STATEWIDE LITTER SURVEYS 2023-26

ANNUAL LITTER SURVEY 2024-2025 REPORT

MAY 2025

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Document History

Revision	Date	Description	Author	Reviewer
1.0	27/05/2025	Final report	LC, RM	DC

Contents

Introduction

DLC Spatial has been engaged by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment ("NRE") to undertake a series of litter surveys and produce associated reports using the Australian Litter Measure ("AusLM") method.

The AusLM has been developed to standardise litter data across all Australian states. DLC Spatial has used AusLM as a tool for measuring the extent and nature of littering; and to assist with collecting, analysing, and presenting data on litter.

Program

Litter is surveyed twice per year (December and May), beginning in December 2023 and concluding in May 2026, across four local government areas around Tasmania, with litter data analysed by litter type, item count, volume, site type, and key categories and items—specifically beverage containers and single-use plastics.

The findings of the surveys will then be summarised into annual reports, with a focus on highlighting key litter items, trends in litter volumes across the site types, and identifying key drivers and impacts on litter volumes overall. This is the second annual report to be prepared.

Table 1: Program Delivery Schedule

Stage	Deliverable	Delivery Date
Stage 1	Three-Year Survey Plan and Program	By 27 November 2023
Stage 2	December 2023 Surveys	By 28 Dec 2023
	May 2024 Surveys	By 28 May 2024
	Annual Litter Survey 2023-2024 Report	By 28 May 2024
Stage 3	December 2024 Surveys	By 31 Dec 2024
	May 2025 Surveys	By 28 May 2025
	Annual Litter Survey 2024-2025 Report **– this document**	By 28 May 2025
Stage 4	December 2025 Surveys	By 31 Dec 2025
	May 2026 Surveys	By 28 May 2026
	Annual Litter Survey 2025-2026 Report	By 28 May 2026
Stage 5	Status of Litter in Tasmania 2023-2026 Report	By 28 May 2026
	Presentation	By 28 May 2026

Scope

A total of 24 sites are being surveyed on a biannual basis (December and May). The sites are spread across four local government areas – two in the Greater Hobart Region, one in the Greater Launceston Region, and one in the North-West Region.

The AusLM method classifies sites into six different site type categories – residential areas, retail areas, industrial areas, recreational parks, beaches, and main roads. One of each site type has been surveyed in each local government area.

The selected sites were determined to be suitable and met the AusLM inclusion criteria. The number of transects per site was also defined by AusLM specifications. This includes six transects for each residential area and main road, five transects for recreational parks and beaches, and three transects for retail and industrial areas. The total number of site types and transects within each local government area is summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Total Number of Site Types and Transects

Jurisdiction	Region	Local Government Area	Site Types (Number surveyed)	Number of Transects per Site
Tasmania	South	Clarence City Council	Beach (1)	5
			Main road (1)	6
			Residential (1)	6
			Retail (1)	3
			Industrial (1)	3
			Park (1)	5
		Glenorchy City Council	Beach (1)	5
			Main road (1)	6
			Residential (1)	6
			Retail (1)	3
			Industrial (1)	3
			Park (1)	5
	North	West Tamar Council	Beach (1)	5
			Main road (1)	6
			Residential (1)	6
			Retail (1)	3
			Industrial (1)	3
			Park (1)	5
	North-West	Central Coast Council	Beach (1)	5
			Main road (1)	6

	Residential (1)	6
	Retail (1)	3
	Industrial (1)	3
	Park (1)	5
Total	**24**	**112**

Survey Methodology

Surveyors received training in the AusLM method prior to commencing the surveys. They were also provided a copy of the AusLM Field Manual, which provides comprehensive guidelines on all aspects of the litter count method.

Litter was classified using current AusLM categories, with additional custom categories included to support data capture and reporting. Site information was collected to ascertain if certain factors impacted the litter levels (such as waste and recycling bins, public transport stops, BBQ areas in parks). Final data collation, review and analysis has been completed by DLC Spatial.

Measurement Methodology

The AusLM method employs a standing stock visual litter count. This method was chosen as the most appropriate way of answering questions about broad trends and achievements at the jurisdictional scale. Under this method, litter items are counted and categorised in a defined area and litter is left in place. It is a relatively fast and cost-effective method that indicates the extent and composition of litter at a site at a point in time.

Data Calculation Basis

The following calculations have been utilised throughout the report:

Number of items (#)	Total number of individual items counted
Items (#) per 1000m2	$\frac{\text{Total number of individual items counted}}{\text{Total square metres surveyed}} \times 1000$
Volume – litres (L)	Total number of individual items counted x standard volume per item
Volume (L) per 1000m2	$\frac{\text{Total number of individual items counted x standard volume per item}}{\text{Total square metres surveyed}} \times 1000$

Litter Composition Overview - 2024-25

During the 2024-25 surveys, a total of 4,859 litter items were identified across the 45,999 m^2 surveyed, with an average density of approximately 106 items per 1,000 m^2.

Summary Litter Data				
Total Area Surveyed (m^2)	Total Litter Items	Litter Items / 1,000 m2	Total Litter Volume (L)	Litter Volume (L) / 1,000 m2
45,999	4,859	105.63	623.2	13.55

Litter by Item

The AusLM surveys identified 4,859 litter items across the 24 sites. As seen in Figure 1, plastic items were the most prevalent, comprising 45% of all litter observed—highlighting the dominance of this material type. Paper and card made up 19% of all items, followed by cigarette butts and filters at 16%.

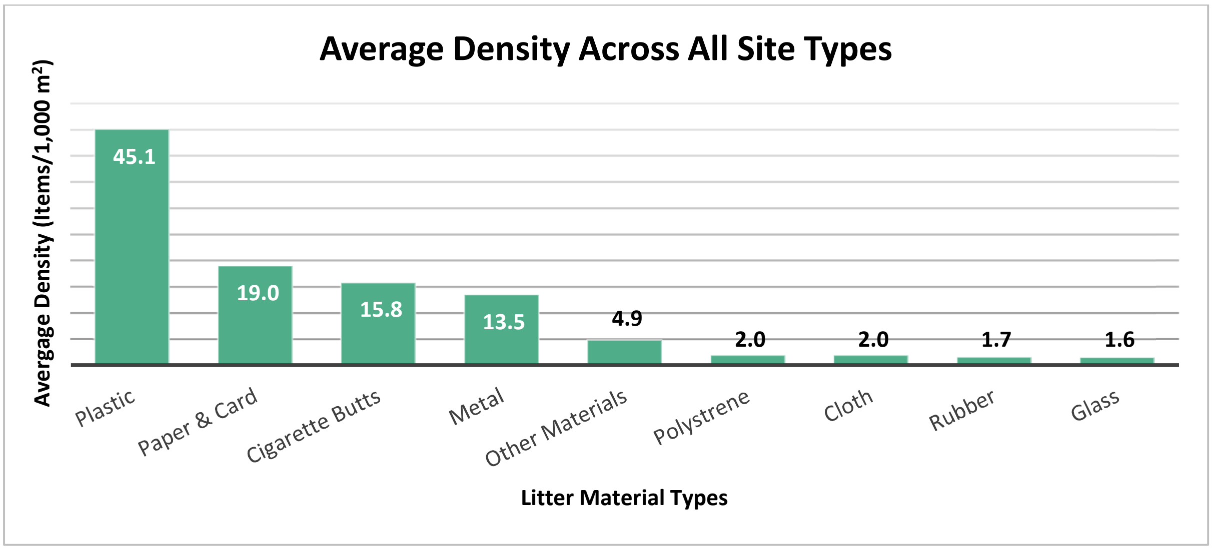

Figure 1. Average density of different litter material types across all sites (items per 1,000 m^2)

Broadly similar patterns in composition were evident at different site types (i.e. dominance of plastic, paper and card, and cigarette butts and filters – see Figure 2).

