Tackling Takeaway Litter
Case study
BACKGROUND

Takeaway packaging is a visible and significant type of litter. In one in five vehicles, a driver or passenger will consume their takeaway food in streets and car parks close to fast food exits. It is in these streets that the City of Canterbury Bankstown spends significant time and resources cleaning littered takeaway bags, wrappers, cups and straws.

TAKEAWAY LITTER IN CANTERBURY-BANKSTOWN

Council has identified two types of litter sites:

- Opportunistic street sites, where a driver will park in the first available spot after exiting the drive-through; and
- Destination car park sites, where the driver will travel a short distance and park in an area that has a pleasant outlook and/or room for other cars to park.

RESEARCH AND PARTNERSHIPS

We knew research and partnerships with key organisations would be necessary to create a program that, not only reduced takeaway litter, but also effectively changed littering behaviour.

With assistance from NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA), Council hosted NSW’s first takeaway packaging litter summit. More than 35 organisations came together to identify takeaway litter reduction strategies.

Behavioural research revealed:

- 50 per cent of people eating takeaway in their car littered the packaging, doubling to 100 per cent after dark;
- People who parked near drive-through exits did so to consume their food while it was hot or meet up with friends; and
- People littered because:
  - There were no available bins;
  - They didn’t want mess or the takeaway smell in their car;
  - They didn’t want a family member to find rubbish in the car; and/or
  - They simply didn’t think about consequences.

TRIALS

Knowing a new and innovative education and enforcement program was required to tackle takeaway litter, Council developed four strategies across six destination car parks and two opportunistic street sites. These were:

- Prevention measures, including regular cleaning;
- Education strategies, including lit signage;

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‘Report a Tosser’ messaging; and
Enforcement measures, including camera and covert surveillance.

This became the Tackling Takeaway Litter program.

RESULTS

Site inspections showed most litter was from a single takeaway outlet. Signage was placed in locations where it was visible from drive-through entry and exit points and at destination sites.

During the program, the targeted sites saw a 53 per cent reduction of targeted litter types.

The Tackling Takeaway Litter program also encouraged people to register and report littering from vehicles to NSW EPA using the ‘Report to EPA’ tool. The number of registered users doubled during the trials and Council issued 350 fines.

LEGACY

Council remains committed to change the way people dispose of takeaway packaging and continues to facilitate this change in the community.