

Clean Up 



# LITTER REPORT FY23

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Data submitted by Clean Up Australia volunteers. Report collated and written by, Linda Boettcher & Lucia Moon.

# INTRODUCTION

**Clean Up Australia inspires and mobilises communities to improve and conserve our environment, eliminate litter, and end waste.**

This is the refreshed Clean Up Australia mission, which in 2023 was confirmed after an extensive review of the organisation's strategy. This mission is the backbone to the work we do at Clean Up Australia – encouraging volunteers to take practical action and remove accumulated litter from the environment, both on Clean Up Australia Day and all year round.

Since 1991, the Clean Up Australia annual Rubbish Report has provided a snapshot of the rubbish our volunteers collect over a calendar year. But with a new mission and an expanded team come other changes – the annual Rubbish Report has transformed into the **Litter Report FY23**.

**Welcome to the FY23 Litter Report.**



## WHY THE CHANGE?

This is the first year that the Report has surveyed litter collected and reported on by our volunteers over a **financial year** – from July 1, 2022 until June 30, 2023, rather than a calendar year. We've changed our reporting period to be in alignment with our [Review of Operations](#). The reporting period still centres around our national day of action – Clean Up Australia Day, where the bulk of our returned litter data comes from. But the changed period better enables data to be analysed for trends, prior to the next oncoming Clean Up Australia Day.

## THE GOAL

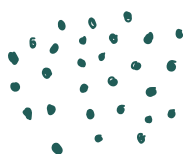
Although streamlined, the goal of the Report remains the same as over the past 32 years of its production: **To provide an analysis of trends in the types and spread of litter throughout Australia.** The analysis includes some broader examination of the factors which influence the major types and sources of litter our volunteers are finding in the environment. We've included discussion on the problem of single-use plastics, soft plastics and packaging, as well as the role of Container Deposit Schemes (CDS) in reducing litter.

In compiling this Report, we note the invaluable contributions of numerous people and organisations throughout the financial year. Firstly – our incredible volunteers, who don their gloves, pick up a bag and get out there and do the hard work, then top it all off by filling out an End of Clean Up Report with their valuable data. The work of Clean Up Australia would not be possible without the generous financial support of our [corporate partners](#). We thank them wholeheartedly for the impact they are making.

We hope that this Litter Report will be a useful tool for all those in Australia concerned with the state of litter in our environment – whether that be community members, environmental journalists, other NGOs or scientists. We envision the Litter Report playing a part in the long-term goal of helping Australians to rethink their relationship with plastics and packaging, as we move toward a circular economy: where resources are no longer wasted or discarded as litter, but designed for longevity, to be recycled and reused again and again.

# OUR ANNUAL IMPACT

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. In response, an estimated 1,030,395 Australians registered 17,139 Clean Up sites, donating around 2,060,790 hours of their time and effort across the nation.



**1,030,395**

Volunteers



**2,060,790**

Volunteer hours



**17,139**

Sites



**10,686**

Community  
clean ups



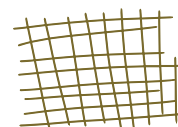
**4,776**

School and youth  
clean ups



**1,667**

Business  
clean ups



**217**

Supporting  
councils

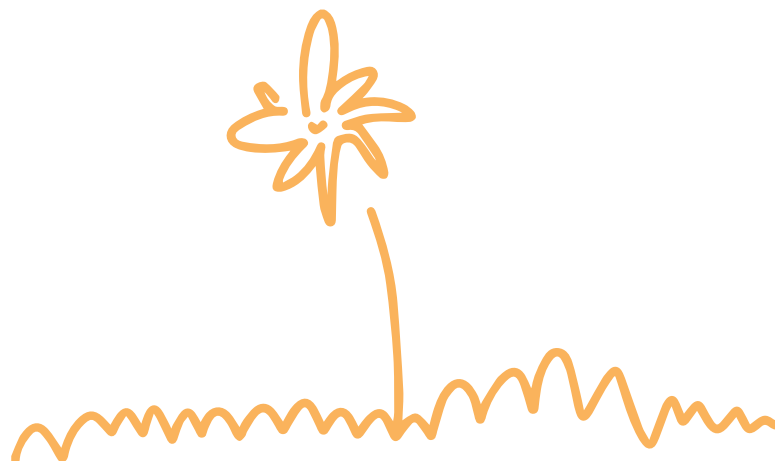
The accumulative result of this year's effort means that over the past 34 years, more than 21 million volunteers have donated more than 40.5 million hours to their local communities, removing hundreds of thousands of ute loads of rubbish from over 232,500 registered locations across the country.

It is now known that almost every species group in the ocean has encountered plastic pollution, with scientists observing negative effects in almost 90% of assessed species.<sup>1</sup> The work of Clean Up Australia volunteers in preventing rubbish and litter entering our waterways and oceans is invaluable; as this Litter Report demonstrates, every little bit of effort in litter removal counts.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

