

FACT SHEET

DOG POO



DOG POO ISN'T LITTER, IS IT?

Dog poo is litter and a cause of major worry for local communities and councils because of the potential health, environmental and amenity impacts.

WHY SHOULD I CARE?

- Droppings contain harmful bacteria and nutrients, and some end up washing into natural waterways through the stormwater system.
- *Toxocara canis* is the roundworm that can be found in the faeces of infected puppies or adult dogs, and can be passed onto humans. Children, people with compromised immune systems and field sports players are most at risk of infection.¹
- Research has found that community concern about pet issues such as dog poo in public places is associated with a poor opinion of pet owners, a negative opinion of council animal management services, less support for dog off-leash exercise areas and increased support for legislative controls on pet ownership.²
- Some experts argue that in addition to problems arising from dogs off the leash behaving badly, dog poo is one of the main reasons why dogs are banned from certain public places, e.g. beaches.³
- A Western Australian survey, conducted by the City of Stirling, found that 83 per cent of residents were 'offended' by dog faeces in public places, with 57 per cent stating that they were 'very much offended'.⁴



WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP REDUCE DOG POO

- Always carry a plastic or biodegradable bag, trowel or pooper scooper with you when you walk your dog. Keep your bags/pouches/pooper-scooper products with your leash, as a reminder to take them with you.
- Personal bag carriers are available that attach to your dog's leash to store plastic bags for use during walks.
- If you forget your bag, look for bag dispensers and bins provided by the local council.
- If using the plastic bag method for cleaning up, simply put your hand inside the bag, pick up the dog poo, turn the bag inside out, then seal.
- Dispose of your bags in council-provided dog litter bins, or in your bin at home, but not the recycling bin. You could also compost your dog poo either in composting units or worm farms.
- If you are someone who does the right thing, you can also help make a difference by registering to become a litter reporter.

LITTERING IS ILLEGAL

Leaving dog poo in public areas such as streets, parks and on beaches can all incur a fine. Under the **Litter Act 1979** you can be fined \$200 for not cleaning up after your pet.

REFERENCES

1 Victoria Litter Action Alliance; 2 Van de Kuyt, 2003; 3 Murray, Penridge, 1997; 4 Liversage, 1995

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