

LITTER IN THE DERWENT

Litter on the Derwent estuary foreshore

LITTER found on the Derwent estuary foreshore comes in all shapes and sizes – from plastic bottles, bags and tiny cigarette butts to large items such as supermarket shopping trolleys and even old cars! Litter is not only unsightly but is also a health hazard to people and wildlife.



Where does the litter come from?

Many of the smaller items of litter reach the Derwent estuary via stormwater. Stormwater is the rain that collects on roofs and gutters and flows down our streets, car parks, gardens and parks into drains or creeks that reach our beaches, and the estuary. Along the way the stormwater collects rubbish, dirt, oil and other pollutants.

Stormwater stencilling kits available for loan from the Derwent Estuary Program.

A basic Waterwatch monitoring kit is available for loan from Sustainable Living Tasmania 6234 5566



ABOVE: Litter near the Derwent Entertainment Centre.



ABOVE: Litter traps are used to prevent litter from entering the Derwent.

Litter - it just doesn't go away!

Litter is no trivial matter. What we drop or throw away on land can have far reaching impacts. Most plastic does not biodegrade but simply becomes smaller and smaller pieces. These fragments of plastic are now entering the food chain as they are eaten by birds, fish, turtles and other marine life.

There is a large patch of plastic in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Most of this patch is not made up of plastic bags and empty bottles; instead it consists of billions of tiny pieces of plastic hidden beneath the surface, like confetti. Scientists are studying this massive garbage patch and you can find videos, blogs and other information at seaplexscience.com or follow the cruise of the Plastiki – a boat made entirely of plastic – at www.theplastiki.com

Albatross on an isolated island near the Pacific Garbage Patch are dying because of plastic litter. Adult albatross mistakenly eat the plastic as food. Young albatross are starving to death because the fish they are fed by their parents contain plastic which cannot be digested.

- Message from the Gyre** - Chris Jordan Photography - http://www.chrisjordan.com/current_set2.php?id=11
- North Pacific Gyre** - <http://www.environmentalgraffiti.com/featured/north-pacific-gyre-million-tons-garbage-growing/14477>
- Charles Moore** - <http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/the-worlds-rubbish-dump-a-garbage-tip-that-stretches-from-hawaii-to-japan-778016.html>

What's being done about it?

Litter traps

To prevent litter entering the Derwent, local councils have installed litter traps in stormwater pits and along stormwater drainage networks, while larger floating litter traps and litter booms have been fitted in some rivulets.

- Stormwater Management Derwent Estuary Program – Stormwater Management**
<http://www.derwentestuary.org.au/index.php?id=30>
- Urban Ecology Australia**
<http://www.urbanecology.org.au/topics/stormwater.html>
- Stormwater Infrastructure**
http://www.hobartcity.com.au/hccwr/_assets/main/lib60037/12.%20hard%20engineering%20systems.pdf

Waterwatch Australia
<http://www.waterwatch.org.au/>

What can we do about it?

We can all do something to prevent litter harming wildlife and spoiling our favourite beaches and places to walk. It's simple!

1. Make sure your rubbish goes into the bin.
2. Get Involved. Clean Up Australia Day is held in March every year and encourages thousands of Australians to collect rubbish in their local area.
3. To register your group and site go to www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au/about/about-the-event/clean-up-australia-day

You can also help reduce littering:

- Report littering to the EPA Division (Look Who's Littering – on the Road) - phone: 1300 13 55 13.
- Stencil stormwater drains near your school – Stormwater stencilling kits available for loan - 6233 0477.
- Conduct litter audits and share your data with other schools - <http://www.sustainableschools.tas.edu.au/>
- Join your local Coastcare or Landcare group.



ABOVE: A dead cormorant entangled in netting. Picture courtesy of R. Alderman.