

# Illegal Dumping and Litter Enforcement Strategy

2022–2025







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# Introduction

The illegal dumping of waste and litter has a negative impact on Logan city. Such activities pollute the environment and weaken community pride. A highly visible antisocial behaviour, illegal dumping ultimately damages the reputation and image of the city through the public lens.

In 2019, the Queensland government introduced a waste levy to reduce landfill and maximise resource recovery and recycling. This meant that individuals and businesses had to pay more to dispose of their commercial, industrial and construction waste. This has resulted in people seeking to avoid paying increased fees by dumping waste on public land. Each year, Council typically removes and disposes of significant amounts of illegally dumped waste at ratepayer expense. However, it is unfair to expect ratepayers to continue funding retrospective clean-up activities with no long-term shift in community behaviour.

Recognising that it is a behaviour which is not tolerated or accepted by the community, the public make thousands of complaints about illegal dumping and littering to Council each year. Through partnership with the Queensland government's Illegal Dumping Partnerships Program, Council have recently established a dedicated Illegal Dumping Taskforce to combat this issue.

Shifting public behaviour around illegal dumping and littering is a shared responsibility across government, business and the community. This strategy outlines our vision and strategic roadmap towards ensuring the focus on city image and beautification remains strong in the city of Logan.

## Purpose

This strategy paves the way toward the following outcomes:

1. the responsible and lawful disposal of waste
2. reduce the financial impact of clean-up on ratepayers
3. encourage the community to report dumping offences
4. quicker enforcement outcomes driving greater levels of public deterrence
5. disincentivise people who make commercial gain from unlawful dumping
6. build strong partnerships with industry and community organisations to combat dumping
7. create greater pride in our community and city image.

## Community Sentiment

“I’m a proud Logan resident and ratepayer. Aside from the environmental and potential health impacts of illegally dumped waste, this type of behaviour makes it look like our community doesn’t care”





# Strategic fit

Combating illegal dumping and littering strongly aligns with Council's Corporate Plan 2021–2026 in seeking to foster a proud city that has a continuing focus on health, safety and wellness. This strategy closely aligns with the Queensland state government's *Keeping Queensland Clean: the Litter and Illegal Dumping Plan (2021)*, sharing a continued vision of a community free from illegal dumping and litter. At an organisational level, this plan forms a subset of Council's broader Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy 2022–2032.

## What is illegal dumping?

Illegal dumping and littering is the unlawful disposal of waste materials on public or private land. Specifically, waste is illegally dumped if it involves the deposit of 200 litres or more of household, commercial or green waste. It ranges from the smaller scale dumping of bags of rubbish, unwanted household items, chemicals, paint, furniture and tyres to larger-scale dumping of materials like construction or demolition waste. This waste is deliberately taken to another public or private place to be disposed of rather than to an authorised waste facility for correct disposal, recycling or repurposing.

Common examples of illegal dumping include:

- placing unwanted household items on the footpath outside of kerbside collection timeframes
- adding waste to another property's household clean-up pile or skip bin without consent
- dumping household, commercial, green waste or construction waste in the bush or on the side of the road
- businesses or contractors which are paid to correctly dispose of commercial waste but instead dump it on land for profit

Litter is like dumping, but on a smaller scale. It is defined as a small amount of waste (under 200 litres) discarded onto private or public land. Litter is usually a singular item or multiple small items. Littering occurs instantaneously as items are thrown, dropped or left where consumed or tossed from a vehicle.

### Examples of litter

- throwing food wrappers or cigarette butts from a vehicle
- leaving food containers on public property
- stubbing a cigarette out on a footpath and not picking it up
- tossing an apple core in a park
- advertising material that is deposited, in a public place, on private property or left on a windscreen of a vehicle.





*Stubbing a cigarette out on a footpath and not picking it up*



*Advertising material that is deposited, in a public place, on private property or left on a windscreen of a vehicle.*



*Tossing an apple core in a park*



*Throwing food wrappers or cigarette butts from a vehicle*



*Leaving food containers on public property*



## What waste is illegally dumped?

At 62% of all waste, household waste makes up the majority of illegally dumped waste in the City of Logan, followed by green waste, construction and demolition waste and used tyres. Demolition waste and contaminated soil are the most common types of illegal fill material dumped. Approximately 371 tonnes of illegal waste deposits collected from public areas were received at Council's waste facilities during the 2020 financial year.

