

## FACT SHEET

# CIGARETTE BUTTS



### THE FACTS

- Cigarette butts are the most littered item in Australia.
- About seven billion of the 24 billion filtered cigarettes sold every year in Australia are littered.
- Six out of 10 Australian smokers litter their butts outdoors.
- Cigarette butts make up over 50 per cent of the Western Australia litter stream.

### WHY SHOULD I CARE?

- Butts littered on streets get washed into stormwater drains and into waterways where they leach toxic chemicals such as cadmium, lead and zinc.
- Butts are commonly mistaken for food by marine life and have been found in the stomachs of fish, birds, sea turtles and other marine creatures.
- Cigarette butts are made from non-biodegradable plastic and can take up to 12–15 years to break down.
- Cigarette butts are responsible for 8–10 per cent of bush fires in rural areas.

### LITTERING IS ILLEGAL

Flicking cigarettes from your vehicle; stubbing out and flicking butts onto public areas such as footpaths, roads, gutters, bus shelters and outside office buildings can all incur a fine. Under the *Litter Act 1979* you can be fined \$75 for the incorrect disposal of your butt.



### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP REDUCE CIGARETTE BUTT LITTER

- If you are a smoker, dispose of your cigarettes butts responsibly by always putting them in a bin.
- Carry a portable ashtray with you to use when there are no bins around. (Available from Keep Australia Beautiful)
- Get your business involved in the Bin Your Butt Program — a workplace education campaign to reduce butt litter.
- If you are a non smoker, or a smoker 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](http://www.kabc.wa.gov.au) or phone 6364 7210

### REFERENCES

Planet Ark Cigarette Butt Report 2003; FESA 2009.