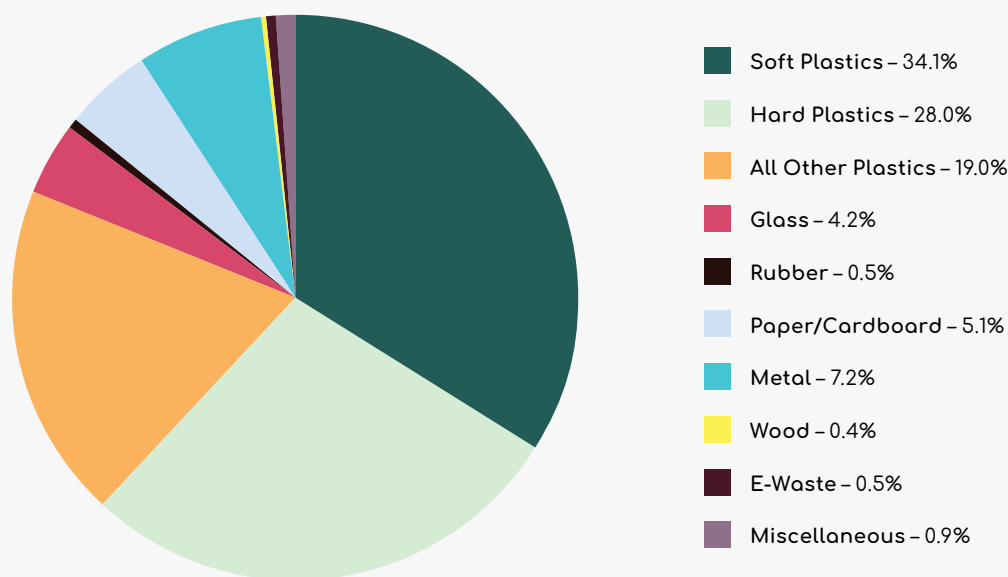
## KEY POINTS

- Across the nation, plastics continue to dominate as the material type most reported at surveyed Clean Up sites, representing 81.1% of all counted litter this financial year [76.9% in 2022]. This is an increase of 4.2%.
- As a percentage of types of litter, soft plastics represent 34.1% of all counted litter in FY23, an increase of 9.2% from 24.9% of surveyed litter in 2022. This increase may have been influenced by the collapse of REDcycle in November 2022.
- Hard plastics, including plastic beverage bottles, take-away food containers and single-use cutlery and plates represent 28.0% of all surveyed litter [23.6% in 2022].
- Packaging [non-food, beverage containers and food] continues to lead litter counts, representing 55.2% of all reported litter during the year [58.1% in 2022]. Packaging continues to be a persistent problem in the Australian national landscape.
- Beverage container counts this financial year were at 14.5% of all counted litter. This is a decrease from 2022 levels of 17.3% and may be attributed to increased Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) collector efforts.
- Wine and large alcoholic bottles represent 6.2% of all counted glass in FY23 [3.4% in 2022]. Clean Up Australia supports the addition of these bottles as eligible CDS containers in all states.
- Single-use cutlery and plates represent 1.7% of all plastics counted in FY23. Nationally, all states except the NT and TAS have banned single-use plastic cutlery and plates.
- Cigarette butts are one of the most reported individual items by volunteers, representing a whopping 16.2% of all counted litter. This is an increase on 2022 which counted cigarette butts at 13.6% of all reported litter nationally. Cigarette butt counts are second only to soft plastic pieces counts in the individual items list.
- Vapes were collected from 22.4% of sites surveyed in FY23 [10.4% of sites in 2022]. Vapes are a triple-threat to our environment as they contain plastic, hazardous and electronic waste, but erroneously end up in landfill or stored by users for long periods. Sadly, there is no consistent approach across the nation on how they are to be disposed.
- Face masks make up 0.4% of all litter counted in 2023, a massive reduction from 2022 when face masks counted for 3.2% of all litter reported.
- Of all pieces of litter, polystyrene packaging accounts for 1.9% [2.8% in 2022]. Polystyrene takeaway containers are banned in all states apart from the NT and TAS.



## MAJOR TYPES OF LITTER

LITTER BY MATERIAL TYPE



**PLASTIC** [hard, soft and all other plastics] is the most common litter type, representing 81.1% [76.9% in 2022] of all litter items counted. This is the 29th year that plastic has dominated the 'Major Types of Litter'. Plastic continues to be the worst pollutant type of litter in the environment, and increasingly dominates the other types of litter counted, with percentages reported to Clean Up Australia continuing to rise each year.

Soft plastic counts include chip and confectionary wrappers, plastic food bags, retail and garbage bags, cling wrap, miscellaneous soft plastic pieces, reusable shopping bags, and bait bags. In FY23, volunteers counted 159,962 soft plastic items [91,061 in 2022], representing 34.1% [24.9% in 2022] of all surveyed litter and 42.1% [32.3% in 2022] of plastics.

Hard plastics, including plastic beverage bottles, take-away food containers and single-use cutlery and plates represent 28.0% of all surveyed litter [23.6% in 2022].

Other plastics counts include miscellaneous plastic items like cigarette butts, polystyrene, nappies and face masks. These items represent 19.0% of all surveyed litter [28.5% in 2022].

It should be noted that the 2022 figure for plastics [76.9%] has been adjusted from our Rubbish Report 2022 figure [63.3%] to bring it in line with our current methodology which counts cigarette butts as plastics. All 2022 plastic percentages have been adjusted to our current methodology and reported as such to allow for FY23-2022 comparison.

**METALS** took second position in the major material types of litter, representing 7.2% of the total count this year [8.0% in 2022]. Beverage containers continue to dominate metals, representing 73.8% of metal litter reported. Bottle caps represent 13.1% of metal litter reported, an increase on their 9.1% representation in 2022.

**PAPER AND CARDBOARD** represents 5.1% of all litter reported [4.6% in 2022]. Within this category, the most counted items include napkins, tissues, newspapers, books, magazine, and large and small paper items which taken together represent 37.8% of all paper counted. Food packaging also dominates the category, accounting for 25.7% of all counted paper and cardboard.

**GLASS** reflects 4.2% of the count, a reduction of 3.1% from 2022 [7.3%]. Glass pieces continue to dominate glass counts, representing 51.1% of the glass count, a reduction on the previous year [69.7% in 2022]. Beverage containers including beer, soft drink, spirits, and wine bottles account for 46.2% of all glass counted.

**MISCELLANEOUS** items represent only 0.9% of all counted litter. The miscellaneous category includes mixed material items and clothing, construction, and food scraps.

