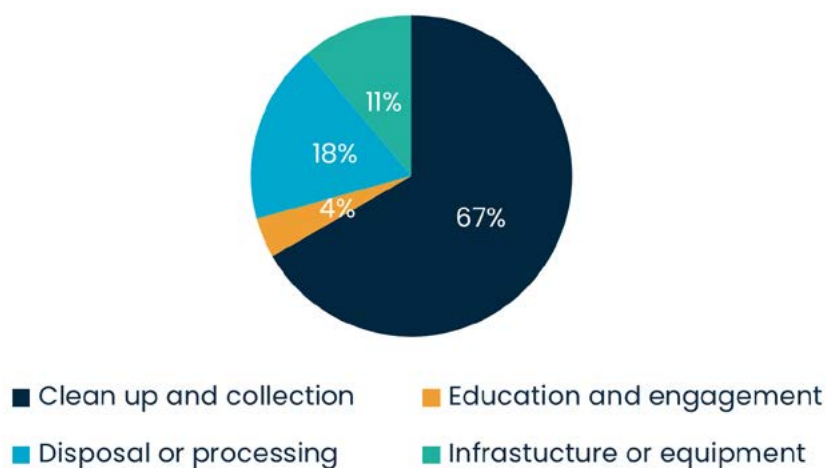
- The cost of managing incorrectly disposed litter has increased by almost \$6m for participating WSROC Councils
- The costs per capita have also increased by almost a third in the same timeframe for participating WSROC Councils
- There has been an 84% increase in the average spending per Council to manage incorrect litter disposal.

For Hawkesbury in the year 2021–2022:

- Of the 536 tonnes of waste collected, 45.7% (245t) was public place waste and 54.3% (291t) was litter. See graph 2 below.
  - Across the participating WSROC Councils, the average was 74% was public place waste, while 26% was litter.
- The average annual cost per person to collect public place waste is \$6, and \$9 for litter, for a total of \$14.
  - The regional average for annual cost per person to collect public place waste is \$7, and for litter is \$12. This is a total of \$19.
- Council spent \$985,000 on (public place) waste management. 41% was spent on public place waste, while 59% was spent on litter. See graph 3 below.
  - Regionally the average Council spent \$4,828,393 on litter management. 36% was on public place waste management, while 64% was for litter management.
- Of their total cost, Council spent: 66% on clean up and collection, 18% on disposal or processing, 11% on infrastructure equipment, and 4% on education and engagement. See graph 4 on the following page.

<sup>4</sup> Litter Costs to the NSW Economy – A Preliminary Report

<sup>5</sup> Arcadis Western Sydney Regional Litter Assessment 2021–22

**Graph 2: Total waste collected****Graph 3: Waste management cost to Council breakdown****Graph 4: Total Cost Breakdown**

## 5.2 COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES

### 5.2.1 What the data shows

While the Hawkesbury community know that litter is important, on the back of multiple floods, there appear to be other higher priorities.

A recent community sentiment survey<sup>6</sup> conducted by WSROC in 2023 revealed that in the Hawkesbury:

- 43% of people are not at all/not particularly concerned about litter. 34% were quite concerned, while 23% were extremely/very concerned
- 94% agreed that litter makes the place look messy
- 94% agreed that littering has a negative impact on the environment
- 51% agree that people litter less now than they used to
- 42% agreed that most people litter from time to time.

<sup>6</sup> Litter Social Study - Western Sydney Residents



## 5. UNDERSTANDING LITTER IN HAWKESBURY

When asked whether they litter themselves, 8% said they do, and a further 11% said they might. 77% said they don't, while the remaining 4% said they don't recall.

85% said they were aware that there are fines for littering, but only 10% said it's likely that they would be fined. 77% said it's unlikely.

77% knew that they could report littering, while 22% said they were unaware. 1% said they couldn't recall.

When asked what they would do if they saw somebody littering:

- 49% said they would pick the item up themselves
- 40% said they would get angry but do nothing
- 31% said they would say something
- 28% said they would do nothing
- 22% said they would complain to Council
- 22% said they report them to the EPA
- Only 8% said they had reported somebody for littering in the last 12 months.

During the preparation of this Plan in 2024, the Hawkesbury community and businesses were surveyed to garner views on litter.

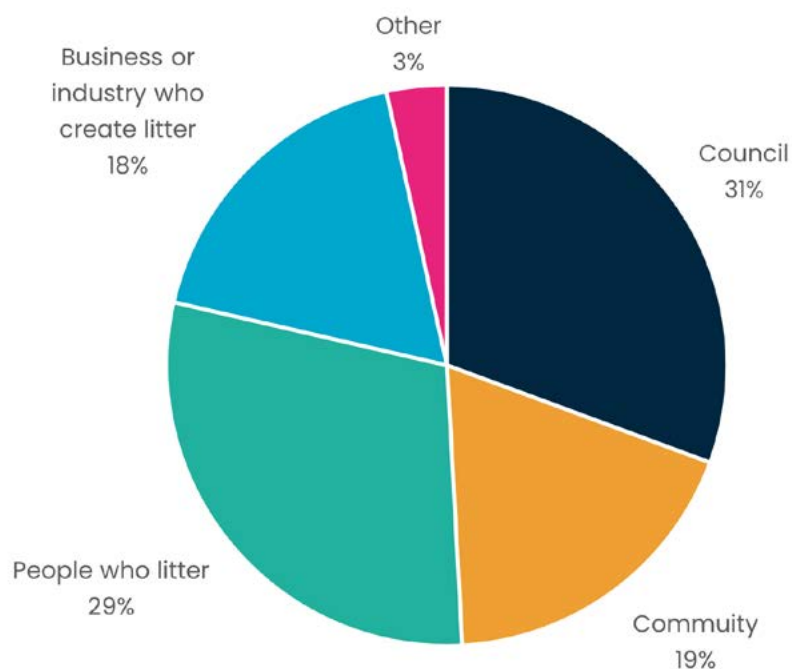
When asked what role community members play in litter prevention:

- 87% said that it's their own responsibility to dispose of their own litter
- 36% said it's to pick up litter
- 26% said it's to educate other community members.

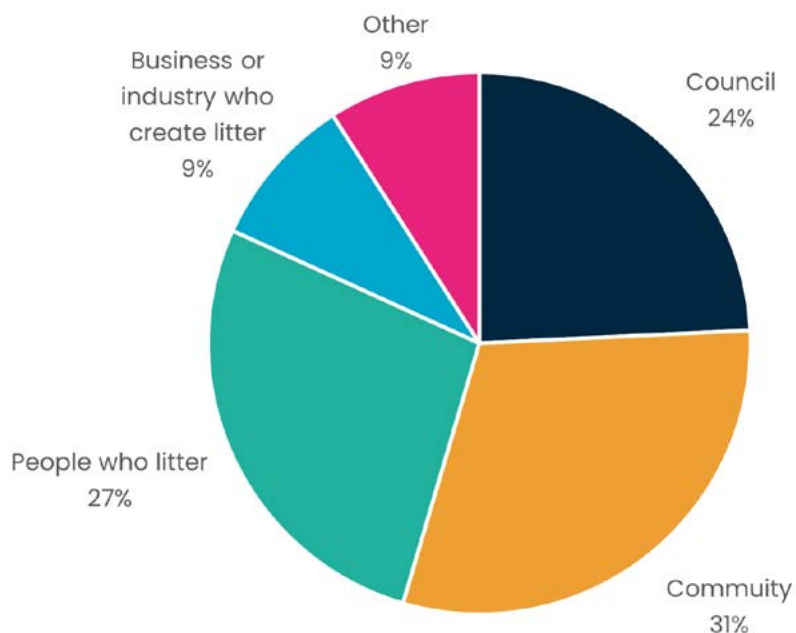
Business owners described their key roles:

- 78% said it's their own responsibility (as a business) to dispose of their own litter correctly
- 57% said it's their responsibility to use recyclable, compostable, or reusable packaging where possible
- 45% said it's their responsibility to reduce the amount of packaging they use
- 36% said it's their responsibility to pick up litter from customers.