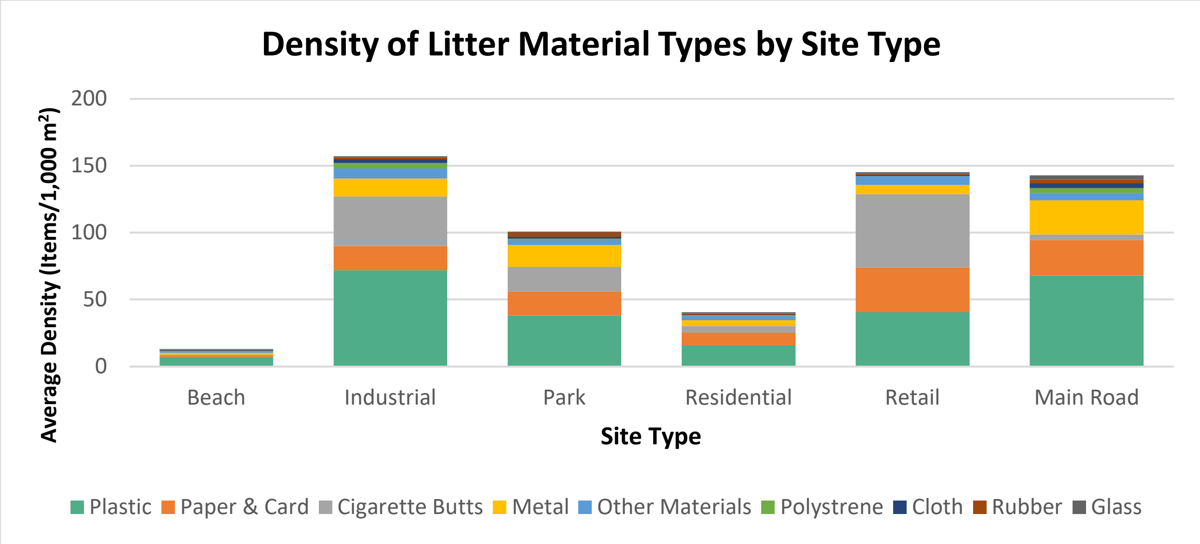

Figure 2. Density of litter material types by site type (items per 1,000 m²)

Table 3 presents the 15 most prevalent litter items, aggregated across all sites. These results are consistent with the broader composition trends, with cigarette butts, plastic items, and paper and card dominating the totals. These items collectively accounted for over 70% of all litter observed, reinforcing the need for targeted interventions aimed at reducing cigarette waste, food packaging, and plastic fragments.

Table 3: Top 15 litter items (by count) across all site types

Top 15 Items by Count		
Item[1]	Total Number of Items	Items / 1,000m²
Cigarette Butts and Filters	728	15.83
Plastic - Soft Plastic Fragment - Small	302	6.57
Plastic - Hard Plastic Fragment - Small	282	6.13
Paper & Card - Fragment - Small	269	5.85
Plastic - Food/Confectionery Wrappers	220	4.78
Metal - Fragment - Small	145	3.15
Paper & Card - Takeaway Containers	124	2.70
Metal - Soft Dr/FW/FJD/SpD/End (150 - 499 ml)	100	2.17
Paper & Card - Paper Tissues/Napkin	96	2.09
Plastic - Cup – Single Use (Inc. Coffee Cups)	95	2.07
Plastic - Other Plastic Item	89	1.93
Plastic - Tape/Narrow Soft Plastic Film	85	1.85
Paper & Card - Packages & Boxes	82	1.78

[1] Soft Dr/FW/FJD/SpD/EnD = Soft drink, flavoured water, sports drinks, and energy drinks

Top 15 Items by Count		
Item[1]	Total Number of Items	Items / 1,000m^2
Metal - Premixed (150 - 499 ml)	77	1.67
Plastic - Soft Plastic Fragment - Medium	76	1.65

The prevalence of plastic across all site types, as shown in Table 4, is concerning, particularly within sensitive environments such as beach and recreational park sites, where litter is more likely to enter aquatic ecosystems and pollute rivers or coastal areas.

Retail areas had the highest proportion of cigarette butts and filters (38%), suggesting either a lack of enforcement of smoking restrictions or absence of designated disposal options.

Metal items were particularly prevalent along main roads (18%), potentially associated with drink containers discarded from vehicles, aligning with previous observations on roadside littering.

Table 4: Proportion of litter material types across different site types

Litter material	Proportion of Items (by item count)					
	Beach	Industrial	Park	Residential	Retail	Main Road
Plastic	56%	46%	38%	40%	28%	48%
Paper & Card	10%	12%	18%	23%	23%	19%
Cigarette Butts	2%	24%	18%	12%	38%	3%
Metal	11%	9%	16%	11%	5%	18%
Other Materials	10%	5%	4%	8%	5%	4%
Polystyrene	2%	3%	1%	1%	0%	3%
Cloth	6%	2%	2%	1%	1%	3%
Rubber	2%	1%	3%	2%	1%	2%
Glass	3%	0%	0%	2%	1%	2%

Litter Composition by Volume

While litter item counts provide one perspective, volume offers another important dimension in understanding the overall impact of different litter types. Volume estimates for key litter categories, presented in Figure 3, highlight the space that different materials occupy in the environment. These calculations are based on estimates and should be interpreted with caution.

Notably, plastic remains the most dominant material type by volume across all sites. In contrast, cigarette butts—despite being numerically dominant—represent a relatively small proportion of total litter volume.

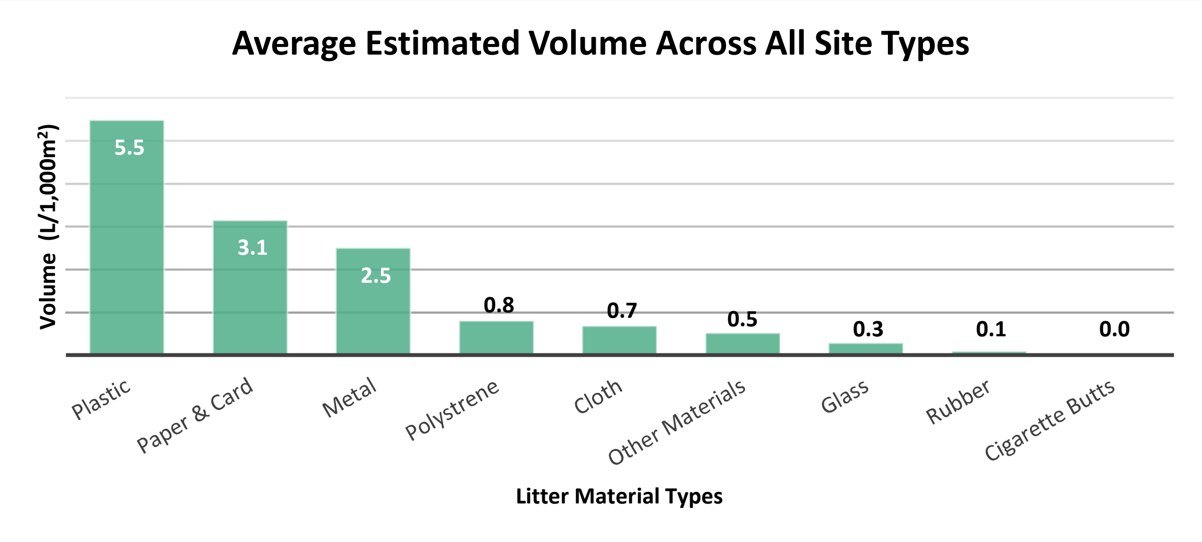

Figure 3. Average estimated volume of litter material types across all sites (litres per 1,000 m²)

Analysis of litter by volume reveals a different pattern to that of item counts. Paper and card items—particularly takeaway containers and packaging boxes—emerge as the most prevalent categories by volume, as outlined in Table 5.

Table 5: Top 15 litter items (by volume) across all site types

Top 15 Items by Volume (L)		
Item[2]	Estimated Volume (L)	Volume per 1,000 m² (L)
Paper & Card - Takeaway containers	62.0	1.35
Paper & Card - Packages and boxes	41.0	0.89
Metal - Soft Dr/FW/FJD/SpD/EnD (150 - 499 ml)	37.5	0.82
Plastic - Other food package	33.5	0.73
Polystyrene - Insulation and packaging	30.0	0.65
Metal - Premixed (150 - 499 ml)	28.9	0.63
Plastic - Soft Dr/FW/FJD/SpD/EnD (500 - 999 ml)	22.5	0.49

[2] Soft Dr/FW/FJD/SpD/EnD = Soft drink, flavoured water, sports drinks, and energy drinks

Top 15 Items by Volume (L)		
Item[2]	Estimated Volume (L)	Volume per 1,000 m² (L)
Metal - Beer (150 - 499 ml)	22.5	0.49
Cloth - Clothing	21.0	0.46
Plastic - Non-Food package	21.0	0.46
Plastic - Cup – Single use (inc. coffee cups)	19.0	0.41
Plastic - Flavoured milk (500 - 999 ml)	15.8	0.34
Plastic - Food/confect. Wrappers	14.6	0.32
Plastic - Soft Dr/FW/FJD/SpD/EnD (1000 - 3000 ml)	12.0	0.26
Plastic - White milk (1000 - 3000 ml)	10.5	0.23

While plastic dominated by both count and volume, bulky items such as takeaway containers, boxes, and drink containers also significantly contributed to total litter volume, highlighting the need for better packaging design and public disposal infrastructure.

