

FY25 LITTER REPORT – ACT

Over a million volunteers joined us across 12,242 Clean Up events nationally in FY25. The Litter Report FY25 is a snapshot of litter removed by Clean Up Australia volunteers across a portion of these sites during Clean Up Australia Day, the Great Spring Clean Up and Every Day Clean Ups. Across the ACT, the Report is based on a count of litter items from 31 surveyed locations (21 locations in FY24).

21,339

EST. VOLUNTEERS
(26,250 IN FY24)

42,678

EST. VOLUNTEER HOURS
(52,500 IN FY24)

250

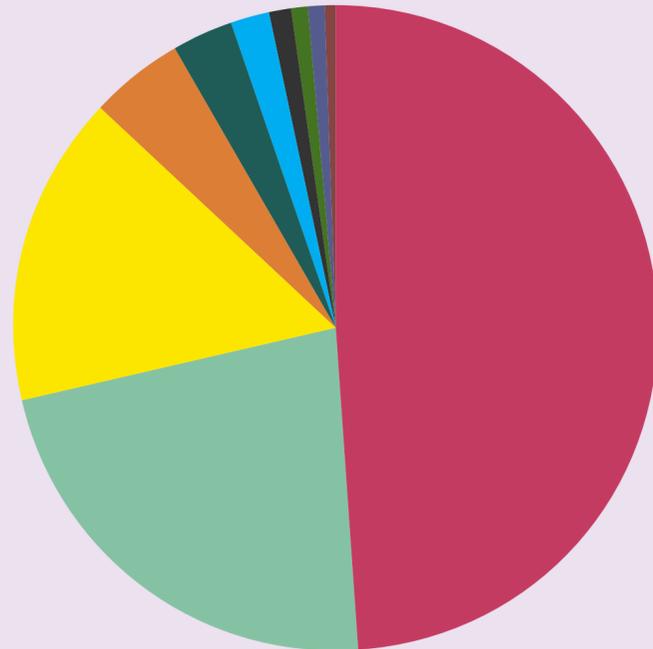
EVENTS REGISTERED
(199 IN FY24)

*FY24 participation figures exclude Drumstick event registrations for comparison purposes.

MAJOR TYPES OF LITTER REPORTED

NATIONAL	FY25	FY24	DIFF.
ALL OTHER PLASTIC	49.2%	30.4%	18.8%
SOFT PLASTIC	22.4%	31.7%	-9.3%
HARD PLASTIC	15.5%	16.0%	-0.6%
METAL	4.7%	10.6%	-5.9%
GLASS	3.2%	4.7%	-1.5%
PAPER/CARDBOARD	2.0%	3.8%	-1.9%
RUBBER	1.1%	1.2%	-0.1%
MISCELLANEOUS	0.8%	0.2%	0.6%
E-WASTE	0.8%	1.3%	-0.5%
WOOD	0.4%	0.2%	0.2%

Plastics represent 87.1% of all counted litter (78.1% in FY24).



NOTABLE CHANGES

↑ INCREASE

All Other Plastic 18.8%
Miscellaneous 0.6%

↓ DECREASE

Hard Plastic 0.6%
Soft Plastic 9.3%
E-Waste 0.5%
Glass 1.5%
Metal 5.9%
Paper/Cardboard 1.9%

— UNCHANGED

Rubber
Wood

LITTER DISTRIBUTION BY SITE TYPE



*Small discrepancies in percentages are due to rounding errors.

During the financial year of 2025, Clean Up Australia volunteers continued to unite against litter by taking to their streets, beaches, parks, bushland and waterways to Clean Up.



TOP 10 LITTER CATEGORIES AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL LITTER SURVEYED

RANK	CATEGORY	FY25	FY24	DIFF.
1	NON-FOOD PACKAGING	53.0%	26.7%	26.2%
2	SOFT PLASTICS	22.4%	31.7%	-9.3%
3	BEVERAGE CONTAINERS	8.6%	20.3%	-11.7%
4	FOOD PACKAGING	8.6%	13.1%	-4.6%
5	HOUSEHOLD ITEMS	3.1%	4.2%	-1.1%
6	BEVERAGE LITTER	1.9%	1.8%	0.0%
7	E-WASTE	0.8%	1.3%	-0.5%
8	CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS	0.7%	0.2%	0.5%
9	CLOTHING	0.4%	0.1%	0.3%
10	SANITARY ITEMS	0.3%	0.4%	-0.1%

NOTABLE CHANGES

The most notable change in the top 10 grouped items is the increase by 26.2% in non-food packaging items, which include boxes, bags and cigarette butts. Cigarette butts leach harmful chemicals into their surroundings, including nicotine, heavy metals and other known carcinogens and are made of a plastic called cellulose acetate.

Soft plastics have moved from first place in FY24 to second in FY25, but remain a problematic litter item in the state, representing 22.4% of all litter. With the commencement of the national voluntary soft plastics scheme in December 2025, soft plastics as a percentage of overall litter counts could decrease in future. Beverage container counts have decreased by 11.7%, which could be attributed to Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) collections. ACT has committed to expanding its CDS to include glass wine and spirit bottles from mid-2027, which could further decrease beverage container litter levels in future.

Packaging overall (non-food, beverage containers and food) represents a whopping 70.2% of all litter reported in the state throughout FY25, the highest of any state or territory. Urgent regulatory reforms are needed to effectively manage packaging waste.

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

RANK	ITEM	FY25	FY24	DIFF.
1	CIGARETTE BUTTS	45.4%	24.3%	21.1%
2	SOFT PLASTICS – PACKETS, WRAPPERS	15.5%	23.2%	-7.7%
3	PLASTIC BAGS – FOOD, RETAIL, GARBAGE	5.2%	8.5%	-3.3%
4	HARD PLASTIC FRAGMENTS > 5MM	3.5%	0.3%	3.1%
5	PLASTIC FOOD CONTAINERS & UTENSILS	3.2%	5.1%	-1.9%
6	PLASTIC BEVERAGE BOTTLES	3.1%	5.7%	-2.6%
7	ALUMINIUM BEVERAGE CANS	3.1%	9.8%	-6.7%
8	TAKEAWAY COFFEE CUPS	2.2%	2.8%	-0.6%
9	GLASS BEVERAGE BOTTLES	1.7%	4.1%	-2.4%
10	OTHER SOFT PLASTICS	1.6%	0.0%	1.6%

NOTABLE CHANGES

Cigarette butts are still the number one litter item reported and have increased by 21.1% from FY24. Soft plastics packets and wrappers have decreased by 7.7% but still represent 15.5% of overall litter counts. As stated above, the proportion of soft plastics packets may decrease in future due to increased soft plastics collection and recycling.

The number of plastic bags being reported has decreased by 3.3%. ACT banned all plastic shopping bags with handles and thick plastic carry bags from January 2024. It is positive to see this kind of litter reducing in the environment.

Similarly, with plastic straws phased out in the ACT since 2022, straws are no longer in the top 10 individual items list. The last time straws were in the top 10 was in FY23, representing 2.6% of the overall litter count.