**Graph 5: Who the community believe holds key responsibility for preventing litter**



**Graph 6: Who businesses believe hold key response for preventing litter**





In terms of who holds KEY responsibility for preventing litter:

- Community believe Council holds key responsibility for preventing litter (31%) followed by people who litter (29%)
- This compares to business owners who believe that the community holds key responsibility (31%) followed by people who litter (27%)
- Both community and businesses agreed that Council's main role in litter prevention is to provide and maintain bins in a public place
- 63% of people said that the biggest barrier to litter prevention is that there are not enough bins in the right locations.

## 5.2.2 What Consultation Reveals

Three recurring themes came from community and business engagement.

### Bins

- The number and location of bins seems to be a contributor to litter behaviour (not enough, or bins are in the wrong place)
- Inconsistent use of bin signage seems to be creating confusion about which bin to use (pertains to recycling)
- Event related litter stems from overfull bins (not enough bins, or not serviced fast enough). This theme was particularly clear for market days and following sporting events
- Recreational use of parks and riverside areas is seasonal. During the summer months, the community believe there aren't enough bins to accommodate surge in use, often resulting in overfull bins
- The lack of bins in shopping centre car parks made disposal of litter inconvenient resulting in higher levels of littering behaviour
- Incorrect use of commercial or business bins e.g. open lids or overfull bins, creates unintentional littering from wind, rain, and animals
- Servicing of residential bins in rural locations where many bins are grouped together is reported to be creating unintentional litter from incorrect use of bins (lids open causing litter to be spread by wind, water, animals), and litter spills during collection.

### Roadsides

- Litter is most noticeable along roadsides. This litter was reported as being mostly takeaway containers or beverage containers
- Roadside litter was cited as a problem in rural areas (where there are no witnesses).

### Waterways and foreshore

- Community pride is place based. People are connected to and proud of their local town or village but less so about 'the Hawkesbury'. However, the Hawkesbury River is the one feature of the LGA where there is consistent pride.
- There is concern about the impact litter has on animals in the river, particularly native animals such as the platypus. This concern was held highest for school students and Bushcare volunteers.
- There is a shared understanding and frustration that during flood events, bins are washed away and create more litter.

### 5.2.3 Themes



## 5.3 COUNCIL PERSPECTIVES

### 5.3.1 What Desk Top Review Revealed

Historically, due to the constraints on resources, Council has had to prioritise certain areas of work, which has often meant that litter prevention has not been at the forefront. The limited resources have typically led to a more reactive approach rather than a proactive one. Despite Council's strong passion and commitment to addressing various issues, competing priorities have meant that managing litter has not been a key focus. Litter prevention projects are often implemented as additional initiatives when resources permit, rather than as a primary objective.

In terms of litter management, public place general waste bins are serviced by two trucks on either a daily or weekly schedule – dependent upon site usage and demand. There are two Council compactors: one services the city, and one services the country. Recycling bins are serviced by an external contractor.

Council has a cleansing team who litter pick, clean bin infrastructure within their scope of jobs, noting they are also responsible for cleaning public amenities and picnic facilities.

Public place recycling bins are serviced by a contractor on a fortnightly schedule.

Hawkesbury City Council delegates the care, control, management, and development of sporting facilities in the region to the Hawkesbury Sports Council so that decisions regarding resource allocation for sports facilities are made by the sporting public.

The Hawkesbury Sports Council was incorporated in January 1992 to be representative of the sporting community and specifically to undertake the control of active sporting facilities in the region. The Sports Council receives an annual budget from Hawkesbury City Council, collects and retains all hire fees, applies for any available grants and employs its own contractors to carry out maintenance of facilities. This includes litter management responsibility via their own bins and cleaning sports grounds. The bins are serviced by Council's Open Spaces team.



Council litter management assets include:

- 20 GPTs
- 1 streetsweeper
- 2 waste compactor vehicles
- Approximately 50 recycling bins
- Approximately 500 public place bins plus additional public place bin infrastructure such as bin stands, bin enclosures and cages

In addition, Council also has:

- Special events bins
- Cigarette butt litter infrastructure
- Fishing tackle bins known as T'angle Bins.

Consultation revealed that responsibility for litter management and/or prevention sits across nine Council departments, outlined in table 1 below.

*Table 1 Council teams with litter responsibility*

Department	Intersection with litter
<b>Strategic Planning</b>	Development Control Plan includes a chapter on waste and construction management at new developments.
<b>Resource Recovery and Environmental Sustainability</b>	Manages waste within the LGA and is responsible for strategic oversight of litter prevention.
<b>Records</b>	Keeps records of complaints/submissions made from residents about waste.
<b>Assets and Planning</b>	Responsible for assets in open spaces, including bins. This includes both installation and decommissioning.
<b>Development Compliance</b>	Issue fines and do patrols. This team currently doesn't have the resources to focus on litter, and instead solely manage illegal dumping.
<b>Environmental Health</b>	Oversees compliant waste management practices with businesses.
<b>Corporate Planning</b>	Manage the IP&R and ensure strategic alignment across Council.
<b>Community Planning</b>	Manage the community centres hired by the community, and ensure properties are left tidy and waste free.
<b>Open Space</b>	Litter pick public spaces, service and maintain public bins, manage mowing.

### 5.3.2 What Engagement Revealed

Engagement with staff from nine departments reveal nine (9) key themes.

#### Events

- Local events often lack adequate waste infrastructure to accommodate the large number of attendees, resulting in significant litter left behind. This included litter following sporting events and markets
- This issue can stem from bins being overfilled or from intentional littering by individuals
- Waste management guidelines are included in both hire contracts and manuals when Council rents out community centres
- Events typically generate a considerable amount of litter, including food waste, food containers, and packaging, which leads to a surge in demand for bin capacity. When bins are full, attendees may place additional litter beside them.

#### Allure of Hawkesbury as a destination

- Larger regional parks experience the highest levels of both usage and littering
- The Hawkesbury River, renowned for its natural beauty, attracts visitors from across Greater Sydney, particularly in the summer months. This increased visitor activity puts additional pressure on infrastructure and leads to higher incidences of littering, whether from overfilled bins or intentional actions
- As the population continues to grow, both the demand for these recreational areas and the associated littering issues are expected to rise. The river's attractive natural environment remains a major draw, further increasing its appeal as a popular destination.

#### Community expectations

- There is a noticeable gap between community expectations regarding the level of services the Council should provide and the financial resources available to meet these expectations
- Some community members perceive litter management as solely the Council's responsibility, which contributes to misunderstandings and frustrations
- Historical disagreements have led to some tension between the Council and the community
- In some cases, community members have taken the initiative to pick up litter themselves, only to bag it and leave it by bins, subsequently calling the Council for collection
- Certain segments of the community prioritise other pressing issues over litter management
- Recent demographic shifts due to urban sprawl have introduced a wealthier demographic into the area, leading to higher expectations for Council services.



## **Many villages (localised pride)**

- The community's sense of belonging and pride is more localised, with individuals feeling a stronger connection to their closest village rather than to the broader LGA
- The diverse mix of urban centres and rural farmland across Hawkesbury means that a single, uniform approach may not effectively address the unique needs of each area.

## **Flooding**

- During flood events, litter entering the Hawkesbury River often originates from upstream areas outside the LGA, while litter from the Hawkesbury can also be carried downstream
- Bins located on the foreshore are particularly vulnerable to being washed away during floods, and the Council has limited resources to address their removal before such events occur
- These flooding events exacerbate the strain on the Council's already limited resources.

