Department of Environment and Conservation

Keep Australia Beautiful WA

FACT SHEET

ILLEGAL DUMPING

WHAT IS ILLEGAL DUMPING?

Illegal dumping is a particular type of littering where people go out of their way to dump their rubbish. They may be trying to avoid paying disposal fees or simply not making the time and effort required to take their waste to a rubbish tip (landfill).

Illegal dumping can include small bags in urban streets, parks or building site bins or tossing used furniture or other items onto vacant land or into the bush. More serious illegal dumping occurs where people fill up trailers and trucks with all sorts of materials and dump them in areas such as National Parks, bushland reserves, parks, industrial and building sites or outside charity bins, stores and median strips.

WHY SHOULD I CARE?

- In Australia, furniture, packaging and organic waste are amongst the most common types of illegally dumped rubbish, although construction materials, scrap tyres, abandoned cars and hazardous waste are also found.[1]
- More recently, there has been an increase in the amount of hazardous materials found illegally dumped, including industrial waste, oil and other liquid waste, asbestos and medical waste.
- Dumped rubbish can leach contaminates into our bushland, harming our plants and animals and blighting our landscape.[2]
- Dumping of chemicals causes contamination of our precious groundwater and drinking water catchment.
- Dumped green waste spreads weeds and increases risk of fire.
- Dumped cars, appliances and equipment are a major hazard.
- Councils incur high costs for removing rubbish from dump sites.
- The only way to clean up an illegal dump site is to remove the rubbish and send it to landfill. This means that rubbish which could have been recycled is lost.[3]
- Illegal dumping leads to a decrease in visual amenity and land values.
- The presence of illegally dumped materials often attracts additional dumping.[2]
- This type of littering is most serious not only because of the quantity and potential hazard but also the fact that people are intentionally littering with little concern for the way it will affect others.

LITTERING IS ILLEGAL

Illegal dumping can be prosecuted under the ***Environmental Protection Act 1986*** with maximum fines of $62,500 for individuals and $125,000 for corporate bodies (businesses). Under the ***Litter Act 1979*** minor illegal dumping can attract an infringement notice of $200 or $1,000 if taken to court.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP REDUCE ILLEGAL DUMPING

- Utilise bulk rubbish and green waste pick-ups.
- Contact your local council to find out whether they offer free or reduced rate skip bins.
- Utilise kerb side recycling facilities to reduce your overall waste content.
- Contact your council to find out about your local recycling and waste disposal facilities, e.g. metal, tyres, and cardboard.
- Give away your unwanted goods to your community through www.freecycle.org or deliver any items in good condition to charities.
- If you are someone who does the right thing, you can also help make a difference by registering to become a litter reporter.

For more information on Keep Australia Beautiful programs visit www.kabc.wa.gov.au or call 6467 5122

REFERENCES

1 NSW Department of Environment and Conservation http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/waste/dumping.htm
2 Clean Up Australia www.cleanup.org.au; 3 Blacktown City Council www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au

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