Multiple beverage-related items (both plastic and metal) feature prominently by volume, suggesting the recently introduced container refund scheme could play a greater role in reducing this waste stream in the future.

Though not many items were counted during the surveys, polystyrene packaging accounts for a relatively large volume, reinforcing its disproportionate impact on space and environmental harm.

Litter Data by Site Type

The Australian Litter Measure (AusLM) method was used to assess litter at six distinct site types, as defined in the AusLM Field Manual.

Area Surveyed by Site Type

As shown in Figure 4, main road sites accounted for the largest total survey area, with more than 15,474 m² assessed. In contrast, parks contributed the smallest area, with just over 3,000 m² surveyed.

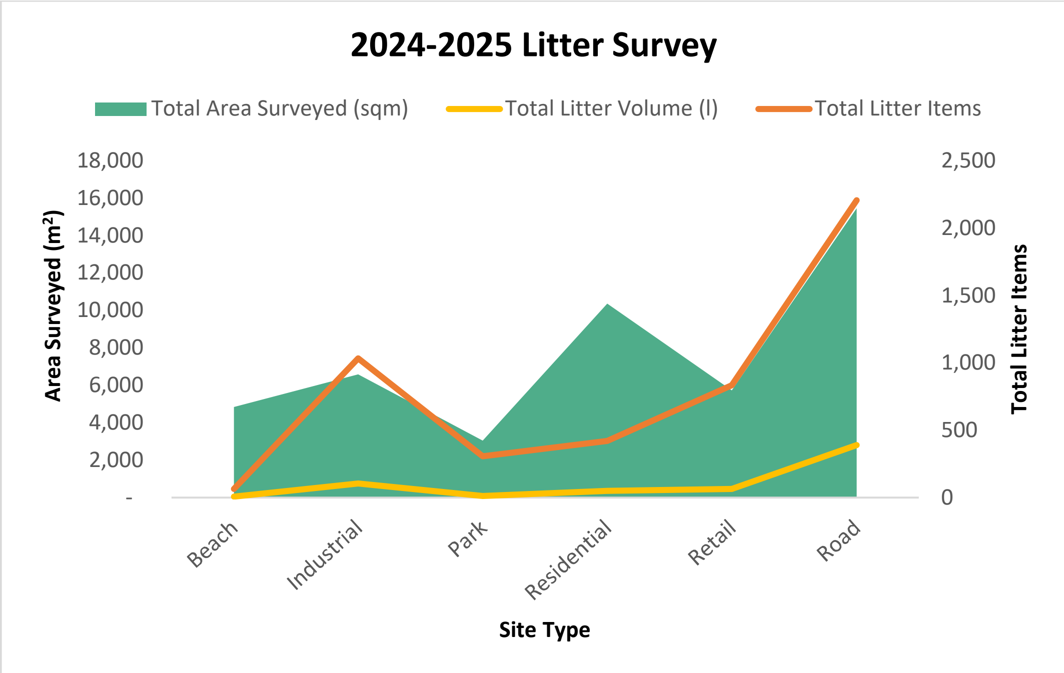

Figure 4. Total area surveyed across all site types, showing relationship with total litter volume and items

Litter Items by Site Type

In terms of total litter items recorded (Figure 5), main roads had the highest litter rate, with 2,208 items representing 45.4% of all items surveyed. Industrial sites followed, contributing 1,032 items (21.2%). Together, these two site types made up 66.6% of all recorded items.

Retail sites were the third highest with 832 items (17.1%). Beaches had the lowest litter levels, with just 63 items (1.3%).

Figure 6 outlines the estimated litter density at each of the sites surveyed, across all four Local Government Areas.

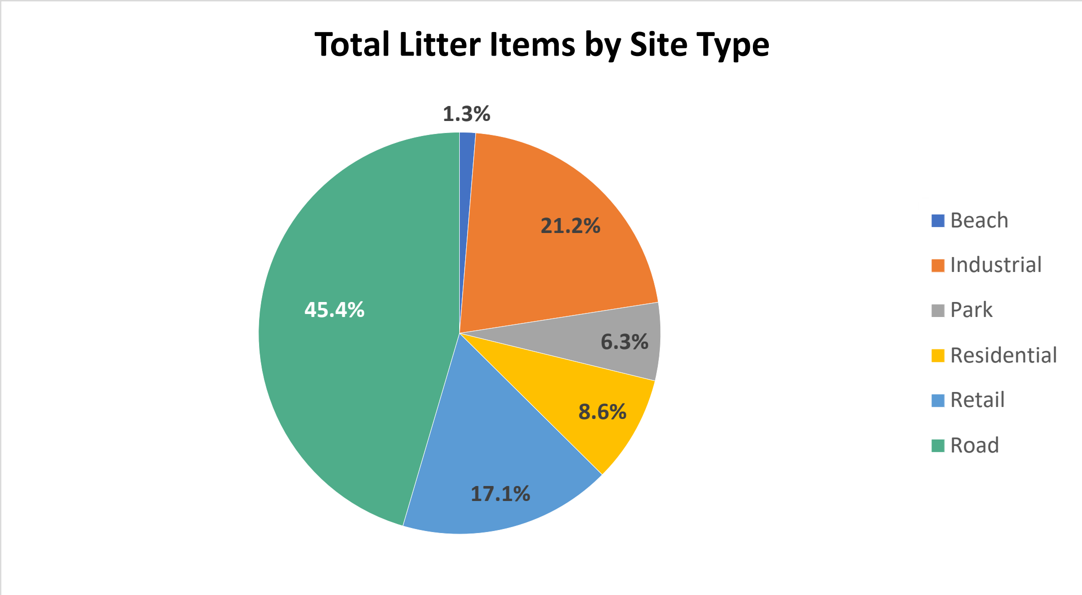

Figure 5. Percentage of total litter items across all site types

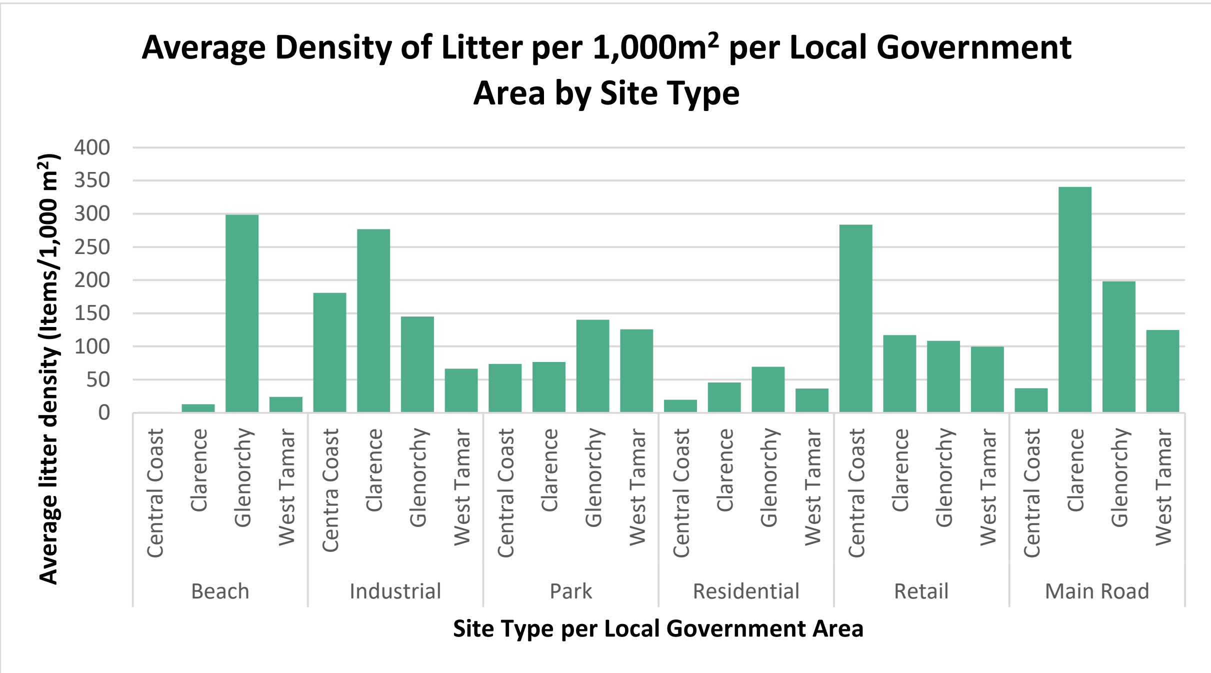

Figure 6. Average density of litter per 1,000m2 per Local Government Area by Site Type

Litter Volume by Site Type

Main roads also had the highest volume of litter, accounting for 62.5% of the total calculated litter volume (Figure 7). This is a 17.1% increase relative to item count, suggesting a higher prevalence or persistence of large or bulky litter items in these areas. Industrial sites again ranked second in total litter volume, while beaches recorded the lowest volume, contributing only 1.9% of the total.