This strategy focuses on reducing the illegal dumping of kerbside waste, construction, demolition and asbestos waste, household waste, used tyres and green waste.

## Where is waste dumped?

Waste is typically dumped or littered in areas highly accessible by the public, such as:

- bushland
- vacant land
- roadsides
- nature strips
- laneways
- outside unit complexes
- sporting grounds
- charity bins and shops

recreational areas including camping grounds, road verges and walking tracks.





# Why do people illegally dump?

Understanding what motivates people to illegally dump waste underpins the development of a roadmap to tackle the problem.

Extensive studies, including those undertaken by the Environmental Protection Authority NSW (*Illegal Dumping Research Report 2015*) guide understanding around what motivates and enables illegal dumping behaviour.

Depending on the type and quantity of waste, illegal dumpers are typically motivated by:

- convenience
- the ability to save money or make commercial gain
- lack of consequences
- uncaring attitude
- lack of easy disposal options for households
- unable to pay for the waste to be collected or disposed of
- lack of community pride
- learned behaviour – it is easy to do and get away with (not necessarily seen as wrong)

- no resale value of the goods being dumped
- poorly informed tenants not aware of waste disposal methods
- perception of what illegal dumping is (eg. depositing household items beside a charity bin)
- poor planning resulting in the need to dispose of materials after hours
- assumption that other people are responsible
- perception the unwanted items will be recycled or upcycled by someone else
- language barriers

Council's covert surveillance activities have established that dumpers disposing of large volumes of household waste, construction materials or tyres typically know their activity is illegal as they will typically take intentional steps to avoid detection.

Many of these behaviours are reinforced when 'dumpers' see their waste being removed by Council, at the expense of the ratepayer.





# The scale of the problem

Illegal dumping and littering occurs in a broad range of urban, semi-urban and rural landscapes across Logan city. Our data shows that there is no distinctive profile of a dumper. Dumpers come from all walks of life and socio-economic backgrounds. The type and extent of goods dumped varies greatly. However, around two thirds of illegal dumping incidents involve household waste. Accordingly, the problem is particularly concentrated in areas of high density living, such as multi-unit developments or areas of high residential housing turnover.

Citywide, in 2020 alone, Council spent nearly half a million dollars to collect illegally dumped waste and litter. This spend does not include costs associated with identification, investigation or enforcement. Of those activities, there were over 1700 collections of illegally dumped materials, recovered at ratepayer expense.

## CASE STUDY 1

### Swift penalties following illegal dumping offence

In August 2021, the Illegal Dumping Taskforce located a large pile of illegally dumped hoon damaged car tyres in Park Ridge. Subsequent review of footage captured by covert surveillance devices captured evidence of an offender responsible for the illegally dumped car tyres. Investigators initiated enforcement activities on the registered owner of a vehicle used in the commission of the offence. A compliance notice was issued to this party which forced the removal and lawful disposal of the car tyres at their cost. A \$2,757 fine was issued for the waste dumping offence.





## CASE STUDY 2

### Targeted neighbourhood hotspot campaign

During 2021, the Illegal Dumping Taskforce carried out a 1 month campaign in Kingston, Woodridge and Logan Central, which were experiencing high volumes of unlawful waste dumping following the kerbside clean up process. In doing so, the team:

- Worked with the Divisional Councillor to trial a 'Dob in a Dumper' style campaign encouraging people to actively report illegal dumping
- Proactively patrolled a total of 439 streets, identifying 79 waste related offences
- Responded to increased customer reports of illegal dumping
- Located a total of 147,681 litres of unlawfully dumped waste
- On 25 occasions a responsible person was given verbal direction to remove waste stored in a public place resulting in the voluntary removal of 55,326 litres of waste at no cost to Council.
- Used 900 metres of illegal dumping investigation tape visibly displaying where illegal dumping had occurred outside of unit development complexes and on roadways
- Installed temporary illegal dumping signs
- Issued fines for noncompliance



# Community Sentiment

To ensure the strategy aligns with community expectations, informal community consultation was conducted between October 2021 and February 2022. The consultation, by way of a survey on Council's 'Have Your Say' platform with a group of local residents specifically sought to identify community understanding and perception of illegal dumping and littering activity across our city. In a snapshot:

