

LITTER REPORT FY24 ACT

During the financial year of 2024, Clean Up Australia volunteers continued to unite against litter by taking to their streets, beaches, parks, bushland and waterways to Clean Up.

While over a million joined us last year across 16,320 sites, the Litter Report FY24 is a snapshot of litter removed by Clean Up Australia volunteers across a portion of these sites during Clean Up Australia Day and Every Day Clean Ups. Across the ACT, the Report is based on the count of 3,795 litter items from 21 surveyed locations (6,167 items from 28 locations in FY23).

ACT SITES REGISTERED:

260 (362 in FY23)

ACT ESTIMATED VOLUNTEERS:

26,515 (36,092 in FY23)

ACT ESTIMATED VOLUNTEER HOURS:

53,030 (72,184 in FY23)

MAJOR TYPES OF LITTER REPORTED

	FY24 Count	%	Difference
Soft Plastic	1,202	31.7%	6.8%
All Other Plastic	1,152	30.4%	-7.9%
Hard Plastic	609	16.0%	-5.8%
Metal	402	10.6%	5.6%
Glass	177	4.7%	2.5%
Paper/Cardboard	145	3.8%	-2.1%
E-Waste	49	1.3%	0.1%
Rubber	46	1.2%	1.0%
Miscellaneous	7	0.2%	-0.1%
Wood	6	0.2%	-0.1%

NOTABLE % CHANGES FROM FY23

↑ Increases:	↓ Decreases:	Unchanged:
Soft Plastic 6.8%	All Other Plastic 7.9%	E-Waste
Metal 5.6%	Hard plastic 5.8%	Miscellaneous
Glass 2.5%	Paper/Cardboard 2.1%	Wood
Rubber 1.0%		

TOP 10 GROUPED ITEMS AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL LITTER SURVEYED

Grouped Items	FY24 Count	%	Difference
Soft Plastics	1,202	31.7%	6.8%
Non-Food Packaging	1,015	26.7%	-16.6%
Beverage Containers	770	20.3%	10.2%
Food Packaging	499	13.1%	-0.5%
Household Items	159	4.2%	2.4%
Beverage Litter	70	1.8%	-1.6%
E-Waste	49	1.3%	0.1%
Sanitary Items	15	0.4%	-0.3%
Construction Materials	8	0.2%	0.0%
Toys & Sporting Equipment	3	0.1%	-0.3%

NOTABLE CHANGES

There are some changes in the top 10 grouped items when compared with FY23. Soft plastics lead the litter count with an increase of 6.8%, indicating a need for an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme for soft plastics. Soft plastics are followed by non-food packaging which show a decrease of 16.6%, beverage containers in third place with an increase of 10.2%, followed by food packaging and household items. The top 3 reported categories in ACT are the same as the national top 3 reported categories.

All other items show minimal percentage changes over FY23.

TOP 10 INDIVIDUAL ITEMS AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL LITTER SURVEYED

Individual Items	FY24 Count	%	Difference
Cigarette Butts	922	24.3%	-12.5%
Soft Plastics – packets, wrappers	880	23.2%	-1.6%
Aluminium Beverage Cans	372	9.8%	6.2%
Plastic Bags – food, retail, garbage	321	8.5%	8.3%
Plastic Beverage Bottles	218	5.7%	0.6%
Plastic Food Containers & Utensils	195	5.1%	-2.1%
Glass Beverage Bottles	157	4.1%	3.3%
Polystyrene Food Containers	118	3.1%	1.9%
Paper Items	115	3.0%	0.7%
Takeaway Coffee Cups	106	2.8%	0.5%

NOTABLE CHANGES

Cigarette butts are still the number one litter item reported, however in relation to other items reported we have seen a significant decrease. ACT, NSW and Tasmania are the only states reporting higher levels of cigarette butts than soft plastic wrappers.

Plastic bags reported have increased by 8.3% and aluminium drink cans by 6.2%. ACT has banned all plastic shopping bags with handles and thick plastic carry bags from July 2024. These changes should be reflected in plastic bag litter counts in future.

Glass beverage bottles and polystyrene takeaway food containers have moved into the top 10 individual items reported. This is despite polystyrene packaging being banned in the ACT since 2023. Glass bottles as a litter item could also be prevented since they are recyclable through ACT's successful Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) and kerbside collections. Straws and fast-food packaging have moved out of the top 10 individual items list, with plastic straws banned in the ACT since 2022.

LITTER DISTRIBUTION BY SITE TYPE

ACT	Number of sites	% of total litter count
Park	9	48.0%
Public Bushland	6	24.2%
Roadside	1	13.8%
Footpath	2	12.4%
School Grounds/Campus	3	1.5%

The site types where litter was reported in FY24 have varied since FY23. Parks accounted for nearly half of litter sites reported when compared to FY23, when parks accounted for 27%. Changes in litter locations reported may have impacted changes in litter types reported.