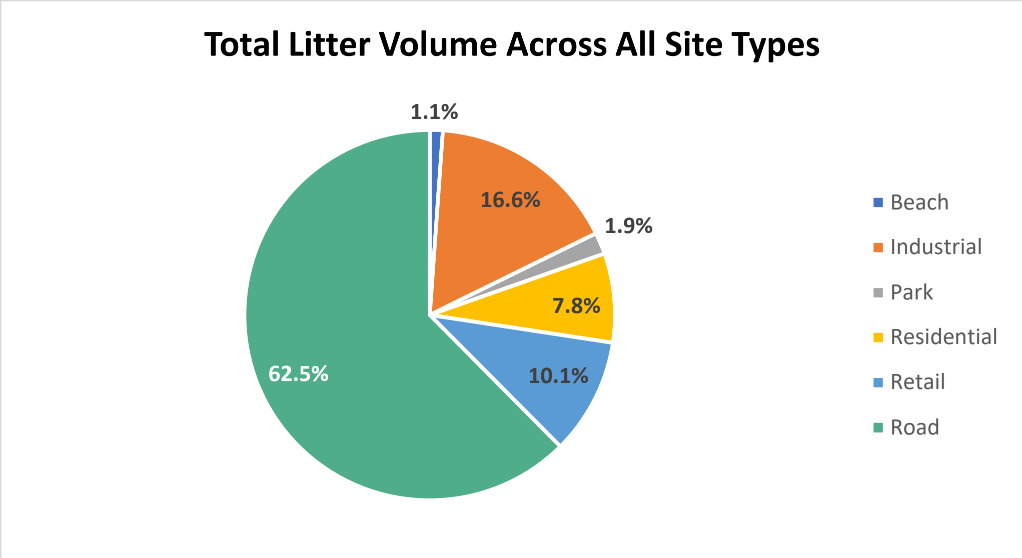

Figure 7. Total litter volume across all site types

Site Type Summaries

Site Summary – Beach

Site Snapshot	
Total Items:	63
Total Volume:	7.05 L
Density:	13.03 items / 1,000 m²
Volume per Area:	1.46 L / 1,000 m²
Top Items by Count:	• Plastic - Soft plastic fragment – Small • Plastic - Hard plastic fragment - Small • Metal - Fragment - Small
Top Items by Volume:	• Cloth – Clothing • Polystyrene - Insulation & Packaging • Plastic - Other Food Package
Highest Litter Count:	38 (Glenorchy)
Lowest Litter Count:	5 (Central Coast)

Common Site Features and Observations

General waste bins were frequently observed near beach sites, typically located in grassed recreational areas adjacent to the beach or within nearby carparks. Recycling bins were occasionally present but less common. No evidence of formal beach cleaning (such as raking lines) was noted at any site; however, regular community-led beach clean-up activities may contribute to the low levels of litter observed. Most litter was found within dune areas rather than on the sand or in the water.

Observations from 2024–25 Surveys

Litter observed during the 2024–25 surveys appeared to be recently deposited, suggesting that older litter had been removed or displaced by wind and tide. Consistent with previous findings, most litter at beach sites was located in dune areas. Although areas outside the designated transects were not formally surveyed, a significant amount of litter was observed along the footpath leading to the beach at Glenorchy. This site differs from typical beach locations, as it is not used for recreation apart from access to a nearby boat ramp, and the water is unsuitable for swimming or dog exercise.

Site Summary – Industrial

Site Snapshot	
Total Items:	1,032
Total Volume:	103.47 L
Density:	157.02 items / 1,000 m²
Volume per Area:	15.74 L / 1,000 m²
Top Items by Count:	• Cigarette butts and filters • Plastic - Soft plastic fragment – Small • Plastic - Hard plastic fragment - Small
Top Items by Volume:	• Paper & Card - Packages & boxes • Polystyrene - Insulation & Packaging • Paper & Card - Takeaway containers
Highest Litter Count:	405 (Clarence)
Lowest Litter Count:	147 (West Tamar)

Common Site Features and Observations

Industrial sites recorded the second highest litter loads across most metrics (total item count, total volume, and volume per 1,000m²), and the highest count when standardised by item count per 1,000m². Litter levels were consistently high across most surveyed locations, with an average of 258 items per site. These sites frequently appeared heavily littered, with the majority of litter appearing to be older and long-standing. Verges were typically poorly maintained, often used for vehicle parking, rarely landscaped, and public bins were seldom present. Much of the observed litter appeared to originate from adjacent businesses and nearby workers, including common items such as packaging materials, cable ties, strapping, and cigarette butts.

Observations from 2024–25 Surveys

While there appeared to be a reduction in visible litter at most industrial sites in December 2024, this may be partially attributed to long grass obscuring litter within several transects, potentially resulting in undercounting. The industrial site in Central Coast was notably impacted by old litter, with one transect appearing as though it had never been mown. Most waste at this location could be linked to a nearby business. Since the previous survey, a new “No Illegal Dumping” sign had been installed at this site.

Site Summary – Park

Site Snapshot	
Total Items:	305
Total Volume:	11.70 L
Density:	100.6 items / 1,000 m²
Volume per Area:	3.86 L / 1,000 m²
Top Items by Count:	• Cigarette butts and filters • Plastic - Food/confectionery Wrappers • Paper & Card - Fragment - Small
Top Items by Volume:	• Plastic - Food/confectionery Wrappers • Paper & Card - Packages and boxes • Plastic - Other Food Package
Highest Litter Count:	113 (Glenorchy)
Lowest Litter Count:	58 (Clarence)

Common Site Features and Observations

Overall, parks were among the lowest-littered site types recorded. Items identified as fragments may be the result of routine mowing, which is common in public parks. Litter bins were frequently observed at park sites and were rarely overflowing. Amenities such as BBQs, playgrounds, and bench seating were commonly present across surveyed locations, indicating high levels of recreational use and general maintenance.

Observations from 2024–25 Surveys

Litter observed at park sites was often located near bins. It was unclear whether this was the result of litter falling during bin servicing, being blown out by wind, or discarded by users. During the May 2025 survey, it was also noted that the playground at the West Tamar park was undergoing an upgrade.

Site Summary – Residential

Site Snapshot	
Total Items:	419
Total Volume:	48.48 L
Density:	40.5 items / 1,000 m²
Volume per Area:	4.68 L / 1,000 m²
Top Items by Count:	• Cigarette butts and filters • Plastic - Hard plastic fragment – Small • Plastic - Food/confectionery Wrappers
Top Items by Volume:	• Paper & Card - Packages and boxes • Paper & Card - Takeaway containers • Paper & Card - Junk mail / free circulars
Highest Litter Count:	139 (Glenorchy)
Lowest Litter Count:	54 (Central Coast)

Common Site Features and Observations

Residential sites accounted for the second largest total survey area across all site types. Despite this, the total number of litter items recorded was the third lowest. This relatively low litter level may suggest that individual households regularly manage litter in their verge areas. Where litter was observed, it was typically found in gutters, ditches, or appeared to be associated with recent kerbside waste collection activities.

Observations from 2024–25 Surveys

In the Central Coast, a new footpath had been constructed within Transect 5 since the previous survey, and additional construction was underway within Transect 1 at the time of surveying. Any waste associated with these construction activities was excluded from the survey data. In two of the four surveyed LGAs, the survey coincided with green bin (organic waste) collection day; however, this had no observable impact on survey results, or the data collected.

