

Media Release

7 May 2026

New beach bin approach reduces dumping and increases public education

Cockburn's beach bins and the City of Cockburn staff who empty them are not just about removing rubbish from the environment – they provide curious beachgoers with opportunities for spontaneous learning.

The City once provided up to 40 bins along the Cockburn coast during summer, but these have gradually reduced to about 13 between the Omeo shipwreck in North Coogee and Ammo Jetty at Woodman Point.

Data and anecdotal evidence show the new approach is helping reduce waste and encouraging people to think about the rubbish they create, and how to dispose of it responsibly themselves, instead of relying solely on bins.

Between November 2025 and April 2026, about four tonnes of rubbish was collected from Cockburn's beach bins, with the bins emptied more than 70 times.

City of Cockburn Community Waste Education Officer Laura Hutchinson said new bin stickers displaying photos taken at Coogee Beach of piles of rubbish left behind by beachgoers, were having an impact.

"The stickers carry a message reminding people that the beach is not a landfill site, and the stats show that less rubbish is being left next to full bins," Ms Hutchinson said.

"I also note there are more incidences of community-collected beach litter in the bins, and often less random litter on the beach on a 'normal' day compared to the summer of 2024-25.

"Some of this may be attributed to fine-tuning of the scheduling of the servicing days. As always there are exceptions for large ticket items like broken shelters and chairs, especially on particularly busy beach days, but these incidences were far less in 2025-26 than last year."

Ms Hutchinson said she often chatted with people while emptying the bins.

"Off-hand messaging from community members who were walking past me was often "you need more/bigger bins," she said.

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“This provides a natural catalyst to have a chat on the spot about the new educational approach determining the number and strategic locations of the bins.

“We talk about the beach bin program, the environmental impact, behaviour change in humans, and litter and recycling in general.

“Specific beach related litter conversation can be around intentional littering, 'accidental' like tissues and packaging caught by the wind, and storm or weather related when items wash up.

“I carry a few waste related 'prizes'. Like reusable calico bags and coffee cups, to reward individuals I see picking up litter which I see on a regular basis.”

During busy periods like school holidays/swim programs, Christmas, New Year, Australia Day, large events like Coogee Live and during particularly good weather, the bins are emptied every day.

“That’s when we often find the most waste next to the bins but I also find the most amount of engagement, as I am clearly visible in my task and people stop to talk,” she said.

“It’s thanks to the efforts of many that we have such a lovely stretch of coast in Cockburn. This year I have engaged with multiple families, children, and retirees who all perform a litter pickup almost every time they visit.”

Ms Hutchinson is largely responsible for coordinating the removal of beach bin waste between two and seven days a week, depending on location and seasonal busyness.

This summer she removed more than 230kg of litter herself, and across the last two years recovered 57 and 85 bags of recyclable containers respectively.

“A total of more than 700 kg was taken to Containers for Change with the cash raised donated to local charities,” she said.

“Beachgoers often express thanks for my work and an understanding that litter is everyone’s responsibility, not just the bins and those employed to empty them.”

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