**E-WASTE** represents 0.5% of all litter counted.

Similarly, **RUBBER** represents 0.5% of the count [0.6% in 2022].

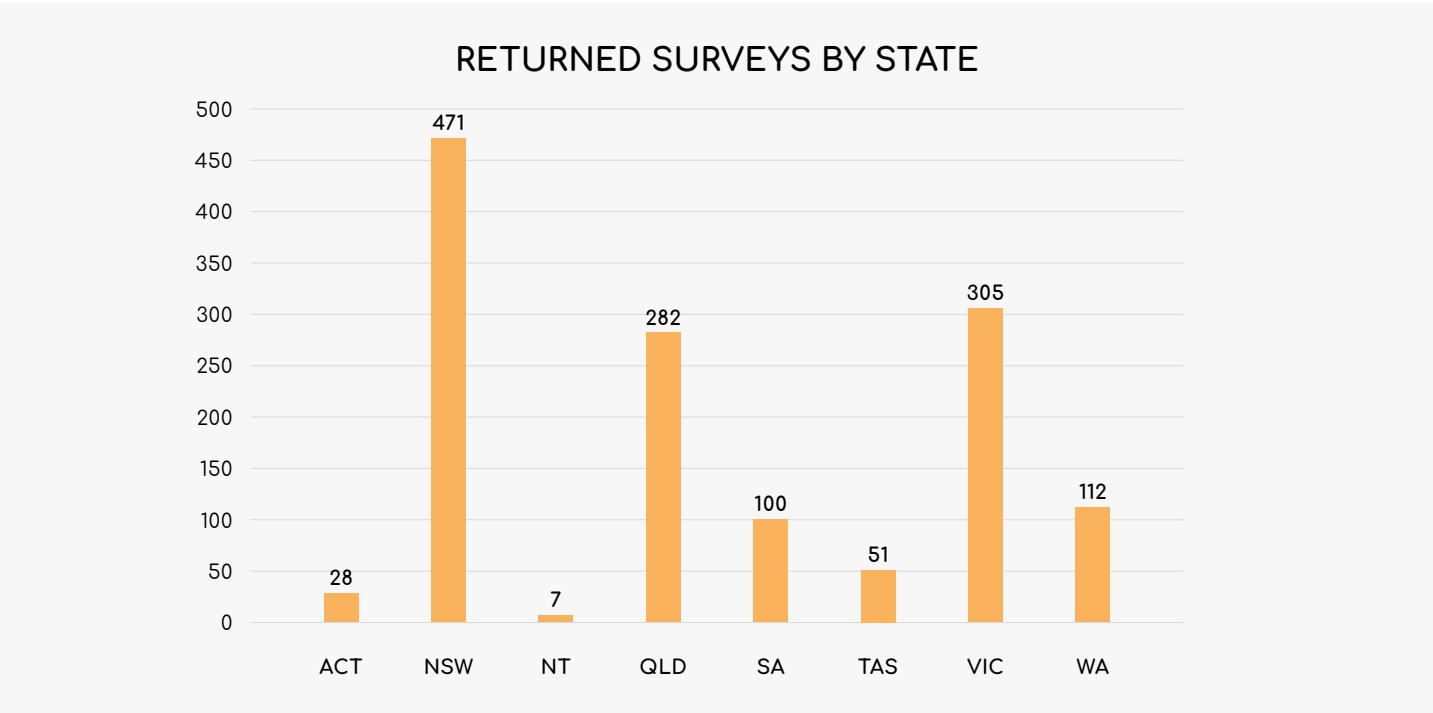
The material type least represented both this year and last year is **WOOD** at 0.4% [0.5% in 2022].

# METHODOLOGY

In FY23, an estimated 1,030,395 Australians registered 17,139 Clean Up sites across the nation. The figures presented in the Litter Report FY23 are based on a **sample** of Clean Up sites where data is collected by our dedicated volunteers within the End of Clean Up Report – our litter survey.

### AT A GLANCE

- 1,356 End of Clean Up Reports analysed for the Litter Report FY23
- 15,347 bags of litter collected and recorded on End of Clean Up Reports
- 3,215 bags of litter opened and counted
- 93 surveyed items



### THE END OF CLEAN UP REPORT

- Issued within Clean Up kits or available online.
- Volunteers either complete their End of Clean Up Report on paper, and email or post it to the Clean Up Australia head-office, where it is entered online, or it is entered online directly by volunteers.