Site Summary – Retail

Site Snapshot	
Total Items:	832
Total Volume:	63.22 L
Density:	145.1 items / 1,000 m²
Volume per Area:	11.03 L / 1,000 m²
Top Items by Count:	• Cigarette butts and filters • Plastic - Food/confectionery Wrappers • Paper & Card - Fragment - Small
Top Items by Volume:	• Paper & Card - Takeaway containers • Plastic - Other Food Package • Paper & Card - Packages and boxes
Highest Litter Count:	334 (Central Coast)
Lowest Litter Count:	118 (Glenorchy)

Common Site Features/Observations

Litter bins were frequently observed at retail sites, with general waste bins being most common and co-mingled recycling bins occasionally present. In some locations, general waste bins were noted to be overflowing. Cigarette butts were commonly observed across retail sites, including in areas clearly signposted as non-smoking. With the exception of one site, it was unclear whether smoking was officially permitted or prohibited in these spaces. Notably, even at the site where smoking is explicitly banned, a significant number of cigarette butts were present. No dedicated cigarette disposal bins were observed at any retail sites. It is possible that individuals are intentionally discarding cigarette butts on the ground to avoid the fire risk associated with placing them in general waste bins.

ATM receipts were also a recurring form of litter in several retail areas, particularly within the Central Coast. This may be linked to the removal of receipt disposal bins at some ATM locations.

Observations from 2024–25 Surveys

During the 2024–25 surveys, litter was frequently observed accumulating in gutters and inside drains. While litter within drains was not included in formal counts, its presence suggests these are common catchment points for waste in retail areas.

Site Summary – Main Road

Site Snapshot	
Total Items:	2,208
Total Volume:	389.24 L
Density:	142.7 items / 1,000 m²
Volume per Area:	25.15 L / 1,000 m²
Top Items by Count:	• Plastic - Hard plastic fragment – Small • Plastic - Soft plastic fragment – Small • Paper & Card - Fragment - Small
Top Items by Volume:	• Paper & Card - Takeaway containers • Metal - Soft Dr/FW/FJD/SpD/EnD (150 - 499 ml) • Metal - Premixed (150 - 499 ml)
Highest Litter Count:	1,128 (Clarence)
Lowest Litter Count:	254 (Central Coast)

Common Site Features and Observations

Main roads recorded the highest litter levels across most measures, including total item count, total volume, and volume per 1,000 m². Litter appeared to be evenly distributed across sites regardless of the presence of footpaths, suggesting that roadside littering from vehicles is a significant contributing factor. This highlights an opportunity for continued public messaging around the impacts of discarding litter from car windows. Additionally, the strategic installation of litter bins in key roadside areas may help reduce waste accumulation.

A notable concern was the high number of alcoholic beverage containers observed along main roads. These findings may present an opportunity for NRE to collaborate with Tasmania Police to support targeted enforcement or awareness campaigns.

Observations from 2024-25 Survey

During the December 2024 survey, many unidentifiable litter fragments appeared to be the result of mowing over existing litter. The time of year also contributed to longer grass at many sites, which likely obscured additional litter that was not visible during data collection. It is therefore highly probable that actual litter levels were undercounted in some areas.

Key Litter Categories and Items

In addition to providing insights into overall litter composition and distribution, the Australian Litter Measure (AusLM) can be used to track trends in specific litter types. This supports evaluation of policies and programs targeting particular materials.

At the request of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE), this section focuses on beverage containers and single-use plastics. While the previous report categorised single-use plastics in accordance with the AusLM, this year's report adopts the classifications used by the Tasmanian Government to better align with local policy and reporting requirements.

Beverage Containers

Tasmania's Recycle Rewards container refund scheme (CRS) officially launched on 1 May 2025. Jointly funded by the Tasmanian Government and the beverage industry, the scheme offers a 10-cent refund to consumers for returning eligible drink containers, aiming to reduce litter and improve recycling rates across the state.

To support early monitoring, surveys were conducted in December 2024 (prior to the scheme's introduction) and again in May 2025. While it is too early to expect a significant impact, initial data suggest a decline in beverage container litter compared to previous years. This early trend is encouraging and indicates the scheme has strong potential to deliver long-term benefits as participation increases.

Key Item Snapshot	
Total Items:	426 (eligible for CRS)
Total Volume:	201.8 L (eligible for CRS)
Highest Litter Count:	167 (Clarence) – *includes all beverage containers*
Lowest Litter Count:	40 (Central Coast) – *includes all beverage containers*

Most beverage container litter was recorded at main road sites, which accounted for 77% of items counted (Figure 8). In contrast, only one beverage container was found at beach sites and two at park sites.

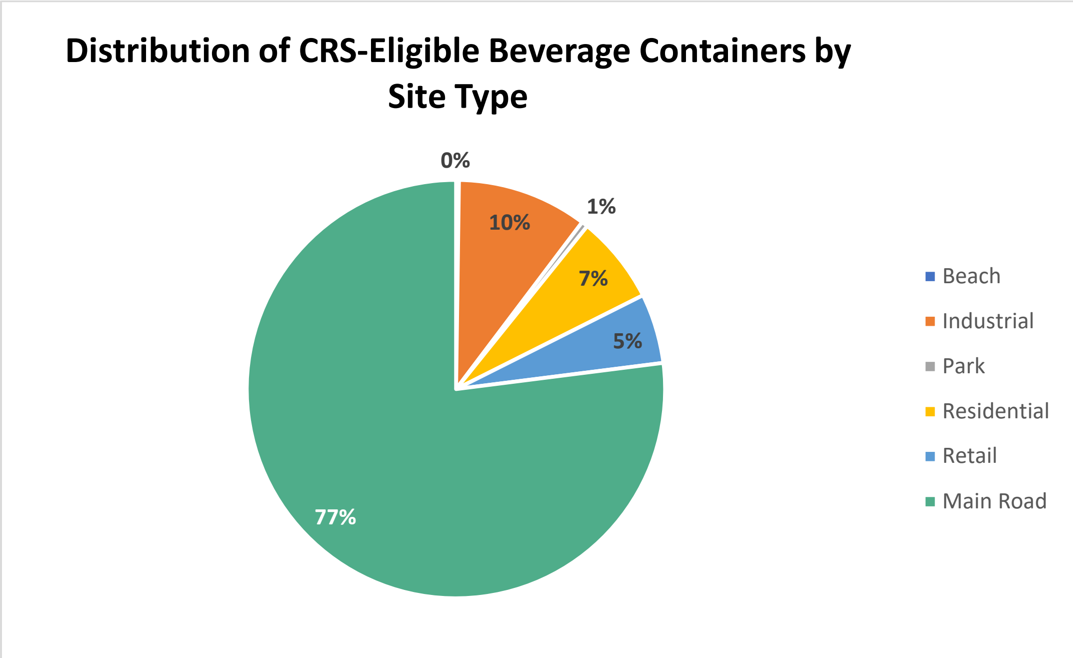

Figure 8. Distribution of CRS-eligible beverage containers by site type

The most common beverage container types were soft drink, flavoured water, sports drinks, and energy drinks, making up 38.7% (165 of 426 items). Premixed spirit drinks were the second most common, accounting for 20.4% of all beverage containers (Figure 9).

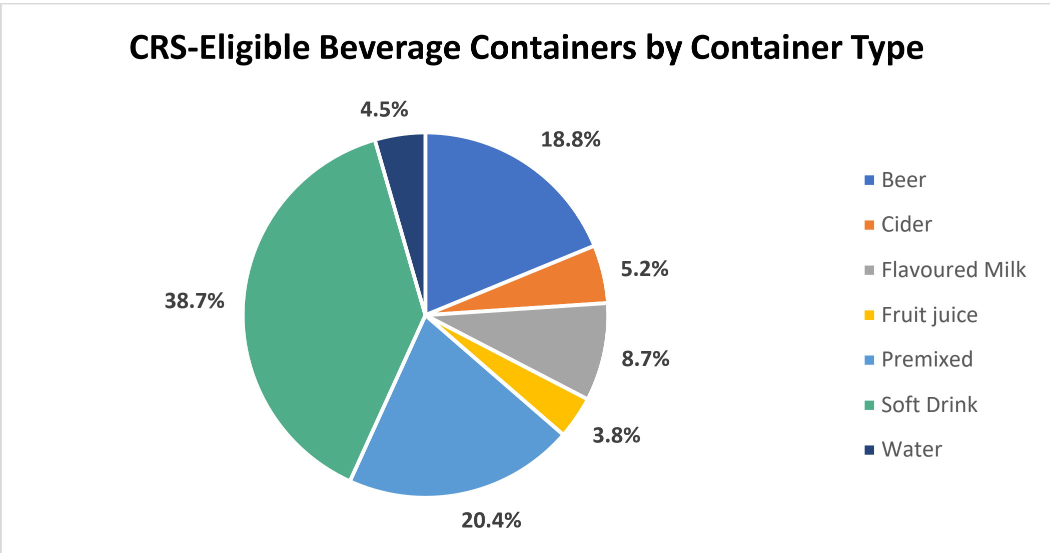

Figure 9. CRS-eligible beverage containers by type (%)

Further information including the beverage container type, number and total volume is captured in **Table 6**.

