

FY25 LITTER REPORT – NSW

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 NSW, the Report is based on a count of litter items from 451 surveyed locations (450 locations in FY24).

344,902
EST. VOLUNTEERS
(418,611 IN FY24)

689,804
EST. VOLUNTEER HOURS
(837,222 IN FY24)

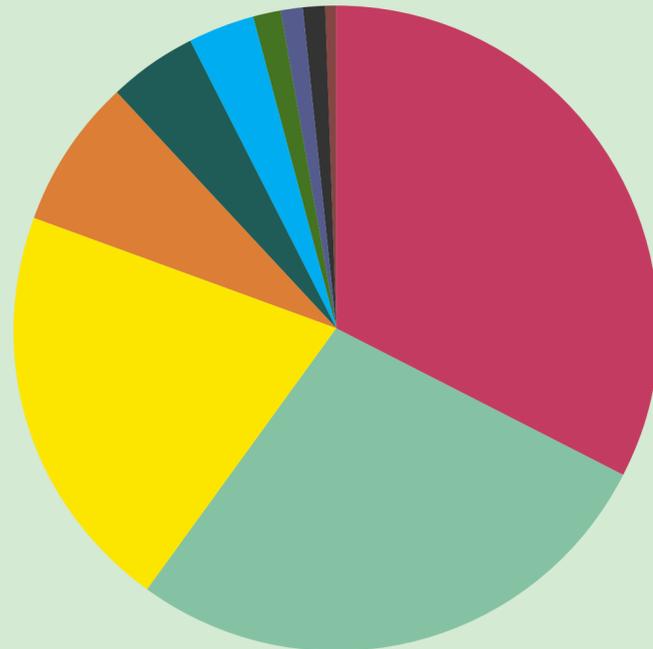
4,377
EVENTS REGISTERED
(4,568 IN FY24)

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

MAJOR TYPES OF LITTER REPORTED

NATIONAL	FY25	FY24	DIFF.
ALL OTHER PLASTIC	32.7%	27.7%	5.0%
SOFT PLASTIC	27.4%	28.3%	-0.9%
HARD PLASTIC	20.7%	27.0%	-6.3%
METAL	7.4%	7.1%	0.3%
GLASS	4.6%	4.1%	0.5%
PAPER/CARDBOARD	3.2%	2.4%	0.8%
MISCELLANEOUS	1.5%	1.2%	0.4%
E-WASTE	1.1%	1.1%	0.0%
RUBBER	1.0%	0.8%	0.2%
WOOD	0.5%	0.4%	0.2%

Plastics represent 80.8% of all counted litter (83.0% in FY24).



NOTABLE CHANGES

↑ INCREASE

All Other Plastic 5.0%
Glass 0.5%
Paper/Cardboard 0.8%

↓ DECREASE

Soft Plastic 0.9%
Hard Plastic 6.3%

— UNCHANGED

Metal
Miscellaneous
E-Waste
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	30.4%	33.2%	-2.8%
2	SOFT PLASTICS	27.4%	28.3%	-0.9%
3	FOOD PACKAGING	16.9%	13.9%	3.0%
4	BEVERAGE CONTAINERS	14.7%	15.1%	-0.4%
5	BEVERAGE LITTER	4.0%	3.0%	1.0%
6	HOUSEHOLD ITEMS	3.3%	3.4%	-0.1%
7	E-WASTE	1.1%	1.1%	0.0%
8	CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS	0.6%	0.6%	0.0%
9	TOYS & SPORTING EQUIPMENT	0.6%	0.2%	0.4%
10	CLOTHING	0.6%	0.4%	0.2%

NOTABLE CHANGES

There are minor changes in the order of categories from FY24 to FY25. Non-food packaging remains in first position. This category includes boxes, bags and cigarette butts. Soft plastics rank second, representing 27.4% of all counted 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. Food packaging increased from FY24 by 3.0%, ranking as the third most counted litter category and overtaking beverage containers from FY24. Beverage litter, including straws, bottle caps and corks, increased by 1.0% and moved from sixth to fifth position.

Packaging overall (non-food, beverage containers and food) represents 62.0% of all litter reported in the state throughout FY25. Urgent regulatory reforms are needed to effectively manage packaging waste.

In NSW, prior to the commencement of the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) in 2017, beverage container litter levels reflected 28.7% of all litter reported. In FY25, this has reduced to 14.7%. NSW has committed to expanding its CDS to include glass wine and spirit bottles by late-2027.

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

RANK	ITEM	FY25	FY24	DIFF.
1	CIGARETTE BUTTS	22.8%	22.0%	0.8%
2	SOFT PLASTICS – PACKETS, WRAPPERS	16.8%	18.1%	-1.3%
3	PLASTIC BAGS – FOOD, RETAIL, GARBAGE	8.5%	6.7%	1.8%
4	TAKEAWAY COFFEE CUPS	7.1%	2.9%	4.2%
5	ALUMINIUM BEVERAGE CANS	5.5%	5.7%	-0.3%
6	PLASTIC FOOD CONTAINERS & UTENSILS	4.9%	6.6%	-1.7%
7	PLASTIC BEVERAGE BOTTLES	4.7%	5.4%	-0.6%
8	GLASS BEVERAGE BOTTLES	3.6%	3.1%	0.5%
9	PLASTIC STRAWS	2.9%	2.3%	0.5%
10	HARD PLASTIC FRAGMENTS > 5MM	2.4%	6.2%	-3.7%

NOTABLE CHANGES

The top 3 most reported litter items in NSW remain the same as in FY24, with cigarette butts topping the list and representing 22.8% of all counted litter. In the NSW Plastics Plan 2.0, cigarette filters were highlighted as a key problem item by the NSW Government, who expressed intention to explore a national approach to regulating cigarette butts.

Soft plastics packets and wrappers in second position represent 16.8% of all counted litter with plastic bags in third representing 8.5% of all counted litter. Plastic bags will be more strictly regulated in NSW from 2026, with any plastic bag with handles, regardless of thickness, set for phase-out. Takeaway coffee cups remain a problem litter item in NSW that could easily be reduced through increased use of reusable cups.

Although phased out since 2022, plastic straws have seen an increase of 0.5% from FY24, representing 2.9% of all counted litter in FY25 and moving into the top 10 items reported.