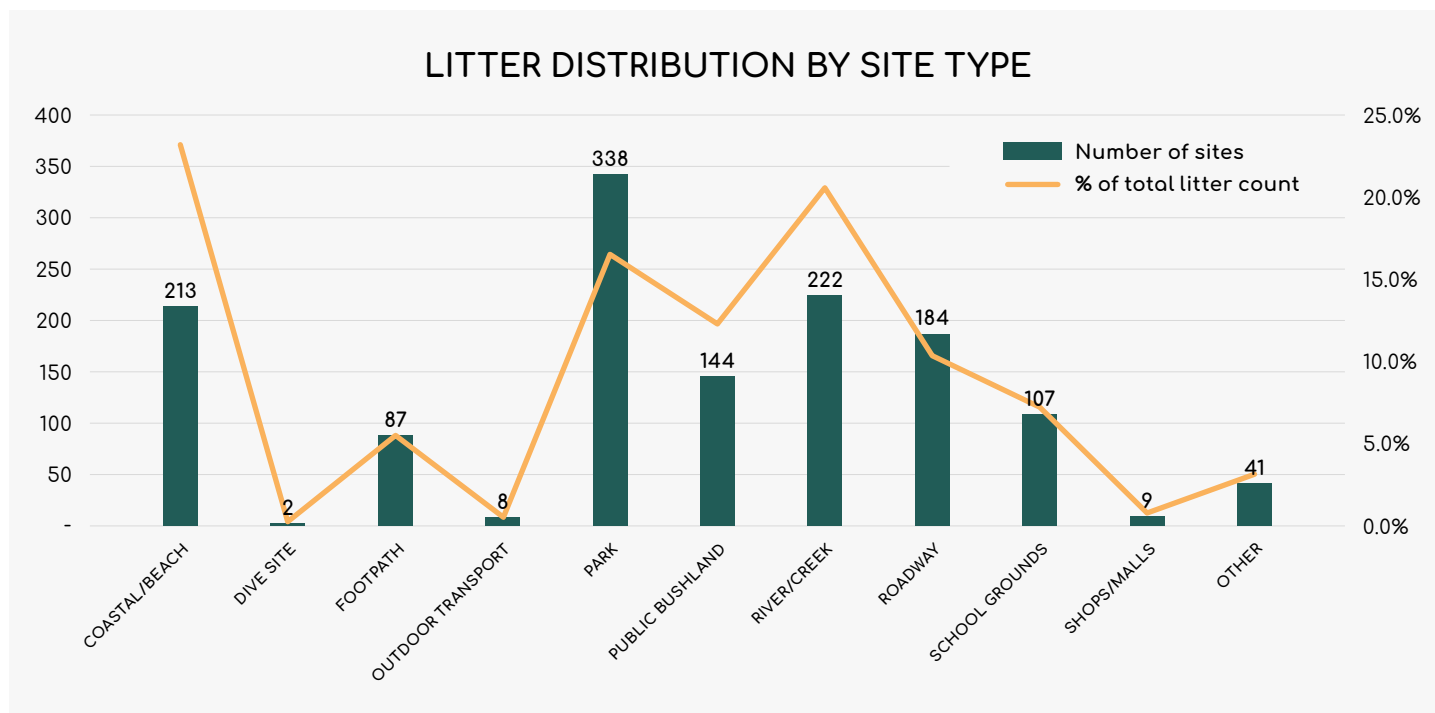
The End of Clean Up Report is divided into two sections: a Quick Count and the full report.

QUICK COUNT ITEMS		FULL REPORT CATEGORIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Face masks</li><li>• Soft plastics (scrunchable)</li><li>• Plastic beverage bottles (single-use)</li><li>• Aluminium beverage cans</li><li>• Takeaway coffee cups</li><li>• Takeaway food containers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plates/cutlery/utensils (single-use)</li><li>• Straws</li><li>• Cigarette butts</li><li>• Batteries</li><li>• Nangs (nitrous oxide cannisters)</li><li>• Vapes (e-cigarettes)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plastics</li><li>• Glass</li><li>• Rubber</li><li>• Paper/Cardboard</li><li>• Metals</li><li>• Wood</li><li>• Electrical Waste</li><li>• Mixed Material Items</li></ul>
Total Item Count = 93		

## SITE TYPES

Each site surveyed is classified by location.  
In FY23 these categories included:

- Coastal/Beach
- Dive Site
- Footpath
- Outdoor Transport
- Park
- Public Bushland
- River/Creek
- Roadway
- School Grounds
- Shops/Mall
- Other (please specify)



- In FY23, 44.0% of all reported litter was removed from waterway sites, including beaches, dive sites, rivers, and creeks.
- 16.7% of all reported litter nationally was removed from parks.
- 11.7% of all reported litter nationally was removed from bushland.
- Despite more volunteers returning surveys on parks, a higher proportion of litter was reported at waterway sites, reminding us that litter has a strong likelihood of ending up in our precious rivers, creeks, and the ocean.

### TO NOTE

- Some figures previously reported in the Rubbish Report 2022 have been adapted slightly in this report to match our updated methodology and allow for accurate comparison of trends between 2022 and FY23.
- Our updated methodology counts cigarette butts in plastics rather than the miscellaneous category. Cigarette filters in cigarette butts contain cellulose acetate, a plastic that can persist in the environment for a long time. We believe it is important that the public is aware of this.
- The Litter Report FY23 is a snapshot of information to show trends over time of litter removed during Clean Up Australia Day and Every Day Clean Ups. It is not intended to be a definitive survey representing all litter found in all Australian environments.



# SUMMARY OF RESULTS

## THE TOP TEN LITTER ITEMS

### INDIVIDUAL ITEMS

The top 10 individual litter items collected and counted on Clean Up Australia sites in FY23 and ranked in order as a percentage of total litter count, compared to 2022.

FY23		2022		Rank
Item	% of total litter count	Item	% of total litter count	
Soft Plastic Pieces	28.7	Soft Plastic Pieces	17.5	1
Cigarette Butts	16.2	Cigarette Butts	13.6	2
Plastic Beverage Bottles (single-use)	6.7	Plastic Beverage Bottles (single-use)	6.1	3
Aluminium Beverage Cans	5.3	Takeaway Food Containers	6.0	4
Takeaway Food Containers	4.8	Aluminium Beverage Cans	6.0	5
Hard Plastic Pieces	3.9	Glass Pieces	5.1	6
Chips and Confectionery Bags	3.7	Hard Plastic Pieces	5.1	7
Straws	3.3	Chips and Confectionery Bags	3.7	8
Takeaway Coffee Cups	2.7	Bottle Caps and Lids	3.3	9
Glass Pieces	2.1	Face Masks	3.2	10
	77.4		70	

