

LITTER REPORT FY24 SA

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 South Australia, the Report is based on the count of 26,470 items from 114 surveyed locations (26,466 items from 100 locations in FY23).

SA SITES REGISTERED:

1,249 (1,126 in FY23)

SA ESTIMATED VOLUNTEERS:

70,373 (59,611 in FY23)

SA ESTIMATED VOLUNTEER HOURS:

140,746 (119,222 in FY23)

MAJOR TYPES OF LITTER REPORTED

	FY24 Count	%	Difference
Soft Plastic	9,822	37.1%	8.1%
Hard Plastic	6,097	23.0%	-12.2%
All Other Plastic	5,727	21.6%	7.9%
Metal	1,741	6.6%	0.7%
Paper/Cardboard	1,072	4.0%	-2.4%
Glass	906	3.4%	-4.0%
Miscellaneous	531	2.0%	0.8%
E-Waste	254	1.0%	0.5%
Rubber	199	0.8%	0.3%
Wood	121	0.5%	0.2%

NOTABLE % CHANGES FROM FY23

↑ Increases:	↓ Decreases:	Unchanged:
Soft Plastic 8.1%	Hard Plastics 12.2%	E-Waste
All Other Plastic 7.9%	Paper/Cardboard 2.4%	Rubber
Metal 0.7%	Glass 4.0%	Wood
Miscellaneous 0.8%		

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

Grouped Items	FY24 Count	%	Difference
Soft Plastics	9,822	37.1%	8.1%
Non-Food Packaging	7,088	26.8%	0.7%
Food Packaging	3,966	15.0%	-1.9%
Beverage Containers	2,823	10.7%	-0.2%
Household Items	1,048	4.0%	0.5%
Beverage Litter	764	2.9%	-6.6%
Construction Materials	282	1.1%	-0.6%
E-Waste	254	1.0%	0.5%
Sanitary Items	180	0.7%	-0.1%
Clothing	137	0.5%	-0.1%

NOTABLE CHANGES

There are some changes in the top 10 grouped items since FY23, however soft plastics remain in first place as the most collected litter item in SA with a significant increase of 8.1%. Reported levels of soft plastics in SA are proportionally 5.3% above the national average. Nevertheless, SA is set to become a frontrunner in soft plastics recycling, with development of an advanced soft plastics recycling facility in Kilburn announced in 2024. This facility will assist state and national soft plastics recycling and may decrease soft plastics litter levels in future.

Beverage containers moved up from fifth to fourth place and household items moved from sixth to fifth place. E-waste made the list this year in eighth place, with toys and sporting equipment moving out of the top 10.

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

Individual Items	FY24 Count	%	Difference
Soft Plastics – packets, wrappers	7,289	27.6%	-1.0%
Cigarette Butts	4,144	15.7%	3.2%
Plastic Bags – food, retail, garbage	2,431	9.2%	8.5%
Plastic Food Containers & Utensils	1,878	7.1%	0.7%
Aluminium Beverage Cans	1,180	4.5%	0.8%
Plastic Beverage Bottles	913	3.5%	-0.8%
Plastic Fragments > 5mm	876	3.3%	-0.5%
Takeaway Coffee Cups	814	3.1%	0.5%
Glass Beverage Bottles	532	2.0%	1.0%
Plastic Straws	487	1.8%	-8.6%

NOTABLE CHANGES

Soft plastics and cigarette butts were the most collected litter items in SA across both FY23 and FY24. Straws show a significant decrease of 8.6%, moving from third to tenth place. Plastic straws were banned in SA in 2021 and the effect of this ban may now be positively impacting litter levels.

Plastic bags show a significant increase of 8.5% and moved into third place. In 2024, SA banned thick plastic bags with handles and plastic produce bags in supermarkets. These bans may be reflected in future litter counts.

Reported levels of cigarette butts in SA are proportionally 4.4% below reported national levels.

Plastic takeaway containers, aluminium beverage cans and plastic beverage bottles all moved up the rankings with glass pieces, beverage litter and pieces of plastic moving down the rankings.

LITTER DISTRIBUTION BY SITE TYPE

SA	Number of sites	% of total litter count
Beach/Coastal Area	19	21.0%
Roadside	20	18.3%
Footpath	19	15.1%
School Grounds/Campus	4	12.4%
River/Creek	15	11.5%
Park	21	11.3%
Shops/Malls	2	2.8%
Public Bushland	7	2.8%
Outdoor Public Transport	1	2.0%
Other	4	1.6%
Dive Site	1	1.1%
National Park	1	0.2%