- 94% of residents said they felt that illegal dumping damages city image and pride
- 86% of residents said that illegal dumping makes it look like our community doesn't care
- 81% of residents said that it encourages other people to illegal dump waste, and this negatively impacts on our waterways and environment

## What are we doing to tackle illegal dumping?

In February 2020, following a competitive application process, Council was successfully awarded a grant from the Department of Environment and Science to combat the issue of illegal dumping and littering in our community as part of the state government's Illegal Dumping Partnerships and Hotspots Program. This one-off funding was used to:

- establish a dedicated taskforce and train investigation staff
- purchase surveillance and monitoring equipment

- develop and install physical deterrents such as signage and bollards
- carry out significant surveillance and enforcement activities
- gather intelligence about repeat offenders in the city
- facilitate local government training in partnership with the Illegal Dumping Partnerships Program.

Over the past year, the Illegal Dumping Taskforce has:

- observed a 65% increase in public reporting of illegal dumping offences
- investigated over 1500 illegal dumping and litter complaints
- successfully ordered 125 offenders to remove and correctly dispose of their waste
- conducted successful targeted enforcement campaigns in hotspot locations
- installed preventative infrastructure, including bollards and signage
- obtained 38 covert surveillance cameras to monitor dumping activities
- implemented education and awareness initiatives
- issued 134 fines, totalling \$239,437
- conducted community consultation around public sentiment

In July 2021, Council invested a further \$180,000 to support continuance of the taskforce for a further 12 months and support development of this strategy with a broadened focus on tackling the problem. An successful competitive state government grant application under the Illegal Dumping Partnerships and Hotspots Program in February 2022 provided a further \$174,000 to Council. Following this, in July 2022, Council invested in longer term 3 year funding to ensure the Illegal Dumping Taskforce has the ability to deliver the outcomes of this strategy in tackling this important problem in the City of Logan.



# Impacts of illegal dumping

Illegal dumping is a costly, constant and highly visible problem that impacts on the social, environmental and financial wellbeing of our community, in the following ways:

Social	Environmental	Financial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in amenity that affects city reputation</li> <li>• Decrease in community pride</li> <li>• Increased crime and decreased perception of safety</li> <li>• Spaces that look uncared for can cause anti-social behaviour</li> <li>• Injury and public health risks such as sharp objects, unsafe objects or unsanitary materials being dumped</li> <li>• Prevent or hinder the maintenance works of access ways, roads and property.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Injury or death to wildlife, where waste is mistaken for food, or wildlife is trapped in the waste</li> <li>• Destruction of local biodiversity and hindered revegetation</li> <li>• Contamination of soil and water sources</li> <li>• Harboring parasites, vermin, snakes and mosquitoes</li> <li>• Spreading weeds and biosecurity matter (invasive and noxious plant species)</li> <li>• Fire risk.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Injury or death to livestock</li> <li>• Loss of resources from materials that could have been recycled or composted</li> <li>• Loss of income to landfill operators and recycling facilities through loss of revenue</li> <li>• Reduction in visitor numbers, affecting the local economy</li> <li>• Reduction in property values</li> <li>• Diversion of our resources to prevent, enforce, clean-up and dispose of waste instead of conducting proactive activities.</li> </ul>



# Where are we going?

We want to reduce illegal dumping and littering and the associated social, environmental, health and financial impacts of this behaviour. Our objective is to drive positive long-term behaviour change and deter illegal dumping and littering through education, awareness and enforcement. We will achieve this by:

## 1. Building capacity

Continuing to operate a dedicated taskforce to investigate and enforce against illegal dumping and littering activity.

## 2. Encouraging residents and visitors to report illegal dumping

Partnering with our community to support the reduction of illegal dumping. Develop and build easy to use reporting mechanisms that are supported by engaging marketing campaigns and incentives. Foster community pride and the desire to report illegal dumping and littering activity.

## 3. Building partnerships to combat dumping and littering

Building strategic partnerships to tackle illegal dumping and littering arising from the shared responsibility of government, business and community.

