

# DO THE RIGHT THING

KEEP AUSTRALIA BEAUTIFUL WEEK 22-28 AUGUST 2016

#tidyaussie



## What you need to know about cigarette butt litter

- Cigarette butts are the number one littered item in the world.<sup>1</sup>
- Approximately 20 million cigarette butts are littered in Australia every day, totalling 7 billion per year.<sup>2</sup>
- Cigarette butts are not biodegradable and will never fully degrade. The filter can be broken down into smaller pieces by the sun but the source material will only become diluted in water or soil.<sup>3</sup>
- Discarded butts can enter the aquatic environment after being transported from storm water drains and beaches to streams and waterways.<sup>4</sup>
- Cigarette butts were the number one piece of garbage collected in the 2014 International Coastal Cleanup.<sup>5</sup>
- It is estimated that 70% of marine debris comprises of non-degradable plastics.<sup>6</sup>
- Littered butts leach chemicals caught in the filter such as cadmium, lead, arsenic and zinc as they decompose, contributing to degradation of the natural environment.<sup>7</sup>
- Pets exposed to littered cigarette butts are exposed to the risk of ingestion and the consequences which include serious gastrointestinal, central nervous system and cardiovascular symptoms.<sup>8</sup>
- Wildlife can mistake cigarette butts for food, and once ingested the animals are exposed to plastic and toxic chemicals.<sup>9</sup>
- Discarded cigarette butts have the potential to cause fire in the home and in the bush.<sup>10</sup>
- Over 90 percent of reports for littering from a vehicle is for cigarette butts.<sup>11</sup>
- Litter attracts litter. The visual pollution caused by littered butts impacts negatively on businesses and public places and can encourage people to continue littering their butts.<sup>12</sup>
- Litter contributes to crime and people feel less safe in areas that are littered.<sup>13</sup>

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## What you need to know about cigarette butt litter (cont...)

1. *Cigwaste.org*
2. *KESAB environmental solutions*
3. *Novotny TE, Lum K, Smith E, et al. Cigarettes butts and the case for an environmental policy on hazardous cigarette waste.*
4. *Novotny TE, Lum K, Smith E, et al. Cigarettes butts and the case for an environmental policy on hazardous cigarette waste.*
5. *Ocean Conservancy*
6. *Environment.gov.au*
7. *Butt Free*
8. *Novotny TE, Lum K, Smith E, et al. Cigarettes butts and the case for an environmental policy on hazardous cigarette waste.*
9. *Butt Free*
10. *Butt Free*
11. *NSW EPA*
12. *Butt Free*
13. *Keep Britain Tidy*

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