## **Stormwater system**

- The extensive network of waterways means there are too many inlets to be effectively managed by Gross Pollutant Traps (GPTs) and Stormwater Quality Improvement Devices (SQIDs)
- Larger debris can cover and block drains, impeding their functionality
- Street and roadside litter is a common issue and can easily enter stormwater drains, eventually making its way into the river
- With only a single street sweeper available, managing litter effectively is challenging, leaving GPTs as the last line of defence against litter entering the stormwater system and flowing into the river. However, GPTs are expensive to install and maintain
- Flood events exacerbate the problem by washing debris into the river, which then becomes legacy litter, persisting in the environment.

## **Bin vandalism**

- Instances of vandalism on bins include people rummaging through them for bottles to take to Return and Earn programs (referred to as bin diving)
- Cradle bins have been misused to start fires in parks
- Bins frequently suffer from graffiti including through stickers or posters
- When bins are damaged or appear dirty, people are less likely to use them
- Damaged bins lead to unintentional litter spreading due to wind, water, or animals
- Repairing and maintaining bins is costly and time-consuming. Budget-constraints may result in not being able to address issues as quickly as the community expects
- Whilst solutions include adding magnets (not locks) on bin enclosures for easier access to Return and Earn bottles, this may increase the risk of further vandalism or antisocial behaviour, such as removing bins from their enclosures.

### Cost and resources

- Council departments are frequently overwhelmed by the need to react to various issues, including waste and litter, and lack the resources to adopt a proactive approach
- Limited resources can create scepticism about the Council's ability to implement changes, even though there is a strong desire to address these challenges
- Council is prioritising illegal dumping over litter due to the high volume of related complaints
- Resource limitations prevent the implementation of time-intensive strategies or initiatives, resulting in repeated reactive measures that are costly. This often leads to old bins remaining in place, new bins being added without strategic assessment, and a legacy of outdated bins, inconsistent signage, and varying bin designs.

### 5.2.3 Themes



# 5. UNDERSTANDING LITTER IN HAWKESBURY

## Understanding Why People Litter What the NSW state data reveals

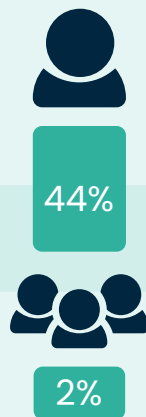


**31%**

Of adults in nsw admit to littering core litter items



A small group of the population accounts for a significant number of yearly items littered with **44% of core items being littered by those who litter several times a day**. However, this group only account for **2% of the total population**.



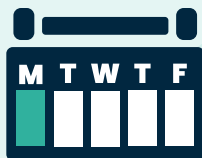
**68%**

were **alone** when they last littered.

Often this happens from or around their car.



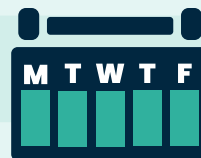
Those who litter **once a day** account for



**38%**

of all core items

**Weekly** litterers account for



**14%**

of all core items

People with higher on-the-go consumption have a higher propensity to litter.



Perceptions of acceptability regarding littering vary depending on factors such as visibility, access to bins, presence of cleaners, and the level of isolation.



In a car, in a park and out in nature are the environments of highest littering, accounting for 45% of most littered environment overall.

Even with heightened awareness, a convenience-driven mindset manifests in behaviours such as littering when it is inconvenient to carry rubbish until people find a bin, or due to the discomfort of holding onto rubbish.



## Cigarette Butt Littering

- Approximately 1.32 billion butts are littered in NSW each year.
- The desire to extinguish littered butts drives a lot of butt dropping behaviour.
- Cleanup of unsightly butt litter is often difficult and expensive. Butt litter hotspots can occur quickly due to smokers using the same location daily.
- A clean area free of butt litter signals the social norm of pride in a place and an expectation of active involvement in keeping the area clean.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Those who litter once a day on average and those who litter on a weekly basis account for 8.5% of the adult NSW population, BUT they account for 52% of the core items that get littered yearly.

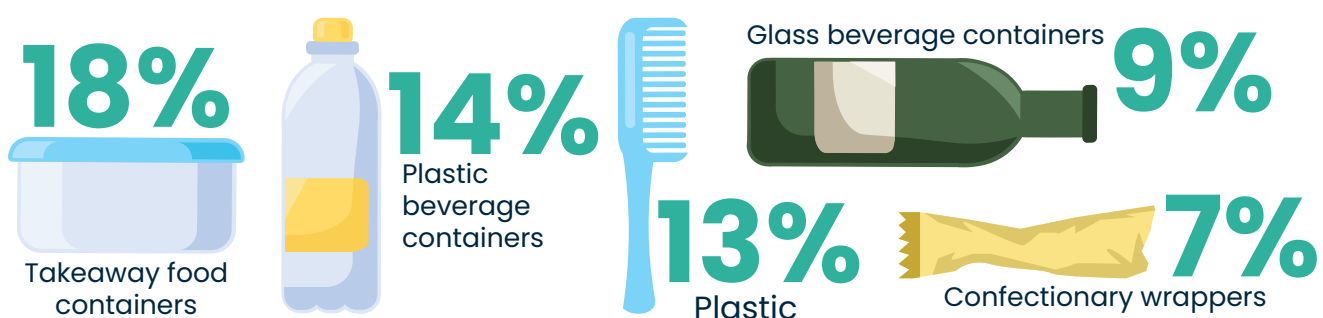


## 5.4 WHAT DO PEOPLE LITTER IN HAWKESBURY?

A combination of qualitative and quantitative data has been reviewed to determine priority litter items in the Hawkesbury.

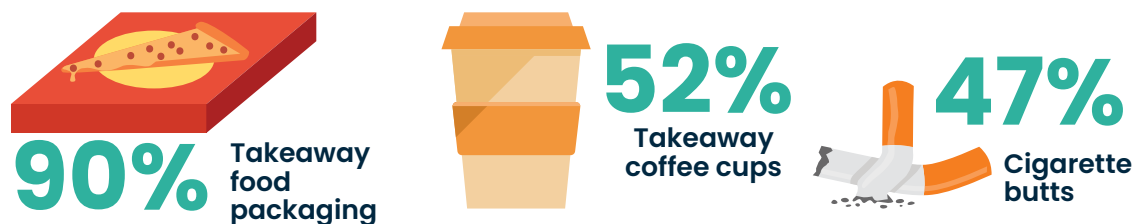
### 5.4.1 Community Views

The Litter Challenges in Hawkesbury City Council Area Survey identified the top five littered items community most noticed were:



# 5. UNDERSTANDING LITTER IN HAWKESBURY

The 2023 Litter Social Study conducted by WSROC aligns with these perceptions:



The top five littered items **school children** most noticed<sup>7</sup> were:



The top five littered items **business owners** most noticed<sup>8</sup> were:



The top littered items the **Aboriginal community** most noticed<sup>9</sup> were:



<sup>7</sup> Youth Views of Litter in HCC Area Survey, 2024

<sup>8</sup> Business Views of Litter in HCC Area Survey, 2024

<sup>9</sup> Aboriginal Community Views of Litter in HCC Area Survey, 2024

### 5.4.2 Council Staff Views

Consultation with internal teams identified these following litter items across multiple workshops:



TAKEAWAY FOOD  
PACKAGING



BEVERAGE CONTAINERS



CONSTRUCTION ITEMS



DOG POO



CIGARETTE BUTTS



FISHING ITEMS



CONFECTIONARY  
WRAPPER



### 5.4.3 What the Data Says

In 2024, Hawkesbury commenced counting litter using the Australian Litter Measure (ALM) methodology. The results of three ALM surveys will establish a litter baseline for the LGA and an annual ALM survey will be used to track progress against benchmark and targets over time.