## 4. Better intelligence and surveillance

Develop comprehensive intelligence, data capture and reporting systems to identify the extent and cost of illegal dumping in our community. Accurate, comprehensive data and intelligence will help Council direct and prioritise actions against illegal dumping and report on these findings.

## 5. Greater community and industry awareness

Education raises awareness of the social, environmental and financial impacts of illegal dumping. Our goal is to develop community and industry awareness programs that will be the catalyst for behaviour change.

## 6. Stronger and more visible enforcement outcomes

Council will take swift and effective enforcement measures through clean-up orders, fines and prosecution to change public behaviours and create deterrence to prevent illegal dumping.

## 7. Evaluate and monitor success

Annually report on progress against the action plan to our community



# How are we going to get there?

Council will undertake the following specific actions to support the vision and outcomes of this strategy:

1. Build capability	Action	Timeframe
1.1	Create temporary dedicated investigator roles to focus on dumping and litter enforcement	Complete
1.2	Seek 12 month fixed-term funding for Taskforce for 2021/2011 through budget process and state government grant funding	Complete
1.3	Seek fixed term funding for Taskforce through budget process for the 3 year life of the strategy	Complete
1.4	Purchase dedicated vehicle and install it with highly visible anti-dumping decal message to ensure visibility in the community	Year 1
1.5	Build the regulatory enforcement capabilities of the Taskforce through legal support	Year 1
1.6	Introduce a streamlined triaging system and quick response time KPI in response to complaints of major dumping offences	Year 1
2. Encouraging people to report	Action	Timeframe
2.1	Develop online reporting and QR code mechanism for illegal dumping	Complete
2.2	Explore alternative reporting platforms for quicker, easier and anonymous reporting methods	Year 1
2.3	Develop a bold marketing campaign and tagline to encourage the public to report offences via a bold 'Dob in a dumper' style campaign, encouraging city pride	Year 1
2.4	Develop greater community awareness and capacity to report illegal dumping by publishing data on the number of offences, location and financial impact on residents to clean up and remove waste	Ongoing
2.5	Implement financial or social rewards or incentives for people to report dumping offences	Year 2
3. Better intelligence and surveillance	Action	Timeframe
3.1	Develop database of repeat offenders	Complete
3.2	Develop an interactive heatmap of dumping hotspots across the city	Complete
3.3	Deploy covert surveillance to hotspot locations across the city	Ongoing
3.4	Gather data on cost of illegal dumping to ratepayer	Annual

3.5	Deploy dashcam technology to Council fleet vehicles to enable detection of litter-from-vehicle-offences	Year 1
3.6	Investigate and trial AI detection and surveillance technology for offence detection	Year 2
3.7	Use drone surveillance to detect dumping in regional and rural locations	Year 2
3.8	Develop enforcement partnership with other local governments to share information about cross-jurisdictional offenders	Year 2
<b>4. Building partnerships to combat dumping</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
4.1	Develop strategic partnership with waste contractor to explore identification of dumping offences	Year 1
4.2	Develop strategic partnership with community housing providers to reduce poor tenancy practices involving dumping	Year 1
4.3	Streamline waste collection processes in partnership with Road Construction and Maintenance Branch to enable quicker collection of dumped waste following a complaint	Year 1
4.4	Explore partnership with Council's community safety camera network to detect illegal dumping and litter offences	Year 2
4.5	Support vulnerable members of the community to properly dispose of waste through establishing networks with community support agencies	Year 2
4.6	Enhance management of litter and dumping on construction sites with Council's Construction Taskforce	Year 2
4.7	Develop strategic partnership with REIQ to disincentivise poor tenancy practices involving dumping	Year 2
4.8	Partner with industry associations relating to tyre manufacturing to disincentivise illegal dumping	Year 3
4.9	Use bollards to block vehicle access in conjunction at key dumping locations	Ongoing and as identified
<b>5. Greater community and industry awareness</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
5.1	Install temporary anti-dumping signage in key hotspot and high litter areas	Ongoing
5.2	Communicate with body corporate entities and real estate agents in hotspot areas raising awareness of tenant/occupier responsibilities around waste disposal	Annual
5.3	Deliver targeted anti-littering marketing campaign	Year 1



