



# Don't be a tosser

## Litter prevention campaign 2002

### CASE STUDY

Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW)

#### Project description

The 2002 *Don't be a Tosser* campaign was the second phase of a three-year Litter Prevention Campaign. The campaign was on air (radio and TV) for four weeks in January 2002, with outdoor elements (taxi backs and billboards) extending into February 2002.

The campaign focused on littering from vehicles - a common littering behaviour in NSW accounting for 62% of all litter fines issued in the first year of the new litter laws. It first ran over the summer holidays, when many people travel in their cars to holiday destinations. The campaign reinforced awareness about littering fines and encouraged people not to litter from vehicles. It reinforced the concept behind the notion of personal responsibility inherent in *Litter, it's in your hands* and introduced the term 'tossers' as a social sanction that could be applied to those who litter.

#### Project rationale

Littering is one of the most visible and persistent environmental issues facing NSW and costs the community millions of dollars every year to clean up and repair the damage it causes. State agencies and local councils put a substantial amount of resources in dealing with litter. For example, the Sydney Coastal Councils Group, representing 16 councils, estimated that local councils spend an average \$3.3 million a year to deal with the effects of littering.

The aims of the campaign were:

- To raise awareness of litter's impact on the environment and encourage a sense of personal responsibility among NSW residents to dispose of their litter properly.
- To develop awareness of the \$200 fine for littering from vehicles and generate a high perceived risk of being fined.

#### Project funding

The 2002 Litter Prevention Program received \$2,395,000 from the NSW Waste Minimisation and Management Fund. Of this amount, \$1,200,000 was spent on the 2002 *Don't be a Tosser* mass media campaign.


#### Project stakeholders

##### Local Councils

Given that local councils issue the bulk of littering fines and conduct local education programs, the involvement of local government has been an important focus of the then EPA's *Don't be a Tosser* campaign.

The then EPA developed a local council engagement strategy alongside the mainstream advertising campaign, and local councils have been very positive about the *Don't be a Tosser* campaign. Over 70 councils joined the campaign by conducting education and enforcement blitzes in their local area and through picking up the local campaign resource kit.





A hard copy kit of resources (including bumper stickers, posters, bin stickers and *Don't be a Tosser* branded film canisters for personal ashtray use) and a campaign booklet with 2 CD's of artwork was distributed to councils across NSW in early March 2002. The then EPA produced a number of litter blitz roadside banners, which were shared around councils in NSW as they conducted their local enforcement blitzes. Thirty local projects were also funded under a Council Grants Program.

### Community Groups

The then EPA also worked closely with community organisations like Keep Australia Beautiful and Clean Up Australia on local community litter prevention projects. Clean Up Australia administered a grants program for litter prevention projects in schools and developed a litter prevention on beaches project, called *Leave only footprints*, with South Coast Councils. Keep Australia Beautiful administered 37 grants to local community organisations for local litter prevention projects.

### Litter Reference Group

The EPA formed the NSW Litter Prevention Reference Group comprising of stakeholders with an interest in or responsibility for litter reduction. The group met on average, once every six weeks to discuss program direction, campaign concepts and strategies, litter research and the involvement of councils, State agencies, community and other stakeholder groups in litter prevention activities.

The Reference Group, co-chaired by the then EPA and Resource NSW, comprises of representatives from the Beverage Industry Environment Council, Keep Australia Beautiful, Clean Up Australia, Resource NSW, the EPA, local government, the Roadside Litter Environment Committee, the Roads and Traffic Authority and the Rail Infrastructure Corporation.

### Project targets

There is no known differentiation of littering behaviours according to age, gender, location or other demographic criteria. The campaign targets all people who travel in vehicles across roads in NSW, including:

- People who do not litter (and people who collect other people's litter) by reinforcing their positive behaviour and providing ways for them to speak out about littering.
- People who do litter but could be influenced to change their behaviour through understanding

of effects of litter on the environment, the social stigma attached to littering or through the threat of penalties.