A survey includes counting litter at four site types: recreational, residential, industrial and retail. Two surveys were completed and have been used to inform this Plan. Key findings include:

Consistent with statewide data, cigarette butts are the most littered item (density/1000m2) in the Hawkesbury LGA sitting at 23.76% of the total litter items counted. See graph 7.

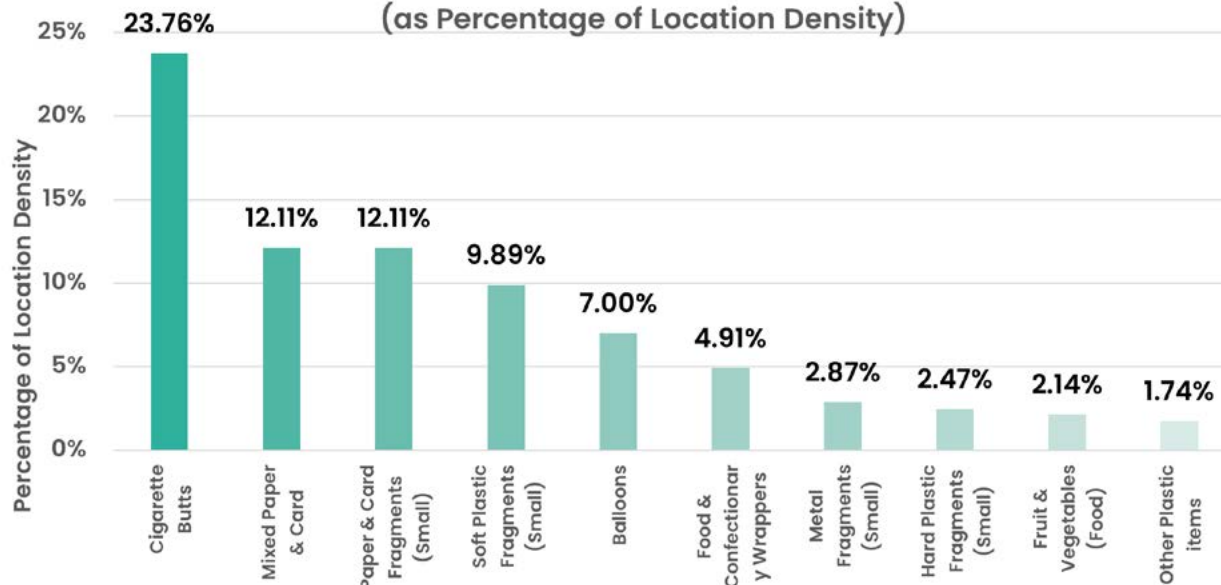
The following table provides a summary of the top FIVE litter items, as well as by composition (what they are made from), and finally by the division (groups of littered items).

Table 2: Top five littered items at HCC (Source: June, Sept ALM Survey)

By individual item	By composition	By division/category
Cigarette butts (23.76%)	Plastics (50.31%)	Fragments (30.32%)
Small paper and card fragments (12.1%)	Paper (28.62%)	Smoking, vaping, packaging (24%)
Mixed paper and card (12.11%)	Other (13.67%)	Misc. paper (14.47%)
Small soft plastic fragments (9.89%)	Metal (5.27%)	Takeaway (7.12%)
Balloons (7%)	Rubber (0.91%)	Misc. other material (9.96%)



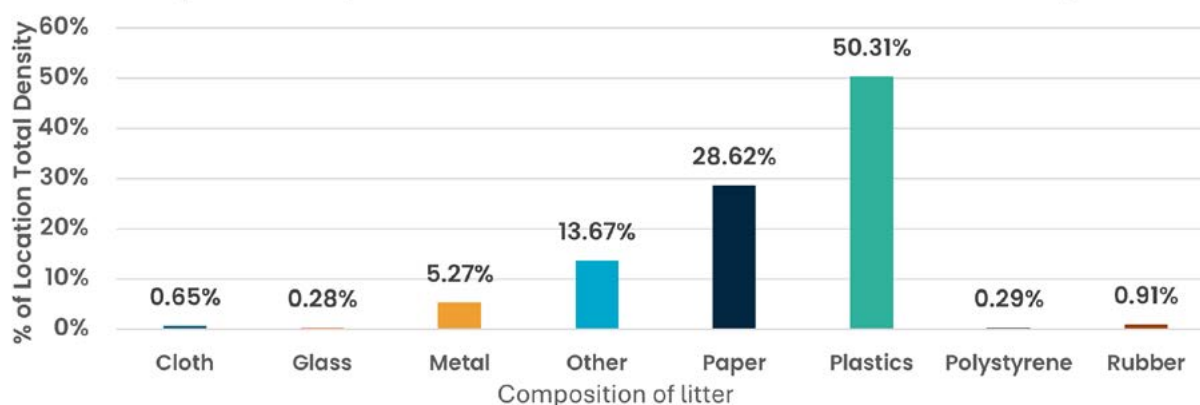
**Graph 7: HCC Top 10 Counted Items**  
(as Percentage of Location Density)



Large numbers of confetti at the recreational site were counted in survey 2. Balloons and confetti are party items and together represent 21% of the litter at HCC. This finding matches HCC staff observations of the number of parties such as gender reveals (confetti), children's parties (balloons) occurring in recreational parks across the LGA. Whilst party items are NOT an ALM item or category, it is an important consideration when prioritising litter items in the Plan. In the future, party items will be counted and subcategorised for HCC. The following are defined as party items: confetti, balloons, blowouts, streamers, curling ribbon, bunting, candles/sparklers, and party prize paraphernalia.

Litter that is made from plastic equates to 50.31% of all litter in HCC. See graph 8 below. CDS containers represent less than 1% of litter counted.

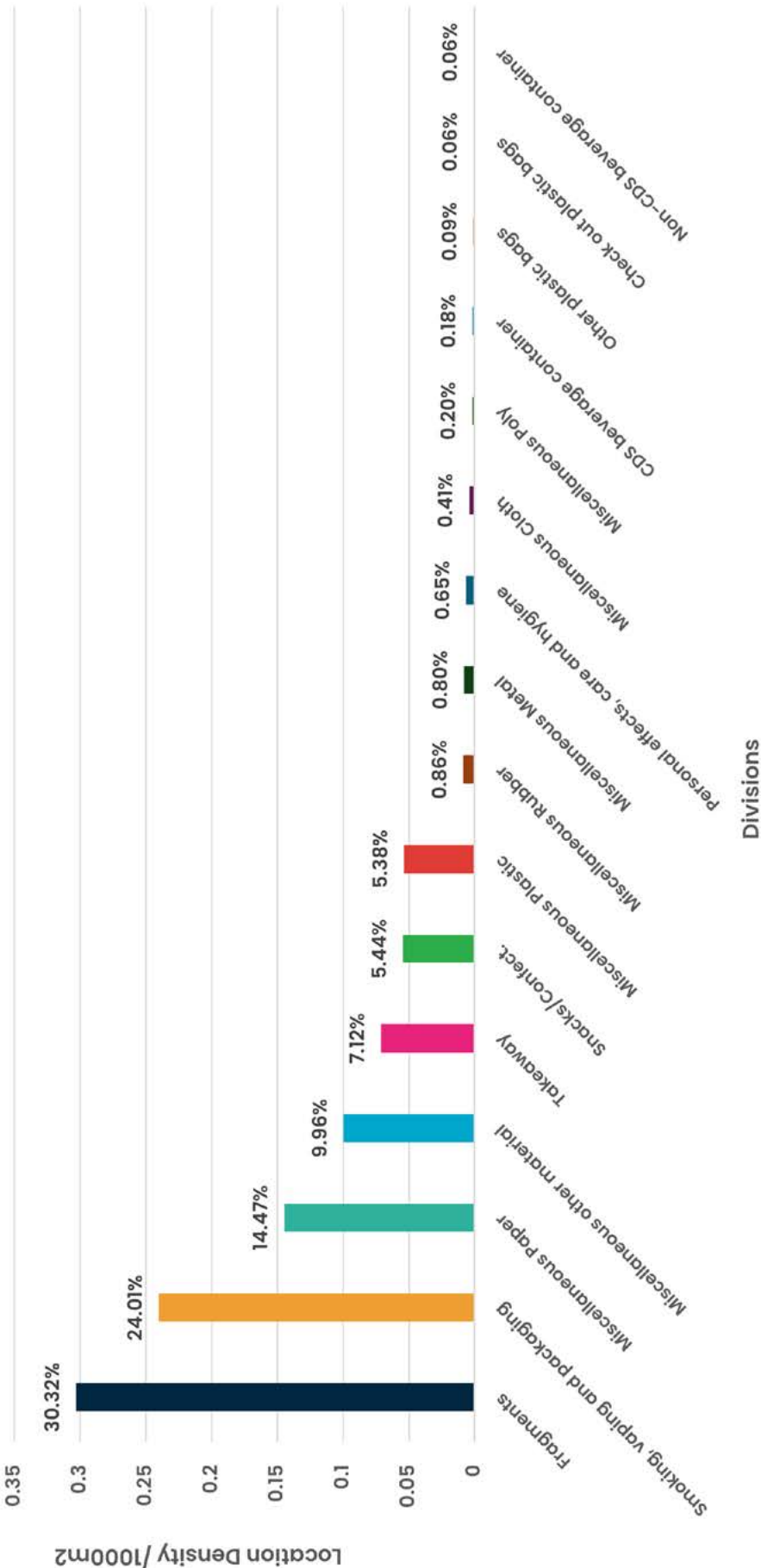
**Graph 8: Composition as Percent of HCC (Location) Density**