5.4	Deliver education campaign in collaboration with internal stakeholders to accompany kerbside collection schedule to improve waste disposal practices	Year 1
5.5	Explore social or economic incentives for tenants to lawfully dispose of waste including the reallocation of tip vouchers from property owners via subscription (opt in)	Year 2
5.6	Explore economic incentives for businesses to prevent littering through design or operational initiatives	Year 2
5.7	Advertise on local trade/service websites (e.g Airtasker, hipages, find a tradie) to encourage the responsible disposal of waste in Logan city	Year 2
5.8	Partner with local real estate agents to improve tenancy lease conditions that allow residential bonds to be withheld if roadside dumping occurs by tenant	Year 2
5.9	Review Council's road construction contractual arrangements to prevent the unauthorised dumping of overflow road base material in road reserves	Year 3
5.10	Educate members of the public about selling or upcycling goods and waste dumping responsibilities (for example, on social media platforms)	Year 3
5.11	Partner with fast-food companies and local businesses to better manage litter risk across outlets in the city through dedicated measures in hotspot locations	Year 3
<b>6. Stronger and more visible enforcement outcomes</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
6.1	Conduct quarterly targeted enforcement operations (including education, surveillance and penalties) in problematic and complex 'hotspot' locations.	Quarterly
6.2	Use highly visible tape to mark suspected unlawfully dumped waste	Ongoing
6.3	Undertake increased proactive surveillance and enforcement activities around key hotspot unit developments and residential complexes where waste disposal practices are poor and unsightly	Ongoing
6.4	Deliver annual targeted enforcement operations in known problem locations following kerbside collection	Annual
6.5	Seek community support in the identification of offenders or their vehicles, utilising social media platforms	Ongoing
6.6	Prosecute repeat or serious offenders, targeting those making commercial gains from dumping offences	Ongoing

6.7	Increase the issuing of penalties and undertake prosecutions for generalised dumping and littering offences, where in the public interest	Ongoing
6.8	Publicise enforcement outcomes through social media or community channels to drive public awareness	Ongoing
<b>7. Evaluate and monitor success</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
7.1	<p>Implement the following metrics of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The growth rate of littering and illegal dumping events is slowed year on year</li> <li>• A reduced financial impact on the ratepayer year on year</li> <li>• Increased reporting of dumping and littering offences</li> <li>• Greater public awareness</li> <li>• Increased collaboration with business owners, property owners, real estate agencies, and authorities</li> <li>• Increased fines and prosecution</li> </ul>	Annual
7.2	Produce annual report card to Council on progress towards action plan deliverables and performance against agreed metrics	Annual (mid-year)

## Implementation

A project team will support the Illegal Dumping Taskforce in delivering this strategy, together with key internal and external stakeholders. Council will continue to work closely with the state government on litter and illegal dumping initiatives and will seek grant funding where available.

## Conclusion

Illegal dumping is an issue that impacts the whole community. This strategy paves the way towards significantly tackling this unacceptable behaviour, helping shape a cleaner, brighter future for the city of Logan.

## Acknowledgements

Logan City Council acknowledge and thank all the organisations and individuals that assisted in the development of this strategy. The organisations or departments listed below have graciously shared their details of how they manage illegal dumping, either directly or indirectly, through the reports and data that they publish and make public:

Queensland State Government, Department of Environment & Science

Tweed Shire Council

Gold Coast City Council

Grampians Central West Council

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (NSW)

Logan City Council – Health, Environment & Waste Branch

Logan City Council – Parks Branch

Logan City Council – Roads Construction Maintenance Branch





## How to report illegal dumping

Council relies on people to report illegal dumping so we can investigate and take enforcement action. Witnesses are vitally important in enabling action to be taken against people who illegally dump as soon as possible. The public can do this by providing the following information:

- Date, time and location of incident
- Description of vehicle and license plate number
- Description of person(s) dumping
- What items/materials are being dumped
- Contact name and phone number

Any information people report will be treated confidentially in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)*.

No person should put themselves in danger by approaching anyone they see dumping illegally. Nor should they attempt to investigate the type of waste dumped as there may be hazardous or sharp items hiding in the waste. Trained Council staff will carry out a thorough investigation once the waste has been reported. To report illegal dumping, residents should call Council on **07 3412 3412**, use Council's online 'Report it' tool or scan the QR code on signage at known hot spot sites. After hours calls will be redirected to the emergency response team.

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