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Table 6: Details of beverage containers counted during the survey

Material	Beverage Type	Size	Number of Items	Total Volume (L)	CRS eligible?
Glass	Beer	150 - 499 ml	20	8	Y
Glass	Cider	150 - 499 ml	2	1	Y
Glass	Premixed	150 - 499 ml	7	3	Y
Glass	Spirit	500 - 999 ml	1	1	N
Glass	Wine	150 - 499 ml	1	0	N
Metal	Beer	150 - 499 ml	60	23	Y
Metal	Premixed	150 - 499 ml	77	29	Y
Metal	Premixed	500 - 999 ml	3	2	Y
Metal	Soft Dr/FW/FJD/SpD/ EnD	150 - 499 ml	100	38	Y
Metal	Soft Dr/FW/FJD/SpD/ EnD	500 - 999 ml	5	4	Y
Metal	Cider/Fruit Based	150 - 499 ml	20	8	Y
Paper & Card	Flavoured Milk	150 - 499 ml	10	4	Y
Paper & Card	Fruit/Vegetable Juice	150 - 499 ml	7	3	Y
Paper & Card	White Milk	1000 - 3000 ml	1	2	N
Plastic	Flavoured Milk	150 - 499 ml	4	2	Y
Plastic	Flavoured Milk	500 - 999 ml	21	16	Y
Plastic	Flavoured Milk	1000 - 3000 ml	2	3	Y
Plastic	Fruit/Vegetable Juice	150 - 499 ml	7	3	Y
Plastic	Fruit/Vegetable Juice	1000 - 3000 ml	2	3	Y
Plastic	Soft Dr/FW/FJD/SpD/ EnD	150 - 499 ml	22	12	Y
Plastic	Soft Dr/FW/FJD/SpD/ EnD	500 - 999 ml	30	12	Y
Plastic	Soft Dr/FW/FJD/SpD/ EnD	1000 - 3000 ml	8	12	Y
Plastic	Water	150 - 499 ml	6	2	Y
Plastic	Water	500 - 999 ml	11	8	Y
Plastic	Water	1000 - 3000 ml	2	3	Y
Plastic	White Milk	500 - 999 ml	7	11	N
Plastic	White Milk	1000 - 3000 ml	7	11	N
Grand Total			**437**	**224**	
Total of Items Eligible for CRS			**426**	**199**	

Single-Use Plastics

Single-use plastics remain a significant contributor to litter across Tasmania. These items are often lightweight, easily transported by wind and water, and slow to break down in the environment, which increases their potential for environmental harm. This section presents data collected through the AusLM, using categories defined by the Tasmanian Government's Department of Natural Resources and Environment to support consistency with local policy frameworks and regulatory reporting.

Tasmania has implemented phased bans on the sale and supply of various single-use plastic items, including straws, cutlery, and stirrers, with further restrictions planned. The AusLM provides a useful baseline and ongoing monitoring tool to assess the impact of these interventions over time.

Plastic items that were categorised as single-use for the purpose of this report include:

Utensils: Drinking straws - Beverage stirrers - Cutlery

Food ware: Bowls (lidded and unlidded) - Plates - Takeaway food containers - Plastic lined noodle boxes

Drinkware: Hot cups and lids (e.g. coffee or soup) - Cold cups and lids (e.g. iced coffee or bubble tea)

Bags and produce items: Plastic shopping bags greater than 35 microns thickness - Plastic barrier and produce bags (e.g. for fruit nuts and vegetables) - Plastic bread-tags - Stickers on fruit and vegetables - Single-serve condiment packages

Cosmetics: Microbeads in personal healthcare items - Plastic-stemmed cotton buds

Party goods and confectionery: Pizza savers - Plastic confetti - Lollipop sticks - Balloon sticks and ties - Pre-packaged and attached products (e.g. plastic straws on fruit boxes)

Expanded polystyrene (EPS) packaging: EPS loose fill packaging - EPS moulded packaging (consumer goods packaging) - EPS fruit and vegetable trays - EPS food service containers - EPS multi-service gelato containers

Key Item Snapshot	
Total Items:	253
Total Volume:	37.2 L
Highest Litter Count:	77 (Glenorchy)
Lowest Litter Count:	44 (West Tamar)

Single-use plastics continue to make up a significant portion of the litter stream across Tasmania. In this year’s survey, single-use plastics accounted for 253 individual items, representing 19.2% of all litter counted, and a total volume of 37.2 litres.

More than half of all single-use plastics (61.7%) were recorded at main road sites, where littering from moving vehicles is likely to be a major contributing factor. These locations often coincide with high traffic volumes and "on-the-go" consumption behaviours, making them critical areas for monitoring and targeted intervention (Figure 10).

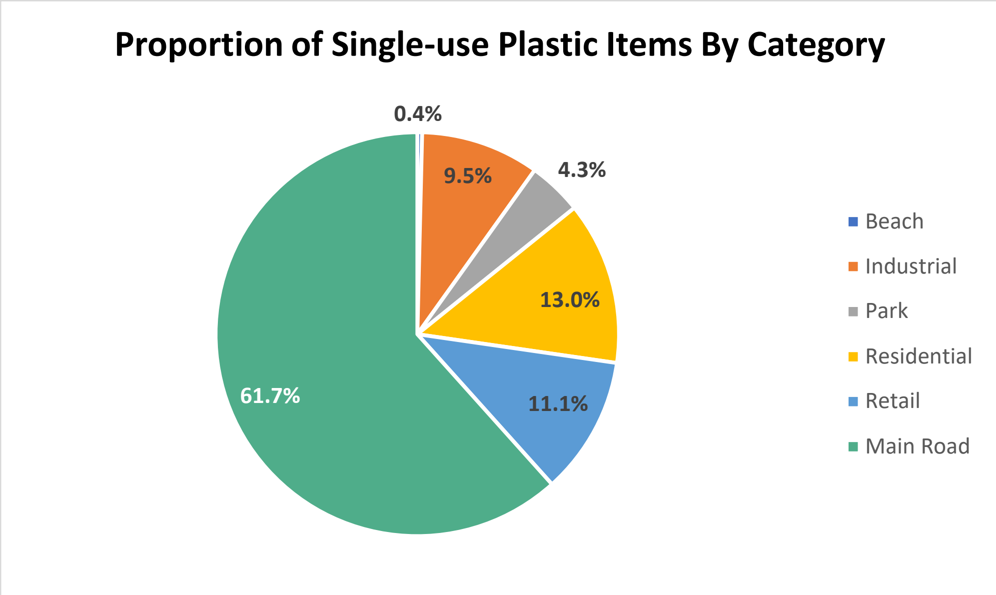

Figure 10. Proportion of single-use plastic items by category

Main road sites recorded the highest concentrations of single-use plastic litter, likely due to their proximity to urban areas, high traffic volumes, and nearby fast-food outlets. These environments facilitate "on-the-go" consumption and disposal, making them hotspots for littering behaviour. The most prevalent items observed were takeaway cups — including soft drink and coffee cups — followed closely by plastic cup lids (Table 7). While 54 lids were recorded during the survey, it is likely that an additional 41 had been displaced by wind or other environmental factors, underscoring the vulnerability of lightweight plastics to environmental dispersal.

Reassuringly, very few banned items such as plastic cutlery or straws were detected, suggesting early signs of compliance with Tasmania's Plastics Reduction Plan. However, the continued presence of some high-volume plastic packaging types highlights the need for further action. To address this remaining litter burden, a combination of public education, business engagement, and expanded policy interventions will be required. The concentration of litter along transport corridors also reinforces the importance of targeted behaviour change campaigns and improved infrastructure — such as more strategically placed bins — to reduce the escape of single-use plastics into the broader environment.