# 5. UNDERSTANDING LITTER IN HAWKESBURY

When the ALM data is considered by division (EPA determined group of litter based on use), fragments have the highest percentage density per 1000m<sup>2</sup> (30.32%), followed by smoking/vaping/packaging (24.01%). See graph 9 below.

Graph 9: Litter by Division for HCC  
(% of location)





#### 5.4.4 Priority Litter Items

There are **SIX priority litter items** for focussed effort and investment. They are:



**CIGARETTE BUTTS**

**TAKEAWAY PACKAGING**



**SNACK AND  
CONFECTIONARY ITEMS**



**BEVERAGE CONTAINERS**



**PARTY ITEMS**



**LITTER FRAGMENTS**



## 5.5 WHERE DO PEOPLE LITTER IN HAWKESBURY?

A combination of quantitative and qualitative data has been used to identify strategic litter locations for focus in Hawkesbury City Council.

### 5.5.1 Community Views

The top five locations **community** most noticed<sup>10</sup> litter were:

- roadsides (20%)
- retail locations (13%)
- carparks (13%)
- reserves (11%)
- waterways (9%).

The 2023 Litter Social Study conducted by WSROC aligns with these perceptions. In the Hawkesbury:

- roadsides (32%)
- parking areas (32%)
- bushlands/rivers/creeks (24%)
- 48% said they had seen somebody throw litter out of their car window in the last 12 months, the highest of any participating Council.

The top five locations **school children** most noticed<sup>11</sup> litter were:

- parks with a playground (78%)
- streets (footpaths and kerbs in residential areas) (71%)
- waterways (64%)
- retail spaces (64%)
- roadsides (57%).

The top five locations **business owners** most noticed<sup>12</sup> litter were:

- retail areas (75%)
- carparks (57%)
- streets (42%)
- waterways (36%)
- roadsides (33%).

The top five locations the **Aboriginal community** most noticed<sup>13</sup> litter were:

- retail areas (100%)
- roadsides and streets (footpaths and kerbs in residential areas) (60%)
- overfull resident bins (60%)
- carparks (40%)
- overfull commercial bins (40%).

<sup>10</sup> Litter Challenges in Hawkesbury City Council Area Survey, 2024

<sup>11</sup> Youth Views of Litter in HCC Area Survey, 2024

<sup>12</sup> Business Views of Litter in HCC Area Survey, 2024

<sup>13</sup> Aboriginal Community Views of Litter in HCC Area Survey, 2024

### 5.5.2 Council Staff Views

Consultation with internal teams identified these following top FIVE litter hotspots across multiple workshops:

- roadsides (8/10 sessions)
- parks (5/10 sessions)
- carpark (5/10 sessions)
- CBD/retail areas (4/10 sessions)
- waterways and foreshore (4/10 sessions).

### 5.5.3 What the Data Says

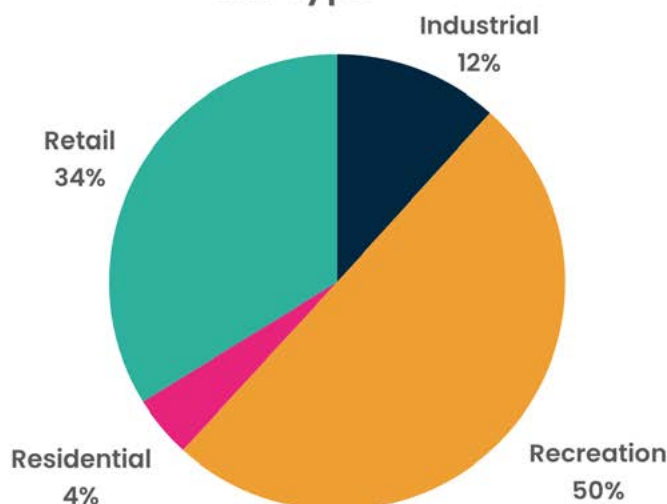
ALM data is counted across four site types (zoned industrial, recreational, residential, and retail).

Counts from these sites show that recreational and retail zones are the most densely littered, followed by industrial, and then residential. See graph 10 below.

Across the four ALM site types:

- Litter at recreational sites represents 50% of the total litter counted
- Retail site litter represents 34% of the total litter counted
- Industrial site litter represents 12% of the total litter counted
- Residential site litter represents 4% of the total litter counted.

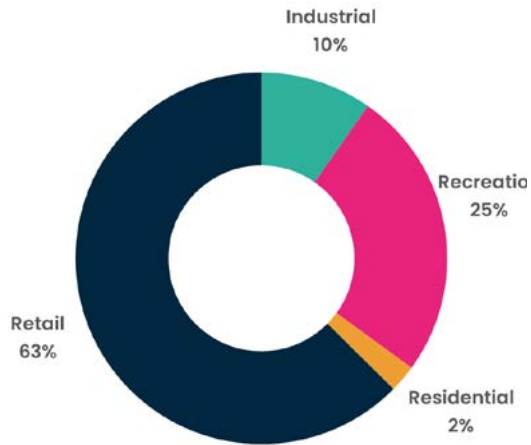
**Graph 10: Percentage Share of HCC litter Density by ALM site type**



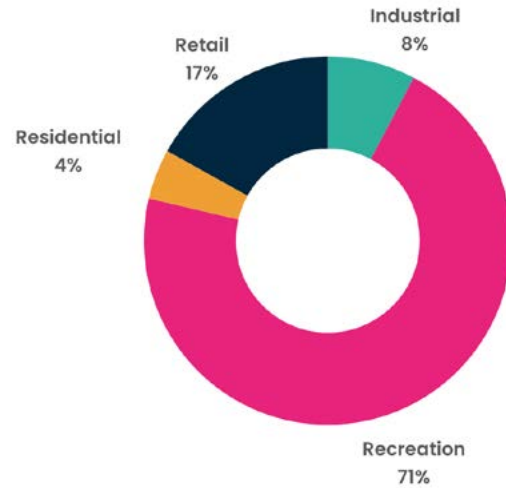


Graphs 11 through 14 provide information about the percentage distribution of the priority litter items for each of the four ALM site types.

