



# Illegal Dumping

Thousands of rubbish items such as construction materials, household goods, and abandoned cars are collected every year on Clean Up Australia Day. Dumping this rubbish on private or public land without authorisation is illegal and degrades our environment.<sup>1</sup>

## The Problem

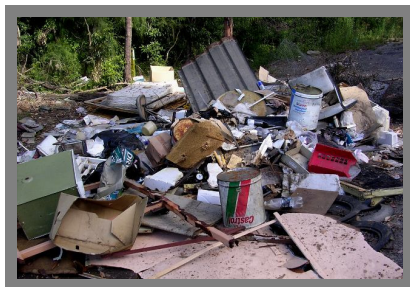
### What is Illegal Dumping

Illegal dumping refers to the dumping of large items of rubbish in public areas such as roadsides or illegal land fills – private land where waste is dumped without Council or EPA approvals.<sup>2</sup>

People might dump rubbish illegally to avoid paying disposal fees or simply because they don't have the time or effort required for proper disposal.

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.<sup>2</sup>

Illegal dumping 'hot-spots' often include roadways, bushlands, and multi-unit premises.<sup>1</sup> Unsecured properties, including undeveloped lots, abandoned structures and unused industrial facilities are also used when dumpers want to avoid a disposal fee or find a waste depot that is closed or refuses to accept waste. The presence of illegally dumped materials often attracts additional dumping.

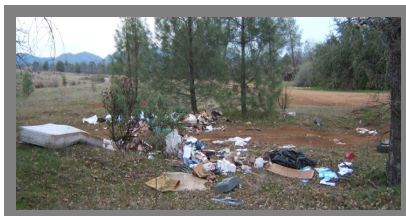


### Impacts of Illegal Dumping

The environmental impacts of illegal dumping are significant. Dumped rubbish can leach contaminants into our bushland, harming our plants and animals and blighting our landscape.

When it rains, illegally dumped rubbish can impact proper drainage of run-off, making areas more susceptible to flooding when wastes block ravines, creeks, culverts and drainage basins.<sup>3</sup>

If run-off passes through illegally dumped rubbish, the health and ecology of our waterways may also be affected by contaminants.<sup>1</sup>



When illegal dumping takes place, the aesthetic value of local communities is diminished, often resulting in reduced property prices and loss of community pride.<sup>1</sup>

Without the tax revenue that accompanies development, the funding available to establish and maintain effective illegal dumping prevention programs is limited.<sup>3</sup>

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, and local councils are forced to bear the cost of the clean up.<sup>1</sup>

### Did you know?

- NSW local governments are estimated to spend \$10 million a year removing and properly disposing of illegally dumped materials and landfilling. For larger councils, these costs can be as high as \$400,000 annually.<sup>2</sup>
- Last year, 8871 illegal-dumping incidents occurred in the Randwick City Council area NSW alone. Most illegally dumped material is from households, including unwanted mattresses, sofas, bric-a-brac, appliances and bags of garden clippings.<sup>5</sup>
- If an individual is found guilty of illegal dumping in court, they can face 7 years in jail and a \$250,000 fine.<sup>2</sup>
- There is a Regional Illegal Dumping (RID) Squad of 8 councils in Western Sydney that works day or night, seven days a week to tackle illegal dumping through surveillance, covert operations, helicopters and trail bike surveillance.<sup>1</sup>



# Illegal Dumping

## The Solution

### What's being done about illegal dumping?

Many local councils around Australia have adopted a strategy including community education, clean-ups and regulatory enforcement to combat illegal dumping. While the strategy may vary depending on the extent of the problem and local conditions, it involves educating the community about the impacts of illegal dumping, warning of penalties and suggesting ways of disposing of unwanted materials.

Councils provide a variety of ways that residents can dispose of unwanted materials – through scheduled clean-ups, on-call clean ups and waste disposal facilities.<sup>2</sup>

### Fines and notices for illegal dumping

Although the penalties vary from state to state, Council Rangers have the ability to fine illegal dumpers. Here are some examples of what you can be fined for illegal dumping under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 NSW:

Cause	Fine
Littering – Individuals	\$375
Littering - Corporations	\$750
Unlawful transporting of waste (usual offence for roadside/bushland dumping)	
Individuals	\$1500
Corporations	\$5000
If the matter goes to court the penalty can be much higher	

### So What Can I do?

Always make sure you dispose of your rubbish responsibly. Find out from your local council when clean-ups will take place so you can put out your unwanted household items for collection. If a clean-up is not coming soon, check with your council to see if they will pick up your items on an on-call basis.

Waste disposal facilities are also available in most council areas. Instead of throwing out unwanted items, try to recycle them so they can be turned into something new or used by someone else.

You can also educate your friends and family about illegal dumping and the negative impact it has on our environment.

### Dob in a Dumper!

If you see an illegal dump site or see someone dumping rubbish, you can report it to your local council who will be able to investigate the matter further.

The kind of information your council will need to know includes:

- Street location of illegal dumping
- Types of dumped materials, whether you believe it constitutes a hazard.
- Date and time of dumping.
- Name and address of person(s) responsible.
- Associated vehicle, registration number(s).
- Photographs of the incident(s) may assist the prosecution.<sup>5</sup>

### References

- <sup>1</sup> Blacktown City Council  
[www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au](http://www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au)
- <sup>2</sup> NSW Department of Environment and Conservation  
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/waste/dumping.htm>
- <sup>3</sup> United States Environment Protection Agency  
[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)
- <sup>4</sup> Department of Environment and Heritage  
[www.deh.gov.au](http://www.deh.gov.au)
- <sup>5</sup> Randwick City Council  
[www.randwick.nsw.gov.au](http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au)