Table 7: Details of single-use plastics counted during the survey

Single-Use Plastics		
Item	**Number of Items**	**Total Volume (L)**
Cup – Single Use (Inc. Coffee Cups)	95	19
Lids - Plastic Cup Lid	33	1
Lollipop Sticks	28	0
Lid - Coffee Cup Lid	21	0
Other Food Package - Sauce	17	1
Bag - Other	13	3
Takeaway Food Container	13	7
Straws	13	0

Single-Use Plastics		
Item	**Number of Items**	**Total Volume (L)**
Bag - Lightweight	10	2
Bag - Heavy	5	5
Cutlery/Chopsticks	5	0
Total	**253**	**37**

Summary of 2024-25 Surveys

The analysis of litter monitoring data using the Australian Litter Measure (AusLM) framework continues to demonstrate the value of systematic, repeatable surveys in providing insights into litter prevalence, informing policy evaluation, and supporting the design of targeted prevention measures.

This report presents a comprehensive overview of litter loads by both number of items and estimated volume per 1,000m², with flexibility to disaggregate findings by site type, local government area, or specific item categories. Results are presented both numerically and graphically, facilitating clear communication to policymakers and stakeholders.

Key Observations

Beverage Containers and the Container Refund Scheme (CRS)
Tasmania's CRS, Recycle Rewards, launched on 1 May 2025, between the December 2024 and May 2025 litter surveys. While the May survey occurred too soon to expect measurable long-term impacts, an encouraging early signal was the reduction in CRS-eligible beverage container litter compared to previous years by 30%. This could stem from behavioural changes induced by the CRS. Beverage container litter remains concentrated at main road sites, suggesting that future behaviour change efforts may benefit from focusing on transport corridors.

Single-Use Plastics and the Plastics Reduction Plan
Single-use plastics made up 19.2% of all litter items counted. Most of these items — particularly takeaway cups and lids — were observed along main roads, reinforcing the role of "on-the-go" consumption in litter generation. Encouragingly, few banned items (e.g. cutlery or straws) were recorded, suggesting positive early compliance with the Tasmanian Government's commitment to phase out problematic single-use plastics by 2025. However, the mobility and dispersal of lightweight plastics (e.g. lids) remain challenges for litter management.

Old vs. New Litter
The May 2025 survey noted that many items at industrial and main road sites appeared to be older litter, rather than recent deposits. This underscores the importance of site cleaning between surveys to allow for a more accurate representation of newly deposited litter, particularly when evaluating policy impacts such as the CRS.

Litter Linked to Nearby Businesses: Behavioural and Compliance Opportunities
Survey findings consistently highlighted certain litter types—such as cigarette butts, ATM receipts, food wrappers, and packaging tape—as being closely associated with nearby business activities and workers. These items were particularly common in industrial and retail settings, often in the absence of appropriate waste infrastructure (e.g. cigarette butt bins or ATM receipt disposal units). There is a clear opportunity for targeted interventions at these sites through both compliance and behaviour change approaches. Strategies could include localised enforcement of littering laws, the provision of purpose-built bins (such as wall-mounted ashtrays), and business-to-business engagement encouraging commercial tenants to take shared responsibility for surrounding verges and public areas.

Continued Application of the AusLM Framework
This year's survey reaffirms the flexibility and robustness of the AusLM framework in tracking litter

trends over time. By incorporating Tasmanian policy definitions (e.g. revised SUP categories), the analysis better aligns with local reporting needs and supports the development of targeted litter reduction strategies.

Annual Comparison: 2023-24 vs 2024-25

The 2024–25 reporting period represents the second complete year of litter monitoring using the Australian Litter Measure (AusLM) methodology across 24 sites in four local government areas in Tasmania. This chapter presents a comparison between the 2023–24 and 2024–25 survey results, examining changes in total item counts, litter volume, site type performance, and key items of interest—namely beverage containers and single-use plastics.

Early evidence from the 2024–25 reporting period suggests several emerging trends. These include an initial reduction in beverage container litter following the implementation of Tasmania's Recycle Rewards Container Refund Scheme (CRS), a decline in the overall litter volume, and a notable decrease in single-use plastics, and potentially linked to increased awareness of Tasmania's intention to phase out single-use plastic.

There was a substantial reduction in both the number and volume of litter observed in 2024–25 compared to the previous year. Total item count decreased by one-third, and total litter volume halved (Table 8). While some variability is likely due to seasonal conditions or visibility (e.g. long grass), the consistency of reductions across multiple locations and litter types suggests early signs of positive behavioural shifts. This change may be influenced by heightened public awareness, early voluntary compliance with incoming regulation (e.g. the CRS), or a reduction in waste generation in certain environments.

Table 8: Comparison of Overall Litter Metrics (2023–24 vs 2024–25)

Metric	2023–24	2024–25	% Change YoY
Total Area Surveyed (m^2)	45,999	45,999	—
Total Litter Items (count)	7,275	4,859	↓ 33%
Items / 1,000 m^2	158.16	105.63	↓ 33%
Total Volume (L)	1,245	623.2	↓ 50%
Volume / 1,000 m^2 (L)	27.08	13.55	↓ 50%

Composition of Litter

By Material Type

Despite overall reductions in volume and item counts, the proportional composition of litter remained relatively stable. Plastic continued to dominate item counts (42.7% in 2024–25), followed by paper & card (18.0%) and cigarette butts (15.0%) (Table 9).

Some subtle shifts were observed:

- Metal increased from 9.4% to 12.8% of items, reflecting its persistent presence — particularly drink cans — along main roads and industrial sites.
- Paper & card items also increased slightly, due to the prevalence of takeaway containers and packaging, particularly in parks and retail spaces.
- Polystyrene and glass decreased in both volume and proportion, which may indicate improved collection practices or a reduction in bulky illegal dumping events.

Table 9: Comparison of Litter Composition by Material Type

Material Category	% of Total (2023–24)	% of Total (2024–25)	% Change
Plastic	45.26%	42.7%	↓ 2.6%
Paper & Card	16.66%	18.0%	↑ 1.3%
Cigarette Butts	14.38%	15.0%	↑ 0.6%
Metal	9.39%	12.8%	↑ 3.4%
Other Materials[3]	6.25%	4.6%	↓ 1.6%
Polystyrene	2.80%	1.9%	↓ 0.9%
Cloth	1.54%	1.9%	↑ 0.4%
Rubber	1.14%	1.6%	↑ 0.5%
Glass	2.58%	1.5%	↓ 1.1%

By Volume

In both 2023–24 and 2024–25, bulky items such as takeaway food containers, cardboard packaging, and metal drink containers consistently contributed substantially to overall litter volumes. However, the total volume of each material type saw a notable decline in 2024–25, reflecting the broader trend of reduced litter across all categories.

As detailed in Table 10, plastic continues to represent the largest proportion of litter volume—accounting for just over 40% in both years—primarily due to single-use cups and large beverage containers. Paper and card materials, mainly takeaway containers and packaging boxes, make up the second-largest share.

Metal litter decreased by more than 30%, yet metal drink containers, especially alcohol and soft drink cans, remain prevalent along main roads. The most pronounced reductions were seen in polystyrene and rubber items, which likely reflect fewer bulky illegal dumping incidents and improved waste control in industrial areas.

Table 10: Total Litter Volume by Material Category (2023–24 vs 2024–25)

Material Category	Total Volume (L) – 2023–24	% of Total Volume – 2023–24	Total Volume (L) – 2024–25	% of Total Volume – 2024–25	Volume Change %
Plastic	509	40.9%	252	40.5%	↓ 50.5%
Paper & Card	266	21.4%	145	23.2%	↓ 45.5%
Metal	170	13.6%	115	18.5%	↓ 32.4%
Polystyrene	112	9.0%	37	5.9%	↓ 67.0%
Cloth	44	3.5%	32	5.1%	↓ 27.3%
Rubber	64	5.1%	4	0.7%	↓ 93.8%

[3] A defined category under AusLM. Includes construction materials, vehicle parts, and wet wipes.

Material Category	Total Volume (L) – 2023–24	% of Total Volume – 2023–24	Total Volume (L) – 2024–25	% of Total Volume – 2024–25	Volume Change %
Glass	22	1.8%	13	2.1%	↓ 40.9%
Other Materials	59	4.7%	25	4.1%	↓ 57.6%
Total	**1,246**	**100%**	**623**	**100%**	

Litter by Site Type

While all site types saw reductions in total litter, the relative ranking remained the same. Main roads continued to account for the largest number and volume of items, followed by industrial and retail sites. Beaches consistently recorded the lowest litter levels across both years (Table 11).