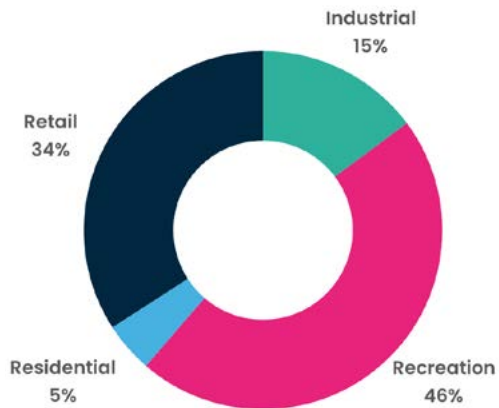
**Graph 11: Cigarette Butt litter**  
(distribution across sites in HCC)



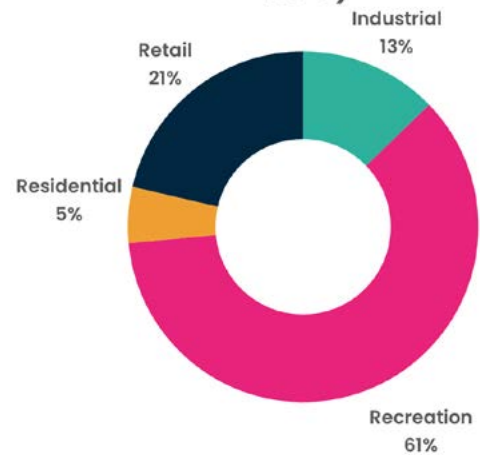
**Graph 12: Food & Confectionary Wrappers**  
(distribution across Sites in HCC)



**Graph 13: Takeaway Item Litter**  
(distribution across Sites in HCC)



**Graph 14: All Fragment types**  
(distribution across Sites in HCC)



### 5.5.4 Priority Litter Locations

There is litter in many locations in Hawkesbury. However, there are FIVE priority locations for focussed effort and investment. They are:



**RECREATIONAL PARKS**



**CAR PARKS**



**HAWKESBURY RIVER**

**RETAIL PRECINCTS**



**ROADSIDES**



## 5.6 TARGET LITTERING BEHAVIOURS

While it is important to identify priority litter items and locations, it is equally important to focus on the intersections between them, and what is driving the behaviour. This means identifying what is most littered where, and why.

### 5.6.1 Recreational Parks

Litter	Behaviours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Party items</li> <li>✓ Cigarette Butts</li> <li>✓ Fragments</li> <li>✓ Food &amp; confectionery wrappers</li> <li>✓ Takeaway packaging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Party related litter, such as balloons and confetti are a highly littered item. Need to build a new normal behaviour to exclude the use of these items based on impact to environment.</li> <li>• Visitors have a lower level of responsibility and ownership over the area. Enforcement (signage and rangers) may be required to ensure correct disposal behaviours.</li> <li>• Visitors may be from CALD communities. Compliance or engagement activities will be required in multiple languages.</li> <li>• Recreational use of parks (no matter which type) includes eating, drinking and this results in food related litter. Convenience to bin location is key to curbing littering behaviours.</li> <li>• Events in parks (including sports events and markets) create a surge in site usage. Events including eating and drinking and this results in food related littering.</li> <li>• Surge visitation in summer months places demand on bin capacity.</li> <li>• Overfull bins will drive 'litter stacking next to a bin' behaviours. This litter is then subject to being spread by wind, water and animals.</li> <li>• Open top cradle bins can be the source of unintentional litter i.e. blown by wind or picked out by animals.</li> <li>• Fragments coming from wind, rain or animals. Coming from overfull bins. Party related items.</li> <li>• Fragments can be caused by mowing parks without being litter picked beforehand. Litter is then cut up into smaller pieces which are more difficult to pick.</li> <li>• Cigarette butts – small number of offenders, litter multiple times per day. Habitually discard butts on the ground, garden beds etc.</li> <li>• Recreational use includes eating. Snacks and confectionery items are not just from children.</li> </ul>



### 5.6.2 Retail

Litter	Behaviours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Cigarette butts</li> <li>✓ Mixed paper &amp; card</li> <li>✓ Paper &amp; card fragments (small)</li> <li>✓ Metal fragments (small)</li> <li>✓ Food &amp; confectionery wrappers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some bins have cigarette ashtrays, these need to be kept clean so as not to become a deterrent to use of bins.</li> <li>• During events like the Sunday markets, bins can quickly become overfull becoming the source of unintentional littering (wind, water, animals).</li> <li>• Overfull bins will drive 'litter stacking next to a bin' behaviours. This litter is then subject to being spread by wind, water, animals.</li> <li>• Incorrect use of public place bins by businesses can lead to overfull bins, or unclosed lids can lead to litter escaping and then spreading.</li> <li>• Cigarette butts will come from a small number of offenders, repeat behaviour at the same spot, littering multiple times per day.</li> <li>• Cigarette butt litterers could be business owners and/or employees.</li> <li>• Convenience is key – bin proximity is critical.</li> <li>• Wind-blown commercial items e.g. serviettes.</li> </ul>

### 5.6.3 Roadsides

Litter	Behaviours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Takeaway food packaging</li> <li>✓ Beverage containers</li> <li>✓ Fragments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The low visibility in large parts of the LGA mean it's easy to litter without being seen, or 'caught'.</li> <li>• 'Ick' factor is critical, offender won't hold onto items that will spill or dirty a car.</li> <li>• Litter is often hidden in long grass and revealed once the roadsides are mown.</li> <li>• Mowing can also result in litter becoming smaller fragments and then spreading with wind, water etc.</li> <li>• Uncovered loads cause litter to be blown from trucks and utes. Note 54% of residents commute to work in a private car.</li> <li>• Rural residents placing large numbers of bins in one roadside location for weekly collection – can be tipped over. Escaped litter can be blown or washed or mown. Food waste attracts animals, which further distributes the litter.</li> </ul>

### 5.6.4 Carparks

Litter	Behaviours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Takeaway food packaging</li> <li>✓ Beverage containers</li> <li>✓ Paper/receipts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takeaway packaging is common in carparks, especially when close to fast food outlets.</li> <li>• Destination eating, litter dropped from the parked car after a meal is consumed (in the car). Unlikely to keep items in the car due to the 'ick' factor.</li> </ul>

## 5.6.5 Recreational – Hawkesbury River and Foreshore

Litter	Behaviours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fragments</li> <li>• Fishing items</li> <li>• Takeaway food packaging</li> <li>• Food &amp; confectionery wrappers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified stressors of the river include recreational boating, fishing, and swimming. These activities bring with them littering behaviour, as people leave behind their litter.</li> <li>• Litter can also be blown into the water from boats, or from the foreshore.</li> <li>• Stormwater runoff is also an identified stressor, as litter is washed from parks, fields, and kerbs into the river.</li> <li>• Fishing items are left both along the foreshore but also in the river. Tackle, including fishing line can be disposed of in the river, crab pots and yabby traps are left on the river bottom, and bait bags etc left on the foreshore.</li> <li>• Flooding is a major risk in Hawkesbury. With new residents moving in, there are parts of the community who are unfamiliar with flood threats, and don't know how to prepare for them.</li> <li>• During flood events, stormwater drains and GPTs fail, letting litter into the river system as well as being washed up on foreshore.</li> </ul>





## 6.1 VISION

**“ Empowering Council, community, businesses, and visitors, to take informed, efficient actions towards a litter-free future. ”**

## 6.2 OBJECTIVES

1. Employ a robust, evidence-based approach to litter prevention decision making.
2. Build Council’s understanding of the financial advantages of investing in litter prevention in addition to litter management.
3. Identify opportunities for efficiencies and maximise the strategic leveraging of Council resources.
4. Build Council’s understanding and ownership of litter prevention, to create a new business-as-usual approach to planning and delivery of litter prevention initiatives.
5. Create opportunities to collaborate with local businesses and surrounding Councils, and champion shared commitment of litter prevention.
6. Leverage individual and collective pride in our community and foster a culture where residents and businesses take localised litter prevention measures.
7. Enhance community understanding of correct litter disposal practices and the benefits of a clean environment.
8. Ensure visitors are informed and encouraged to correctly dispose litter.
9. Ensure an infrastructure standard that prevents unintentional litter and maximises correct disposal.