- The top 3 counted litter items at Clean Up Australia sites in FY23 remain the same as 2022:
  - Soft plastic pieces
  - Cigarette butts
  - Plastic beverage bottles
- The miscellaneous soft plastic pieces count increased by 11.2% which could be linked to the collapse of REDcycle in November, 2022. Post REDcycle, there is also increased awareness regarding the problem of soft plastics, with some volunteers choosing to focus their efforts on smaller soft plastic pieces within the environment.
- Cigarette butt litter levels increased by 2.6% from 2022 to FY23, indicating a persistent and increasing problem regarding butt disposal and recycling in Australia. Despite a long downward trend in smokers in Australia over time,<sup>2</sup> the proportion of cigarette butts as a percentage of total litter counts has increased.
- Interestingly, reported levels of fast food and takeaway containers dropped by 1.2% from 2022 to FY23, and could be reflective of increased awareness surrounding single-use plastics and takeaway containers. Currently, no states have banned lidded plastic takeaway containers although WA is set to phase them out in September, 2024.<sup>3</sup>
- Face masks are no longer counted in the top 10 rubbish items, while take-away coffee cups sit at 9th place. Decreased face masks and an increase in coffee cups may be attributed to increased social activity in the aftermath of COVID-19.

## GROUPED ITEMS

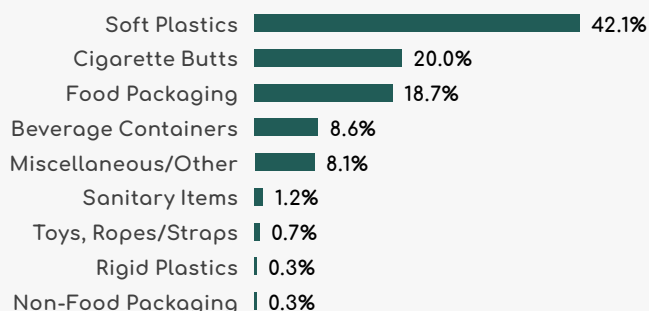
The top 10 **grouped** litter items collected and counted on Clean Up Australia sites in FY23 and ranked in order as a percentage of total litter count, compared to 2022. **Grouped** items are sets of like items regardless of material. For example, beverage containers = glass, plastic and metals.

FY23		2022		Rank
Item	% of total litter count	Item	% of total litter count	
Soft Plastics	34.1	Non-food Packaging	28.2	1
Non-food Packaging	27.2	Soft Plastics	24.9	2
Beverage Containers	14.5	Beverage Containers	17.3	3
Food Packaging	13.5	Food Packaging	12.7	4
Beverage Litter	4.3	Beverage Litter	6.9	5
Household Items	2.6	Sanitary Items	4.4	6
Sanitary Items	1.0	Household Items	2.1	7
Construction Materials	0.9	E-waste	0.9	8
Clothing	0.6	Toys & Sporting Equipment	0.9	9
Toys & Sporting Equipment	0.6	Construction Materials	0.8	10
E-Waste	0.5	Clothing	0.7	
Automotive Items	0.2	Automotive Items	0.2	
	100		100	

- The top 3 counted grouped items on Clean Up Australia sites in FY23 are **soft plastics, non-food packaging and beverage containers**. These are the same top 3 as 2022, but soft plastics have taken the lead from non-food packaging.
- As a percentage of types of litter, **soft plastics** represent 34.1% of all counted litter in 2023, an increase of 9.2% from 24.9% of surveyed litter in 2022. This alarming increase may have been influenced by the collapse of REDcycle in November 2022. A National Plastics Recycling Scheme (NPRS) is currently in development, with the ambitious goal of collecting and recycling 190,000 tonnes of soft plastic per annum by 2025.<sup>4</sup>
- Packaging** [non-food, beverage containers and food] continues to lead litter counts, representing 55.2% of all reported litter during the year [58.1% in 2022]. When taken together with beverage litter, which includes bottle caps, corks and straws, packaging makes up 59.5% of all litter counted in FY23. Packaging continues to be a persistent problem in the Australian national landscape.
- Clothing** sits at 9th place in the top 10 grouped items collected and counted in FY23. The clothing industry was recently put on notice for the need for action by the federal government, which stated: if voluntary product stewardship fails, government will regulate.<sup>5</sup>

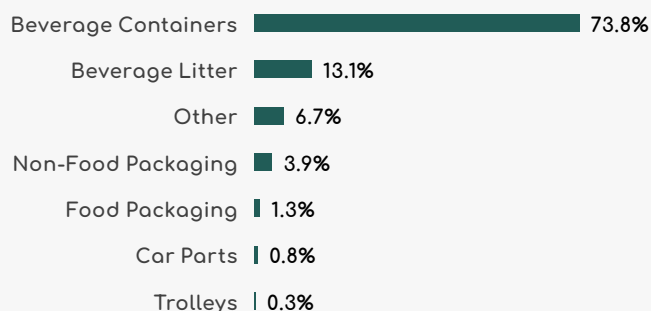
## MAJOR SOURCES OF LITTER

### PLASTICS



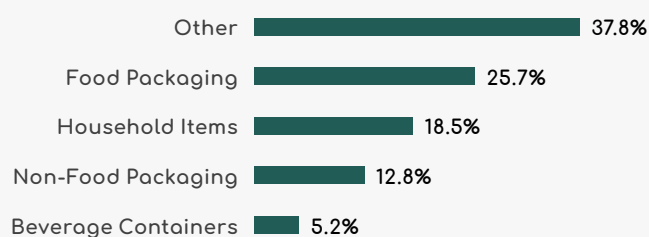
Distribution of plastics - 81.1% of all counted litter

### METAL



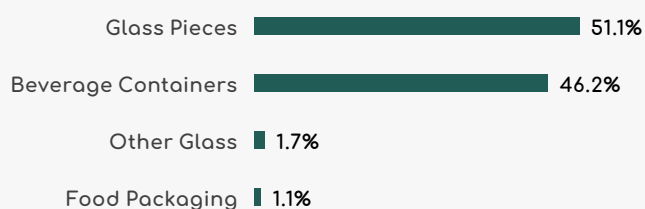
Distribution of metal - 7.2% of all counted litter