The greatest percentage reductions occurred at:

- ↓ Industrial sites (↓ 44%) — possibly due to isolated site-specific clean-ups or changes in business waste behaviours.
- ↓ Beaches (↓ 47%) — though litter counts were already low, the drop may reflect increased community engagement or environmental group clean-ups.

Despite these positive trends, the proportional share of litter from main roads continues to be significant, indicating that roadside littering remains entrenched. This continues to justify targeted education and enforcement along road corridors.

Table 11: Proportion of Total Litter Items by Site Type

Site Type	Total Items (2023–24)	Total Items (2024–25)	Change (%)
Main Road	2,950	2,208	↓ 25%
Industrial	1,848	1,032	↓ 44%
Retail	1,302	832	↓ 36%
Beach	118	63	↓ 47%
Park	364	305	↓ 16%
Residential	693	419	↓ 40%

Key Categories: Beverage Containers and Single-Use Plastics

Beverage Containers

Tasmania's Recycle Rewards scheme formally commenced on 1 May 2025, between the two surveys. While it is premature to attribute effects directly to the scheme, a 30% reduction in CRS-eligible containers was recorded between 2023–24 and 2024–25 (607 down to 426 items) (Table 12).

This suggests:

- Some pre-implementation behavioural change (e.g. stockpiling or pre-sorting), and
- Increased public awareness and communications.

Table 12: Comparison of Beverage Container Litter (Items and Volume)

Metric	2023–24	2024–25	% Change
Total Items – CRS Eligible	607	426	↓ 30%

Interestingly, Table 13 notes glass and metal container counts dropped notably (glass beer ↓ 49%, metal beer ↓ 54%), while some product categories (e.g. premixed drinks, flavoured milk, and soft drinks in plastic) showed either smaller decreases or even increases — reflecting consumption or disposal differences across site types.

Further monitoring in 2025–26 will be critical to verifying whether the observed reductions are sustained and attributable to the CRS rollout.

Table 13: Change in Beverage Container Composition

Material	Beverage Type	Size	2023-24	2024-25	% Change	CRS eligible?
Glass	Beer	150 - 499 ml	38	20	↓ 47%	Y
		500 - 999 ml	1	0	↓100%	Y
	Cider	150 - 499 ml	1	2	↑100%	Y
	Premixed	150 - 499 ml	0	7	↑ New	Y
		500 - 999 ml	1	0	↓100%	Y
	Spirit	150 - 499 ml	1	0	↓100%	N
		500 - 999 ml	2	1	↓ 50%	N
	Wine	150 - 499 ml	0	1	↑100%	N
Metal	Beer	150 - 499 ml	131	60	↓ 54%	Y
	Premixed	150 - 499 ml	95	77	↓ 19%	Y
		500 - 999 ml	1	3	↑ 200%	Y
	Soft Dr/FW/FJD/SpD/ EnD	150 - 499 ml	141	100	↓ 29%	Y
		500 - 999 ml	19	5	↓ 74%	Y
	Cider/Fruit Based	150 - 499 ml	0	20	↑ New	Y
Paper & Card	Flavoured Milk	150 - 499 ml	12	10	↓ 17%	Y
		500 – 999 ml	1	0	↓ 100%	Y

Material	Beverage Type	Size	2023-24	2024-25	% Change	CRS eligible?
	Fruit/Vegetable Juice	150 - 499 ml	2	7	↑ 250%	Y
	White Milk	500 – 999 ml	1	0	↓ 100%	N
		1000 - 3000 ml	3	1	↓ 67%	N
Plastic	Flavoured Milk	150 - 499 ml	12	4	↓ 67%	Y
		500 - 999 ml	21	21	-	Y
		1000 - 3000 ml	0	2	↑ New	Y
	Fruit/Vegetable Juice	150 - 499 ml	5	7	↑ 40%	Y
		500 – 999 ml	2	0	↓ 100%	Y
		1000 - 3000 ml	2	2	-	Y
	Soft Dr/FW/FJD/SpD/EnD	150 - 499 ml	20	22	↑ 10%	Y
		500 - 999 ml	31	30	↓ 3%	Y
		1000 - 3000 ml	20	8	↓ 60%	Y
	Water	150 - 499 ml	4	6	↑ 50%	Y
		500 - 999 ml	44	11	↓ 75%	Y
		1000 - 3000 ml	3	2	↓ 33%	Y
	White Milk	500 - 999 ml	0	1	↑ 100%	N
		1000 - 3000 ml	4	7	↑ 75%	N
	Wine Bladder	1000 – 3000 ml	2	0	↓ 100%	N
Grand Total			620	437	↓ 30%	
Total of Items Eligible for CRS			607	426	↓ 30%	

Single-Use Plastics

Single-use plastics saw a 24% decrease in item counts and a 37% drop in volume, compared to 2023–24. Interestingly, single-use plastics share of total litter increased from 4.6% to 5.2% (Table 14).

The overall drop aligns with the Tasmanian Government's approach to banning single-use plastics, even though full implementation is not due until the end of 2025. The early reduction may reflect shifts in supply chains (e.g. businesses phasing out banned items), as well as improved disposal behaviour.

Main roads remained the dominant source of single-use plastic items, reinforcing the connection between "on-the-go" consumption and roadside littering.

Table 14: Comparison of Single-Use Plastic Litter (Items and Volume)

Metric	2023–24	2024–25	% Change
Total Items	333[4]	253	↓ 24%
Total Volume (L)	58.9	37.2	↓ 37%

[4] This data has been updated to reflect the revised single-use plastic categories used for 2024-25.

Metric	2023–24	2024–25	% Change
% of All Items	4.6%	5.2%	↓

Summary Observations

The comparison of 2023–24 and 2024–25 data reveals several encouraging patterns:

Litter volumes and item counts have declined significantly, with no evidence of a compensatory increase in any material stream.

This reduction suggests that overall litter in the environment is genuinely decreasing rather than being displaced into less visible or other waste categories. Ongoing monitoring is critical to ensure these trends continue and to identify any emerging shifts in litter composition or hotspots. It also highlights the effectiveness of current waste management and public awareness initiatives, though vigilance is needed to prevent potential rebound effects or new problem materials emerging.

Key initiatives — including the CRS and Plastics Reduction Plan — appear to be contributing to early behaviour changes, though more data is needed to confirm causal links.

Preliminary observations indicate that these policy measures are encouraging consumers and businesses to reduce single-use plastics and increase recycling rates. However, to robustly attribute behaviour changes to these initiatives, more comprehensive and longitudinal data collection is required. This would involve integrating behavioural surveys, waste audits, and market data analysis to track changes over time and across different regions and demographics.

Main roads continue to require focused attention, particularly regarding infrastructure, enforcement, and public messaging.

This includes the strategic placement and maintenance of bins to reduce littering and promote responsible disposal behaviour. Consistent and visible enforcement of regulations along these routes is essential to deter non-compliant behaviours such as illegal dumping or improper waste disposal. Additionally, tailored and frequent messaging campaigns should be deployed to raise awareness among motorists and pedestrians about the environmental and community impacts of littering, encouraging a collective sense of responsibility. Collaboration with local councils, transport authorities, and community groups can further enhance these efforts by ensuring that interventions are context-specific and sustained over time.

Beverage container management shows early promise and may deliver stronger results in 2025–26 once the CRS is well-established.

The introduction of the CRS has already increased the return rates of eligible containers, reducing litter and improving recycling outcomes. As the scheme matures and consumer participation grows, we expect to see more substantial environmental benefits. Continued support through targeted education campaigns and system optimisations will be essential to maintain momentum and achieve long-term sustainability targets.

Future surveys will be critical to validating these trends, informing continuous policy refinement, and identifying high-impact intervention points for sustained litter reduction across Tasmania.

Looking Ahead

As Tasmania enters a new phase of litter prevention, with both the CRS and Plastics Reduction Plan actively being implemented, the next 12–24 months will be critical in assessing the real-world impacts of these initiatives. Future surveys will be instrumental in:

- Tracking CRS performance across regions and site types,
- Assessing compliance with plastic bans, and
- Informing behavioural interventions and infrastructure planning to reduce litter escape, particularly from transport corridors.

Coordinated efforts between government, industry, and community will be essential to achieving lasting reductions in litter and protecting Tasmania's natural environment.