## 6.3 TARGETS

1	2	3	4	5	6
BY THE END OF 2029	BY THE END OF 2029	BY THE END OF 2029	BY THE END OF 2029	BY THE END OF 2029	BY THE END OF 2029
Hawkesbury City Council will increase investment in litter prevention from the 2022 baseline.	Litter prevention is included in the organisational documents aligned with the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework.	The number of new registrations to report to EPA via the litter portal will increase by 200 across the Hawkesbury LGA.	Litter in priority litter locations will decrease by 20% across Hawkesbury City Council Area.	Cigarette butt litter in priority litter locations will decrease by 20%.	The self-reported percentage of the Hawkesbury community who litter will be less than 40%.



## 6.4 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The strategic directions are heavily influenced by and aligned with the Community Strategic Plan 2022–2024, the Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2023, and the Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2022–2023.

To reach our vision, target, and stated objectives there are three strategic directions that will guide our actions, initiatives, and priorities.

Through them, we will have:

- Alignment of effort
- Increase in organisational capacity
- Council becoming a leader in the community for litter prevention.

The strategic directions are:



### 6.4.1 Summary of Strategic Direction 1

**This strategic direction aims to establish a new approach to litter prevention and management within the Council.**

As the highest priority, we will focus on ensuring litter prevention **is embedded within the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R)** building accountability through delivery plans and operational plans and section business plans.

**Policies and procedures will be reviewed and refined** to maximise litter prevention opportunities. For example, we will review litter management at events, implement pick-before-mowing procedures, and ensure our disaster response plans include actions to prevent litter during a flood.

We will develop a standardised approach to bin infrastructure and signage and invest in new infrastructure and remove aging or not fit for purpose infrastructure in highest priority locations. We will review current public place recycling services as part of this process.

**Enhancing internal knowledge and awareness** of the importance of litter prevention will be a priority. This will be achieved through targeted training programs for staff to enhance knowledge of the benefits of litter prevention and how they can get involved. This will include a program to increase the number of staff who are registered to report littering from vehicles.

**A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework** will also be implemented to assess progress towards our vision and targets. We will utilise the Australian Litter Measure (ALM) to track littering density, the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to track community complaints, the regional Community Sentiment survey to monitor community expectations and behaviours.

We will need to ensure we have the right systems across council departments to allow for the accurate and meaningful **collections of Cost of Litter data**. We will use this data to measure our investment in litter prevention.

We will continue to **engage with our partners** WSROC, Clean Up Australia, and OzFish and we will explore new partnerships with state agencies such as Transport for NSW and Crown Land to identify opportunities to work together to prevent litter in the Hawkesbury.

### 6.4.2 Summary of Strategic Direction 2

**As a small Council there are limited human and financial resources. We recognise we can't prevent litter alone. This Strategic Direction therefore aims to activate community and businesses so that they are empowered to take litter prevention actions.**

**Council will play a leadership role** in activating, supporting and rewarding our community and businesses to **establish and deliver localised litter prevention actions.**

This approach will leverage the sense of pride and ownership within local towns and villages. We will provide stakeholders with the knowledge and tools they need for long-term success in keeping Hawkesbury litter free. Our goal will be to activate and support groups to establish localised actions allowing Council to focus on LGA wide initiatives.

Community organisations will be supported to implement best-practice waste planning and management at events, including sports events and markets.

We will foster and support a Youth Ambassador Program to engage younger members of our community to participate in litter prevention initiatives.

Council will encourage business owners to educate their employees on having Litter Free Smokos and will aim to decrease litter at the source e.g. increasing business knowledge of packaging options, and incentivising consumers who bring 're-usable' items e.g. bags, cups, cutlery, etc.

We will encourage the community to register for and use the Report to EPA App with the aim to increase the perception of getting caught and changing littering behaviours from vehicles. This will realise cleaner roadsides and carparks in the Hawkesbury.





### 6.4.3 Summary of Strategic Direction 3

**This Strategic Direction is the delivery of initiatives within this strategic direction that will be led by Council.**

**Messaging will be tailored to address key litter items specific to different land use types.**

This includes cigarette butts at all sites, party items, and paper fragments in recreational parks, paper fragments, chewing gum, and food wrappers in retail areas, takeaway wrappers and beverage containers in industrial areas, small overflowing items from residential bins, beverage and takeaway items along roadsides, and takeaway items and fishing ghost gear along the foreshore.

**Continuing current education programs in schools is a priority,** teaching our young community to importance of litter prevention.

**Participating in catchment programs** will help to reduce litter entering the Hawkesbury River. This includes our continued participation in the development of the HNRS CMP, advocating for a Hawkesbury-Nepean Litter Prevention Strategy, and investigating options to participate in the NSW EPA Streets to Sea program.

Council will also **participate in regional litter initiatives** that will contribute towards the regional and our own targets.



## 7.1 STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1

*Solid Foundations – Getting the basics right*

### OBJECTIVES

- Employ a robust, evidence-based approach to litter prevention decision making.
- Build Council's understanding of the financial advantages of investing in litter prevention over litter management.
- Identify opportunities for efficiencies and maximise the strategic leveraging of Council resources.
- Build Council's understanding and ownership of litter, to create a new business-as-usual approach to litter prevention.

### TARGETS

- By the end of 2029, Hawkesbury City Council will increase investment in litter prevention from the 2022 baseline.
- By the end of 2029, litter prevention is included in organisational documents aligned with the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework.
- By the end of 2029, the number of new registrations to Report to EPA via the litter portal will increase by 200 across the Hawkesbury LGA.

### KEY INTERNAL DRIVERS

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| • Resource Recovery and Environmental Sustainability | • Asset Systems & Planning          |
| • Business Transformation & Customer Experience      | • Open Spaces                       |
| • Strategic Planning                                 | • Corporate Communications & Events |
| • Governance   | • Regulatory Services               |
|  | • Financial Services                |

### STAKEHOLDERS

- |                         |                     |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| • WSROC                 | • Transport for NSW |
| • Neighbouring Councils | • NSW EPA           |
| • Ozfish                | • NPWS              |
| • WSU                   |                     |



## INITIATIVES

	YR1	YR2	YR3	YR4	YR5
<b>Initiative 1.1:</b> Create a clear alignment with the IP&R, sharing responsibility across departments	✓		✓		✓
<b>Initiative 1.2:</b> Ensure policies and procedures maximise litter prevention opportunities	✓	✓	✓		
<b>Initiative 1.3:</b> Improve internal knowledge of the value of litter prevention	✓	✓	✓		
<b>Initiative 1.4:</b> Create a bin infrastructure and signage standard that encourages correct litter disposal, with implementation that focuses on priority locations	✓	✓	✓		
<b>Initiative 1.5:</b> Implement robust monitoring and evaluation processes to assess progress and impact		✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Initiative 1.6:</b> Leverage our work with strategic partners and ensure that litter prevention opportunities are identified and included in existing projects and programs.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



## 7. HOW WE WILL GET THERE



## 7.2 STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2

### *Shared Commitment and Action – Champions Against Litter*

#### OBJECTIVES

- Create opportunities to collaborate with local businesses and surrounding Councils, and champion shared commitment of litter prevention.
- Leverage individual and collective pride in our community and foster a culture where residents and businesses take localised litter prevention measures.
- Enhance community understanding of correct litter disposal practices and the benefits of a clean environment.

