

# Bin Your Butts

## COUNCIL NAME

Canada Bay City Council

## WEB ADDRESS

[www.canadabay.nsw.gov.au](http://www.canadabay.nsw.gov.au)

## SIZE

20 square kilometres

## POPULATION

84,906

## Overview

'Bin your Butts' is an innovative cigarette butt recycling project which targets butt litter at two local retail precincts in Canada Bay. The project resulted in a 94% reduction in the number of butts littered at the Rhodes precinct and an 82% reduction at the Concord precinct, with over 58.9kg of disposed butts collected for recycling.

Artworks including an ephemeral recycling butt litter piece and floor decals were used, as well as comparative engagement and enforcement activities at the two sites. This comparative approach allowed Council to target the specific communities visiting the two precincts and measure associated responses.

## Background

Canada Bay City Council was in the process of developing a litter strategy and was then awarded an EPA Litter grant to carry out a litter project. They started by carrying out site audits, litter counts, surveys of residents, discussions with street cleaning staff and interrogation of the council complaints system which highlighted key areas for attention: butt litter at Rhodes and Concord.

Council then developed a targeted project plan which included a number of different components of the program to tackle stakeholder wants and needs. The project aims were:

- to reduce cigarette butt litter by 80%
- to increase the profile and awareness of enforcement within the community
- to increase awareness of the impacts of butt litter, and
- to inform Council's litter strategy.

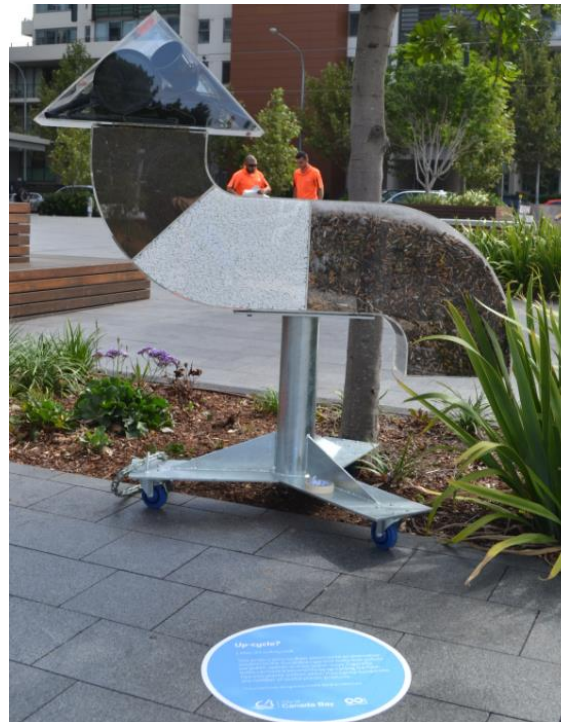
At the Majors Bay Road (Concord) precinct, Council also wanted to address changes to rules about outdoor smoking at dining areas as there was potential for a large number of butts to be littered along the retail food strip.

## Implementation

The steps that Council took to rollout this project included a combination of infrastructure, education, enforcement, partnerships, evaluation and observation.

**Infrastructure** - 17 Butt Litter Bins and 7 no smoking/no littering signs were installed. Also painting, paving repair and cleaning upgrades were carried out.

**Education** - The communication and education campaign included business posters, fact sheets and banners but primarily focused on a face to face approach with the assistance of a creative artwork and floor stickers as prompts. The target audience were local site users, businesses, shoppers and commuters. All materials were developed with minimal text to ensure culturally appropriateness.



**Enforcement** - Enforcement activities were trialled to allow enforcement officers to build confidence and provide feedback to shape the ongoing enforcement program. They carried out a staged engagement period over 6 weeks which included a rolling 6 week schedule of education, warnings and enforcement.

**Partners** - At Rhodes, Council partnered with Mirvac Commercial, Pinnacle and Rhodes Waterside to ensure placement of bins met user and business needs. Butt bins were added and moved as required. In Concord, Council met with the local Chamber of Commerce and local business whose staff were identified as high users of the site.

**Evaluation and Observation** - To ensure both litter reduction and behavioural change were evaluated, Council integrated bin counts, litter checks, observational behavioural surveys and user impact surveys into the evaluation.

## Outcomes

The project achieved a 91% reduction in cigarette butt litter at Concord and 83% at Rhodes, thereby meeting the ambitious project target of 80%. 58.94kg of butts were recycled during the project, saving clean-up costs and reducing waste sent to landfill.

34 hours of face to face education and enforcement were carried out during the 6 week engagement period with 3 fines issued, 1 formal warning and 123 people approached on site about the program. Community-targeted marketing and media reached over 500,000 people via targeted articles and advertisements in written and online publications such as the Inner West Courier, @Rhodes Newsletter, Bayside Brief and e-news, on-site education through an ephemeral art piece, a site banner, business posters and floor decals.

The surveys showed that the community engaged with the idea of recycling cigarette butts and smokers felt like they were contributing to a good cause by doing so. 90% of the 134 people surveyed preferred to recycle butts if there was a choice. Surveys also showed that 89% of businesses noticed a change in behaviour.

## Key Learnings

The key lessons learnt from the project are outlined below;

- Smokers engage with the idea of recycling their cigarette butts as an incentive not to litter,
- Consider smoke drift when locating butt bins to avoid creating an issue for other businesses,
- Commercial premises within a retail precinct are often butt littering hotspots, so are easy to target,
- Awareness campaigns to increase knowledge of fines is an effective anti-littering action, and
- In designing public infrastructure, be aware that garden beds, seating and paving type can attract butt litter.

## Contact

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**This project was the 2015 winner of the Waste Education and Communication Award at the LGNSW Excellence in the Environment Awards.**