

LITTER REPORT FY23 NSW

During the financial year of 2023, Clean Up Australia continued to encourage volunteers across the nation to **Step Up to Clean Up**, by taking to their streets, beaches, parks, bushland and waterways to remove accumulated litter.

While over a million joined us last year across 17,139 sites the Litter Report FY23 is a snapshot of litter removed by Clean Up Australia volunteers during Clean Up Australia Day and Every Day Clean Ups across a portion of these sites. Across New South Wales, the Report is based on the count of 179,066 items from 470 surveyed locations (136,332 items from 312 locations in 2022).

NSW SITES REGISTERED:

5,704 (4,482 in 2022)

NSW ESTIMATED VOLUNTEERS:

355,156 (318,971 in 2022)

NSW ESTIMATED VOLUNTEER HOURS:

710,312 (637,942 in 2022)

MAJOR TYPES OF LITTER REPORTED

	FY23 Count	%
Hard Plastics	57,316	32.0%
Soft Plastics	55,598	31.0%
All Other Plastics	32,166	18.0%
Metal	13,502	7.5%
Paper/Cardboard	8,984	5.0%
Glass	7,263	4.1%
Miscellaneous	1,218	0.7%
E-Waste	1,138	0.6%
Rubber	979	0.5%
Wood	902	0.5%
	179,066	100.0%

NOTABLE % CHANGES FROM 2022

↑ Increases:	↓ Decreases:	Unchanged:
Hard Plastics 5.9%	All Other Plastics 3.8%	E-Waste
Soft Plastics 1.7%	Glass 5.8%	Rubber
Metal 1.1%	Miscellaneous 0.9%	Wood
Paper/Cardboard 1.6%		

TOP 10 GROUPED ITEMS AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL LITTER SURVEYED

Grouped Items	FY23 Count	%
Soft Plastics	55,598	31.0%
Non-Food Packaging	49,147	27.4%
Beverage Containers	28,419	15.9%
Food Packaging	24,742	13.8%
Beverage Litter	9,066	5.1%
Household Items	4,439	2.5%
Sanitary Items	2,428	1.4%
Construction Materials	1,580	0.9%
Toys & Sporting Equipment	1,214	0.7%
E-Waste	1,138	0.6%

NOTABLE CHANGES

While items within the top 5 of grouped items remain consistent with 2022, there are slight percentage increases in two categories, with soft plastics increasing by 1.4% and food packaging by 2.0%.

The good news is sanitary items decreased by 1.9%, reflecting a significant reduction in the number of face masks reported. Beverage related litter also decreased by 1.9%. In NSW, prior to the commencement of the Container Deposit Scheme in 2017, beverage container litter levels reflected 28.7% of all litter reported. In FY23, this has reduced to 15.9%.

All other items show minimal percentage changes over 2022.

TOP 10 INDIVIDUAL ITEMS AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL LITTER SURVEYED

Individual Items	FY23 Count	%
Soft Plastic Pieces	44,824	25.0%
Cigarette Butts	26,957	15.1%
Plastic Beverage Bottles (single-use)	15,183	8.5%
Hard Plastic Pieces	10,410	5.8%
Aluminium Beverage Cans	8,841	4.9%
Takeaway Food Containers	7,862	4.4%
Chips and Confectionery Bags	7,397	4.1%
Straws	6,105	3.4%
Takeaway Coffee Cups	5,357	3.0%
Glass Pieces	3,456	1.9%

NOTABLE CHANGES

There are some changes in the order of the top 10 individual items counts compared to 2022. Soft plastic pieces are the single most reported item in both FY23 and 2022, with an increase of 6.1%. Disappointingly, cigarette butts have moved into second position with an increase of 7.9%. In NSW, bans on single-use plastics will be subject to review in 2024, with cigarette butts listed as a priority item for consideration.

Single-use plastic beverage bottles moved from sixth position in 2022 to third in FY23 with an increase of 3%.

We have seen reductions in hard plastic pieces, fast food/ takeaway containers and glass pieces as a percentage of all litter reported.

LITTER DISTRIBUTION BY SITE TYPE

NSW	Number of sites	% of total litter count
Coastal/Beach	75	27.0%
Dive Site	2	0.5%
Footpath	22	4.1%
Outdoor Transport	2	0.2%
Park	129	16.8%
Public Bushland	52	17.3%
River/Creek	74	17.2%
Roadway	65	5.2%
School Grounds	29	6.9%
Shops/Mall	5	1.4%
Other	15	3.5%