### PAPER AND CARDBOARD



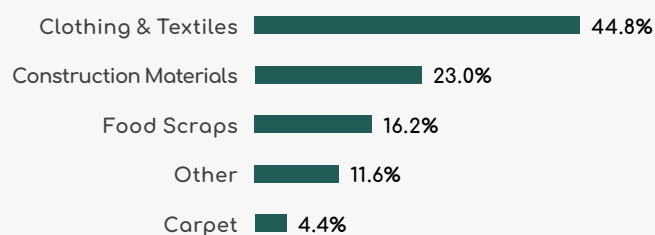
Distribution of paper and cardboard - 5.1% of all counted litter

### GLASS



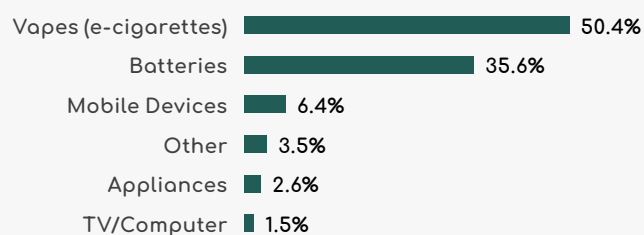
Distribution of glass - 4.2% of all counted litter

### MISCELLANEOUS



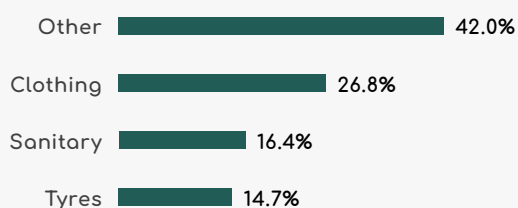
Distribution of miscellaneous - 0.9% of all counted litter

### E-WASTE



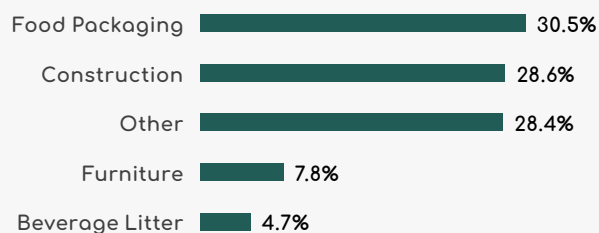
Distribution of e-waste - 0.5% of all counted litter

### RUBBER



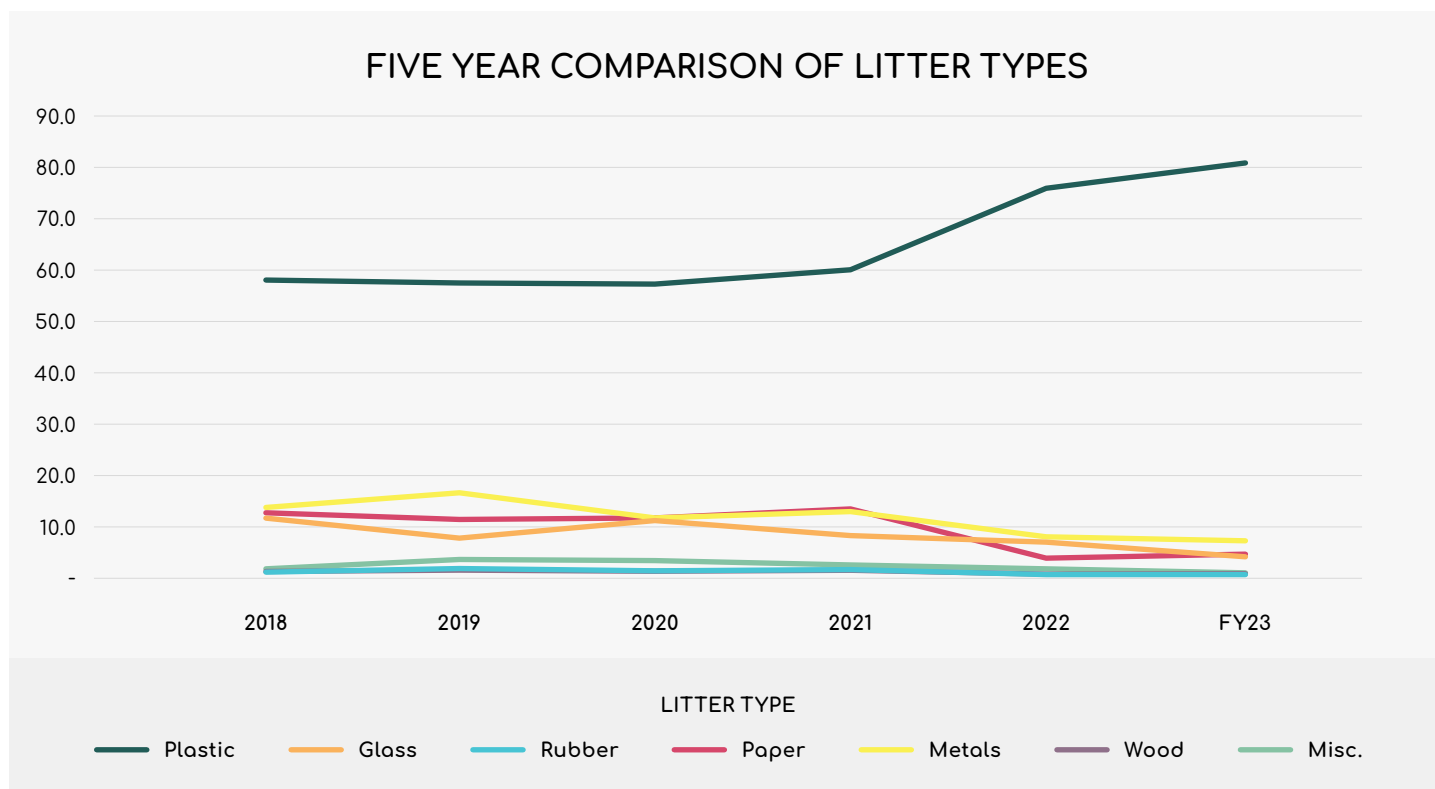
Distribution of rubber - 0.5% of all counted litter