#### TARGETS

- By the end of 2029, the number of new registrations to Report to EPA via the litter portal will increase by 200 across the Hawkesbury LGA.
- By the end of 2029, litter in priority litter locations will decrease by 20% across Hawkesbury City Council area.
- By the end of 2029, cigarette butt litter in priority litter locations will decrease by 20%.
- By the end of 2029, the self-reported percentage of the HCC community who litter will be less than 40%.

#### KEY INTERNAL DRIVERS

- Resource Recovery and Environmental Sustainability
- Environmental Health
- Economic Development
- Community Planning & Partnerships

#### STAKEHOLDERS

- Small to medium sized businesses
- NSW EPA
- Residents
- Community groups
- Schools
- Chambers of Commerce
- CUA
- Sports Council
- Multi-national quick service industry

INITIATIVES

	YR1	YR2	YR3	YR4	YR5
<b>Initiative 2.1:</b> Activate and support the community to establish and deliver localised actions, and reward them for their litter prevention activities	✓	✓	✓		
<b>Initiative 2.2:</b> Empower the community to take an active role in reporting littering	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Initiative 2.3:</b> Support community groups to implement best-practice waste planning and management at events	✓	✓	✓		
<b>Initiative 2.4:</b> Activate and support businesses to take localised actions and responsibilities	✓	✓	✓		



7. HOW WE WILL GET THERE

## 7.3 STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3

### *Council driven litter prevention action*

#### OBJECTIVES

- Enhance community understanding of correct litter disposal practices and the benefits of a clean environment.
- Ensure visitors are informed and encouraged to correctly dispose litter.
- Ensure an infrastructure standard that prevents unintentional litter and maximises correct disposal.

#### TARGETS

- By the end of 2029, the self-reported percentage of the HCC community who litter will be less than 40%.
- By the end of 2029, litter in priority litter locations will decrease by 20% across Hawkesbury City Council area.
- By the end of 2029, cigarette butt litter in priority litter locations will decrease by 20%.

#### KEY INTERNAL DRIVERS

- Resource Recovery and Environmental Sustainability
- Open Spaces
- Asset Systems & Planning

#### STAKEHOLDERS

- WSROC
- WSU
- EnviroCom
- HNCMG
- NSW EPA



## INITIATIVES

	YR1	YR2	YR3	YR4	YR5
<b>Initiative 3.1:</b> Utilise and deliver targeted campaigns that focus on priority litter items and locations. Campaigns will be developed to reach different audiences e.g. residents, businesses, and visitors	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Initiative 3.2:</b> Continue current education programs in schools	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Initiative 3.3:</b> Continue to participate in catchment programs aimed to reduce litter entering the Hawkesbury River, including advocating for the development of a Hawkesbury-Nepean River Litter Prevention Strategy. Investigate options to participate in the NSW EPA Streets to Sea Program.	✓	✓	✓		
<b>Initiative 3.4:</b> Participate in regional litter prevention initiatives that are aligned with the Western Sydney Regional Litter Strategy.	✓	✓	✓	✓	

## 7. HOW WE WILL GET THERE



## 7.4 FUNDING AND RESOURCING

### 7.4.1 Funding

HCC will seek grant funding to the value of \$400,000 from the NSW EPA WaSM Litter Prevention Program to implement this Plan.

If successful, funding will be used to cover the costs of the human resources required for the execution of the Plan. It will also be allocated to fit-for-purpose infrastructure, and the delivery of initiatives.

It is anticipated that within three years, the staffing support provided will have established a new BaU for HCC. This will allow Council to continue with embedded litter prevention initiatives beyond EPA funding.

If HCC is unsuccessful in seeking funding, implementation of the Plan would be scaled to reflect existing resources. We would also need to source funding for infrastructure.

### 7.4.2 Resourcing

Resource	Description
Litter Prevention Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three years x 0.8 FTE</li> </ul>
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removal and disposal of cradle bins and repatriation of site</li> <li>Reallocation of existing bins</li> <li>Installation of fit-for-purpose bins</li> <li>Purchase and installation of bin signage</li> </ul>
Project delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivery of projects and campaigns</li> </ul>
Existing staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support from Sustainability and Waste Education Officer</li> </ul>
In-kind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-kind office expenses provided by HCC</li> </ul>

## 7.5 HOW WE WILL MEASURE OUR SUCCESS

### Cost of litter

WSROC coordinate a Cost of Litter study for participating Councils. Hawkesbury completed a baseline in 2014/15 and repeated the process in 2021/22. This will be repeated with WSROC in 2025, 2027 and 2029.

### Document review

IP&R documents will be thoroughly reviewed to ensure the inclusion of litter prevention measures.

### Report to EPA registrations

Data from the NSW EPA's litter portal will be requested annually to track progress against targets.

### ALM

The ALM provides consistent national litter data to track litter behaviour. Three ALM survey will be conducted to calculate a benchmark for Council, with annual measurements to assess progress against this benchmark and our targets.

### Litter Social Study

WSROC have previously coordinated a Litter Social Study, to gauge community sentiment towards litter. This will be repeated during the life of this Plan and results will inform our progress towards our targets.

### Own It and Act

The EPA's Own It and Act assessment tool will be used as a semi-quantitative measure of any changes in our organisational capacity to prevent litter. OIAA status checks will be repeated annually in partnership with NSW EPA.

### Butt Litter Counts

Butt Litter Counts offer a precise foundation for identifying littering behaviour by type and location, both general and specific. Moving forward, these counts will be utilised to measure the effectiveness of direct litter prevention interventions at targeted sites with high cigarette counts.



## 8. REFERENCES

- Aboriginal Community Views of Litter in HCC Area Survey, 2024
- Arcadis Western Sydney Regional Litter Assessment 2021-22
- Business Views of Litter in HCC Area Survey, 2024
- Hawkesbury City Council 'Hey Tosser' Litter Program Final Report (2015)
- Hawkesbury City Council Bin Inspection Program Report (2024)
- Hawkesbury City Council Census data 2021 <https://profile.id.com.au/hawkesbury/>
- Hawkesbury City Council Community Strategic Plan 2022-2042
- Hawkesbury City Council Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2023-2033
- Hawkesbury City Council Litter and Illegal Dumping Plan and Implementation Program (2011)
- Hawkesbury City Council School Incursions Program Summary Report (2024)
- Hawkesbury City Council Urban Greening Strategy 2023-2033
- Hawkesbury City Council Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2022-2032
- Hawkesbury Nepean River System Physical and Ecological Processes Abridgement Report (2022)
- Litter Challenges in Hawkesbury City Council Area Survey, 2024
- Litter Costs to the NSW Economy – A Preliminary Report
- Litter Social Study – Western Sydney Residents
- NSW EPA Litter Prevention Strategy 2022-2030
- NSW Planning, Hawkesbury Council Housing snapshot
- WSROC Western Sydney Regional Litter Plan 2016-2021
- WSROC Western Sydney Regional Litter Plan 2023-2027
- Youth Views of Litter in HCC Area Survey, 2024





Address	366 George Street, Windsor NSW 2756
Mailing Address	PO Box 146, Windsor NSW 2756
Phone	(02) 4560 4444
Email	<a href="mailto:council@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au">council@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au">www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au</a>
Office Hours	Monday to Friday 8:30am - 5pm