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**Queensland's Waste Strategy  
2010-2020:  
Waste Avoidance and Recycling  
Consultation Draft  
Submission**

**Butt Free Australia**

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## Introduction

Butt Free Australia welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Queensland Waste Strategy 2010-2020: Waste Avoidance & Recycling Consultation Draft.

The Consultation Draft aims to set the direction for waste and resource management in Queensland over the next decade, involving fundamental long-term change.

The reforms and actions in the draft strategy are designed to encourage the behavioural change needed to avoid waste, recycle and responsibly disposal of any left-over waste.

The concept of responsible disposal of waste, through behaviour change is of key interest to Butt Free Australia, as is the need for broad engagement and coordinated effort from all stakeholders.

## About Butt Free Australia

Butt Free Australia (formerly the Butt Littering Trust) is an environmental product stewardship organisation established for the principal purpose of reducing cigarette butt litter and cigarette butt littering in Australia.

As a product stewardship organisation dealing with the issue of cigarette butt litter, Butt Free Australia actively seeks funding from the tobacco industry to address the problem.

Butt Free Australia continues to receive funding from British American Tobacco Australia Limited who was responsible for the initiative to establish the Trust in 2003. Under the Trust Deed funding is also able to be sought, and can be accepted, from any other body that has a stake in the issue of cigarette butt litter.

Butt Free Australia is guided by the principles of the Deed that state that the Trust is to be an environmental organisation and will focus solely on reducing cigarette butt litter and cigarette butt littering through changing behaviour. Butt Free Australia is also required to be fully independent and ensure that it is seen as independent and fully transparent in its discussions and actions.

Since its inception Butt Free Australia has invested over \$2.42 million in 105 projects with partners who, in turn, have contributed a further \$2.16m in cash and resources. This represents a total investment of just over \$4.58m across Australia in seven years.

However butt litter remains the single highest item, by number, found in the litter stream. According to the Keep Australia Beautiful National Litter Index<sup>1</sup>, cigarette butts accounted for 47% of all items in 2008-09 (down from 47.3% in 2006-07 and 48.6% in 2005-06).

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<sup>1</sup> Keep Australia Beautiful National Litter Index 2008-09 [www.kab.org.au/litter-research/what-we-do/national-litter-index/](http://www.kab.org.au/litter-research/what-we-do/national-litter-index/)

Butt Free Australia has identified that a business as usual (BaU) approach to tackling cigarette butt litter is not going to bring about the comprehensive behaviour change that is needed. While on-ground projects successful in reducing butt litter at a local level are, and will remain, central to Butt Free Australia and other stakeholder's activities it is recognised that greater awareness of the issue of cigarette butt litter is needed.

In response, in March 2010 Butt Free Australia launched its national awareness campaign 'Not a Good Look' which places personal responsibility at the forefront of the butt littering issues. A key feature of the campaign, which includes outdoor billboard advertising, indoor media through the hospitality industry and a dedicated community service announcement produced for television, was the establishment of the campaign website [www.notagoodlook.com.au](http://www.notagoodlook.com.au).

The website provides visitors with facts on butt littering, messages that will motivate behaviour change and tools to do something practical about the issue of butt litter. It has two targets: those who know that they should not drop their butts but need to understand why and those who are sick of seeing butts everywhere and want to do something about it.

Through an integrated Butt FREE Solutions approach – context, awareness, education, infrastructure and enforcement achieving quantifiable reductions in butt littering through changing people's behaviour is both desirable and possible.

#### 2010-2020 Waste Avoidance and Recycling Consultation Draft

The 2010-2020 Waste Avoidance and Recycling Consultation Draft is a comprehensive document that will no doubt stimulate discussion, debate and response from and within the waste management industry, industry more generally, the government sector and the wider community.

With an emphasis on shaping the future of waste and resource management in Queensland, from a Butt Free Australia perspective it is pleasing to see that the issue of litter has not been overlooked.

As defined in Queensland<sup>2</sup>, "litter is any domestic or commercial waste and any material a person might reasonably believe is refuse, debris or rubbish. Litter can be almost any material that is disposed of incorrectly. Litter includes cigarette butts and drink bottles dropped on the ground, fast food wrappers thrown out of the car window, poorly secured material from a trailer or grass clippings swept into the gutter. Litter can also be an abandoned vehicle or an abandoned part of a vehicle".