### Project methods

The *Don't be a Tosser* mass media campaign used radio and TV advertisements, roadside billboards and taxi back advertisements to get the anti-litter message to target audiences. An NESB campaign was also developed (radio and press ads), targeting six community languages. These were Italian, Greek, Spanish, Arabic, Vietnamese and Chinese.

Roadside billboards were placed along major highways on the NSW coast were aimed at reaching drivers travelling to summer holiday destinations. Taxi backs were used to target motorists doing short trips in metropolitan areas.

The awareness raising required for this program could not be achieved without the use of mass media. The use of a strategic mix of media (television, radio, press, outdoor and Internet) was vital to effectively reaching large numbers of people from diverse backgrounds across NSW.

### Project resources

- A 1 x 30 second television advertisement statewide; 4 x 30 second radio ads statewide; billboards on coastal highways, and taxi back advertising (2 executions) in Sydney, Newcastle, and Wollongong;
- A multicultural press and radio campaign in six community languages (Italian, Arabic, Greek, Chinese, Vietnamese and Spanish);
- A suite of resource materials to support litter education including a comprehensive local council campaign kit distributed to 173 local councils, and placed on the EPA website;
- Council grants program funding 30 local litter prevention projects;
- Extensive media coverage of the litter issue as a result of a publicity and promotions strategy;
- Development of community education resources through Clean Up Australia and Keep Australia Beautiful including the development of the Leave Only Footprints campaign, Schools Litter Prevention Projects and Community Grants program;
- An independent evaluation of the advertising campaign [available from the Department of Environment and Conservation NSW].

## How the project was evaluated

The success of the project was measured using pre and post campaign telephone surveys of 800 residents across NSW. The research was conducted by independent Market Research company, Taverner Research

## Project outcomes

Changes in...	Qualitative or quantitative data indicating change
Knowledge/awareness	<p><i>Don't be a Tosser</i> has proved to be one of the most successful education campaigns conducted by the EPA. An independent evaluation by Taverner Research found the campaign had significant cut-through with its target audience. Key findings include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· the majority of people surveyed (57%) could recall verbatim, and unaided, the <i>Don't be a Tosser</i> message;</li><li>· 80% of people recalled seeing the advertisement when prompted;</li><li>· 81% of people who saw the TV advertisement thought it was convincing; and</li><li>· half (49%) of the people who saw the TV advertisement said it encouraged them to act in ways to avoid or reduce littering.</li></ul>
Attitudes/motivation	<p>There was strong support for the social sanction message with solid anecdotal evidence about its use in everyday language. Feedback suggests the term 'tosser' is now commonly used to describe litterers. EPA staff, stakeholders and the community at large have reported hearing community members call litterers 'tossers', and in some cases the offending person has responded by picking up the litter and finding a bin.</p>
Behaviour	<p>There were also some positive shifts in self-reported behaviours before and after the campaign. For example, twice as many people reported that they had not thrown rubbish from their cars, in the four weeks after the campaign, than before it (up from 44% to 81%). At the same time, the number of people who said they believed littering from cars was not relevant to them decreased from 51% to 15%.</p>

## Environmental outcomes

An independent national litter index study (conducted by Community Change, Victoria for the Beverage Industry Environment Council) showed that Sydney was the only capital city where the amount of litter produced had fallen in the two years in 2001 and 2002.

## How will the outcomes/ learning be maintained/reinforced?

The then EPA and Resource NSW were allocated a further \$2,245,000 (\$1,200,000 for mass media component) from the Waste Fund to conduct another *Don't be a Tosser* litter prevention campaign in June/July 2003. This campaign targets general litter and small illegal dumping items in public places.

Councils are continuing to conduct local programs. Fines are continuing to be used and educational publicity about their use is ongoing.

## For more information

See [www.epa.nsw.gov.au/litter/council\\_kit](http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/litter/council_kit)

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