### WOOD



Distribution of wood - 0.4% of all counted litter

## HISTORICAL COMPARISON



- The comparison graph shows changes in types of litter collected over the past five years.
- Since 2018, **plastics** have continually dominated the litter landscape, and as a category continues to increase as a percentage of overall litter since 2020.
- Historic data has been adjusted to include cigarette butts in the plastics category for all years from 2018.
- **Metals and glass** as percentages of litter types have gradually decreased and may reflect increased Container Deposit Scheme collector efforts in these categories.
- **Paper and cardboard** as a percentage of litter types has also decreased over the five-year period.
- E-waste as a material type was first separated from the **miscellaneous** category in FY23. For the current comparison graph, it has been included in the miscellaneous category.
- The graph is indicative of Australia's increasing plastic waste crisis.

# DISCUSSION

## SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

With plastics dominating the FY23 Litter Report, representing 81.1% of all counted litter this year, and single-use plastics including **soft plastics, cigarette butts, food packaging and beverage containers** accounting for 89.4% of all reported plastics, single-use plastics are evidently a critical problem within the Australian litter and waste landscape. Indeed, Australia is the second highest generator of single-use plastic waste per capita in the world, after Singapore.<sup>6</sup> Each Australian produces approximately 60kg of plastic waste each year.<sup>7</sup>

Many of the Australian states have been moving to phase-out single-use plastics, but what progress has been made? The Australian Retailers Association has published an overview of states' progress in phasing out problematic single-use plastics.<sup>8</sup> WA is leading the way with bans on heavyweight plastic bags and most food service items. The WA Plan for Plastics outlines a broad range of single-use plastics banned from 2022 to 2025 including all plastic bags and most food service items.<sup>9</sup> QLD has also banned heavyweight plastic bags alongside several other items.

In 2022, NSW became the last Australian jurisdiction to ban lightweight plastic bags. NSW also banned plastic straws, stirrers and cutlery, polystyrene food service items, cotton buds with plastic sticks and microbeads. Bans on other single-use plastics will be subject to review in 2024, with **cigarette butts** listed as a priority item for consideration in collaboration with the Federal government.<sup>10</sup>

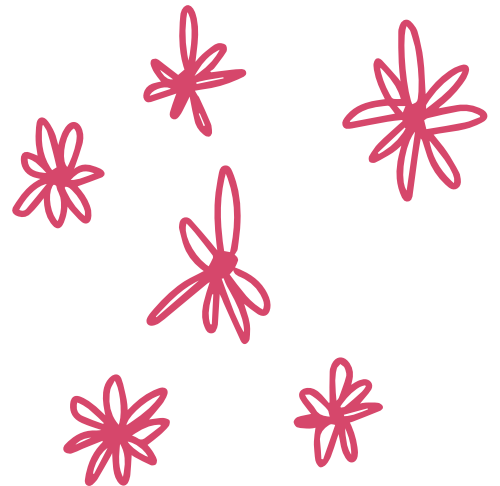
Tasmania has banned lightweight plastic bags but is yet to move on other items, while the NT has banned lightweight plastic bags and will ban other single-use items by 2025. Both Victoria and the ACT have banned lightweight plastic bags and some other single-use plastics such as straws, cutlery, polystyrene packaging and plastic plates and bowls.

Reported levels of **fast food and takeaway containers** dropped by 1.2% from 6.0% in 2022 to 4.8% in FY23, which could be reflective of increased awareness surrounding single-use plastics and takeaway containers. Currently, no state has banned lidded plastic takeaway containers although WA is set to phase them out in September, 2024.<sup>11</sup>

Reported levels of **single-use cutlery and plates** remain stable over recent years and represent 1.7% of all plastics counted in FY23. Nationally, all states except the NT and TAS have now banned single-use plastic cutlery and plates, with the latest bans having come into effect in Victoria in February, 2023.<sup>12</sup>

**Polystyrene packaging** accounts for 1.9% of reported litter in FY23, an encouraging decrease from 2022 levels of 2.8%. This may reflect widespread bans on polystyrene takeaway containers and cups in all states apart from the NT and TAS. Clean Up Australia expects to see other single-use plastic levels in counted litter decrease over time, as nation-wide plastic bans slowly come into effect.

The issue of **vapes** remains problematic. Vapes were found across 22.4% of Clean Up sites surveyed in FY23 and across 10.4% of sites surveyed in 2022. Reported vape numbers increased by more than 250% since 2022. Vapes are a triple-threat to our environment as they contain plastic, hazardous and electronic waste. Although now federally banned, vapes continue to circulate without a safe disposal method and represent 50.4% of all littered e-waste surveyed in FY23.



## PACKAGING

Packaging [non-food, beverage containers and food] continues to lead rubbish counts, representing 55.2% of all reported litter during FY23 [58.1% in 2022]. Further, **packaging** and **soft plastics** represent 69.7% of all plastics reported. It's clear the issue of plastics and plastic packaging waste is in urgent need of attention.