Litter has a large negative economic impact on many stakeholders, particularly local government who bear the main costs associated with its cleaning and management. Litter is also widely acknowledged as having visual, social and environmental impacts that in turn are seen by many as indicators of the health of the area in which they live, work and play.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/environmental\\_management/waste/the\\_new\\_litter\\_laws/index.html](http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/environmental_management/waste/the_new_litter_laws/index.html)

As home to some of the world's most beautiful, diverse and unique ecosystems, Queensland must ensure that adequate attention is given to litter as part of the broader consideration of waste avoidance and recycling.

The problem in Queensland must be tackled through a comprehensive strategy that prevents litter occurring, and addresses littering behaviour, rather than just simply managing littered items.

Butt Free Australia welcomes and supports Action 2 of the Consultation Draft to develop a statewide litter prevention strategy that will outline long-term strategic actions to reduce litter and raise awareness of the impacts of litter in Queensland.

In particular it supports the proposal to introduce a public reporting system for littering from vehicles. The overwhelming success of the Victorian EPA's Litter Report Line introduced in 2001/02 is evidence of the benefit of such a system.

Since its inception over 200,000 infringement notices have been issued by EPA Victoria, of which some 19,465 fines were issued in 2008/09. Each year it is estimated that around 90% of reports relate to tossing cigarette butts (both lit and unlit) from vehicles, although food packaging, drink containers and poorly secured rubbish are also reported<sup>3</sup>.

Successful public report lines also operate in Tasmania and Western Australia. In the two years since the Tasmania line has been introduced, already 1,900 reports have been made resulting in 887 infringement notices, 104 written warnings and 1 abatement notice<sup>4</sup>.

While not devaluing the other programs suggested for inclusion in the Litter Strategy, such as lighter than air balloons, plastic retail shopping bags and unwanted advertising material and community newspapers, Butt Free Australia would request that specific consideration is given the issue of cigarette butt litter as part of the Litter Strategy.

Cigarette butts are identified as the most frequently littered item in the litter stream in Queensland according to the 2008/09 Keep Australia Beautiful National Litter Index<sup>5</sup> with 27 cigarette butts per 1,000m<sup>2</sup>.

They are also exhibiting a strong downward trend in Queensland – down from 36 per 1,000m<sup>2</sup> in 2007/08, 43 in 2006/07 and 45 in 2005/06 which is encouraging. The 2008/09 Queensland figure of 27 butts also compares favourably to the national average of 30 butts per 1,000m<sup>2</sup>. In regard to volume, butts make up only a very small proportion of the overall litter stream at 0.003 litres per 1,000m<sup>2</sup>.

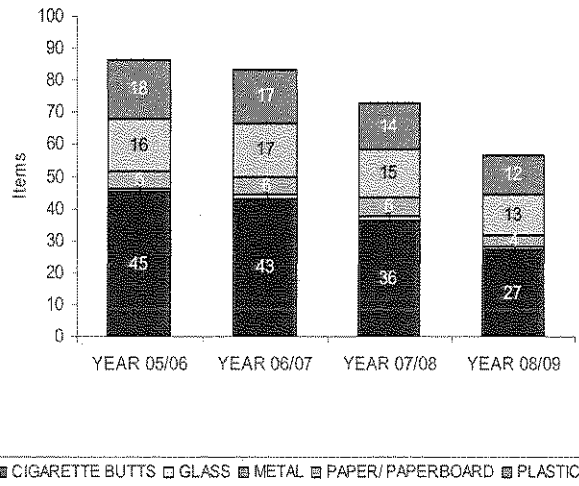
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<sup>3</sup> EPA Victoria Media Release – Community Supports EPA Litter Reporting Program 10 November 2009

<sup>4</sup> Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water & Environment Tasmania

<sup>5</sup> Keep Australia Beautiful National Litter Index 2008-09

Items per 1000 Square Metres by Main Material Type - Annual Averages -QLD



Butt Free Australia also notes with interest the strategic action proposed by the Queensland Government to establish a Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC).

While the SAC will have no statutory function and will be an advisory group not a decision-making body it will provide advice in the first twelve months regarding implementation of the waste avoidance strategy and legislative reforms. It will then evolve to provide advice regarding program funding priorities and program design. Butt Free Australia would welcome the opportunity to participate in any such initiative, particularly related to the development of the Litter Strategy, which may arise.

Butt Free Australia is pleased to have had the opportunity to provide input into the Queensland Waste Strategy 2010-2020: Waste Avoidance & Recycling Consultation Draft and looks forward to engaging further with the Queensland Government and stakeholders in relation to cigarette butt litter and littering.

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