In 2023, the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation (APCO) admitted it would not meet its four voluntary national packaging targets, including the ambitious goal of ensuring all packaging is reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025.<sup>13</sup> APCO's goal of recycling or composting 70% of all plastic packaging by 2025 is also far from being met, with the latest figures showing only 18% is being recovered, with 82% going to landfill.<sup>14</sup>

Clean Up Australia is happy to report that on June 9, 2023, Australia's Environment Ministers met and agreed to mandate obligations for packaging design, as part of a new regulatory scheme which also makes industry responsible for the packaging they place on the market.<sup>15</sup>

Clean Up Australia supports a mandatory product stewardship scheme for packaging based on international best practice that promotes a circular economy approach to packaging and involves the whole supply chain, with producers directly accountable for meeting reduction, recovery, and recycled content targets.

In November, 2023 Environment Ministers reiterated that Australia's incoming national packaging laws will ensure businesses take responsibility for the 6.7 million tonnes of packaging they place on the Australian market. It will be interesting to observe whether packaging litter levels – which currently lead litter counts, representing 55.2% of all reported litter in the Litter Report FY23 – will decline as Australia's new packaging laws come into place.

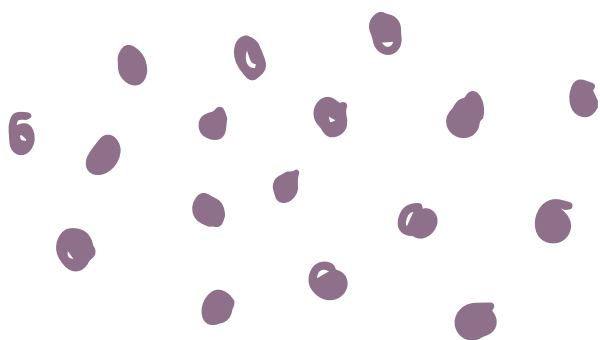
## SOFT PLASTICS

The collapse of REDcycle in November 2022 was a shock for many Australians, who had been diligently separating **soft plastics** to return to their local supermarket for collection. But even before the collapse of REDcycle, the program recycled less than 5% of household consumer soft plastics.<sup>16</sup> A Soft Plastics Taskforce has since been established between the three major supermarkets Coles, Woolworths and Aldi, with the aim of launching a new supermarket soft plastic collection scheme as an interim solution, prior to the establishment of a national scheme.<sup>17</sup>

The National Plastics Recycling Scheme (NPRS), which is currently being developed by the Australian Food and Grocery Council with funding support from the Australian Federal Government's National Product Stewardship Investment Fund, aims to tackle the soft plastic challenge nationally.<sup>18</sup> The NPRS outlines a new kerbside model to collect and recycle household soft plastics. The model would see food and grocery manufacturers pay a levy to support the recycling of the soft plastics they create, in a move toward an Extended Producer Responsibility scheme.

More can be done in reducing plastic packaging, with a recent study finding many supermarkets charging more for loose fruit and vegetables, compared with plastic wrapped options.<sup>19</sup> Reducing soft plastics at the production and retailing level is an important step in reducing plastic use overall.

With soft plastics making up 34.1% of counted litter in the FY23 Litter Report, Clean Up Australia looks forward to the establishment of a national product stewardship scheme with the capacity to process soft plastics at scale, and reduce soft plastic litter in the environment. If successfully implemented, the proposed NPRS scheme is expected to be supplemented by new federal mandatory packaging obligations to regulate packaging design and recycled content. As highlighted by the Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association Australia (WMRR), the biggest challenge to the NPRS will be the creation of demand and end markets for the Australian collected material.<sup>20</sup> It is vital that we all do our bit to create demand for recycled content.



## CONTAINER DEPOSIT SCHEMES

The first Australian Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) was established in SA in 1977. Since then, almost all other states have set up their own schemes, with the Victorian scheme launching in late 2023 and Tasmania set to commence in 2024. Under these schemes, a small, refundable deposit is added to the price of a beverage at the point of sale (10c in Australia). Empty eligible drink containers including plastic, glass and aluminium bottles and cans can be returned to a collection point, where the consumer or collector receives a refund of the deposit.

CDS in Australia represent a successful example of circular economy in action. These schemes increase recycling rates overall, but also have a direct impact on litter, with a study by CSIRO showing that deposit schemes reduce drink containers in the ocean by 40%.<sup>21</sup> In the Litter Report FY23, beverage container counts were at 14.5% of all counted national litter. This is a decrease from 2022 levels of 17.3% and may be attributed to increased collector efforts around the country.

With wine and large alcoholic bottles representing 6.2% of all counted glass in FY23 [3.4% in 2022], Clean Up Australia supports the addition of these bottles as eligible CDS containers in all states.

In 2008, the refund amount for eligible containers in SA increased from 5 to 10 cents. This change led to more South Australians participating in the scheme, resulting in less litter and less beverage containers sent to landfill.<sup>22</sup> For this reason, Clean Up Australia supports a national increase in the refund value from 10c to 20c.





# CONCLUSION

With 130,000 tonnes of plastic litter leaking into the Australian marine environment each year,<sup>23</sup> Australia is in the midst of a plastic waste crisis. There is still a lot of work to be done in preventing litter and waste. These challenges require effort on all fronts, from production and retailing, policy and legislation, through to consumer choice and post-consumer disposal or recycling. Picking up litter is vital to protecting our precious environment, but we must stem the waste production at the outset and live in a more sustainable way.

During the Clean Up Australia week of environmental action in March 2023, over 756,000 volunteers stepped up to Clean Up, and over the course of the year over one million Aussies got involved. In addition to our Clean Ups, Clean Up Australia continues to advocate for more sustainable living practices and encourage Australians from all walks of life to rethink their relationship with the products and packaging they use.

*We will continue to work with key bodies and organisations as we help transition Australia to a circular economy, founded on principles of product stewardship. After all, it's our mission to inspire and mobilise communities to improve and conserve our environment, eliminate litter, and end waste.*

**Our planet needs us all more than ever!**





# ENDNOTES

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