City of Cockburn

wetlands to waves

Coastal Litter Management Plan
2026–2031



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Acknowledgement of country

The City of Cockburn acknowledges the Nyungar people of Beeliar Boodjar. Long ago, now and in the future, they care for Country.

We acknowledge a continuing connection to Land, Waters and Culture and pay our respects to Elders, past and present.

Executive summary

The City of Cockburn's Coastal Litter Management Plan (CLMP) 2026–2031 establishes a coordinated framework for reducing, managing and preventing litter across the City's coastal areas. Developed in direct response to community concern, the CLMP aligns with the Western Australian Government's Beyond WAste 2030 strategy and the City's Strategic Community Plan 2025–2035.

Structured around three strategic objectives: Prevention, Compliance and Engagement, the CLMP delivers a comprehensive Action Plan encompassing infrastructure, education and engagement programs, compliance measures and scheduled services. New initiatives include targeted educational campaigns addressing key litter sources and the investigation and trial of smart litter reduction technology along the Cockburn coastline.

State and local data confirm that coastal litter remains a persistent challenge, with fishing and boating activity identified as the single largest source of marine debris in Cockburn Sound, accounting for 34% of collected items (Davies et al., 2022). The CLMP addresses these and other identified sources through evidence-based actions and measurable outcomes.

Progress will be measured against established key performance indicators, reported annually and subject to review biennially. This plan represents the City’s aspirations for coastal litter management, however, the required staffing is not currently endorsed under the Workforce Plan. It relies on the appointment of a full-time Waste Education Program Officer who would drive the improvements identified in the Climate Change Strategy and Waste Strategy.



Introduction

The City of Cockburn (the City) is committed to sustainability, waste reduction, and the protection of its unique natural environment. The 15km stretch of coastline managed by the City extends from C.Y. O'Connor Beach to Jervoise Bay and is comprised of vital natural habitats, recreational spaces and tourism assets. With the population projected to grow from 135,000 to 190,000 by 2045, coastal areas face increasing litter pressure driven by public misuse, inadequate waste infrastructure, and marine debris.

Littering refers to the improper disposal of waste on land or in water, whether intentionally or accidentally (*Litter Act 1979*). Litter has considerable environmental, social, and economic consequences, including harm to wildlife, diminished public amenity, loss of resource recovery, and long-term damage to coastal ecosystems. The community has raised numerous concerns regarding litter on Cockburn beaches, foreshore areas, and coastal parks.

In line with its sustainability commitments, and in response to community concern, the City engaged and consulted with stakeholders including community groups, businesses and residents to develop this Coastal Litter Management Plan 2026-2031 (CLMP). This plan provides a coordinated approach to reducing, managing, and preventing coastal litter within the City, addressing litter sources, data collection, management strategies, community involvement and education.



Figure 1: Cockburn coastline.

Strategic context

Litter management sits within a broader policy agenda spanning international, national, state and local levels of government. From the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals through to the Western Australian Government's Beyond WAste 2030 and the City's own Strategic Community Plan 2025–2035, there is a clear and consistent direction: reduce waste, protect the environment and build cleaner, more liveable communities. This CLMP forms part of the City of Cockburn's contribution to that agenda, delivering on these shared commitments on our beaches, foreshores and coastal reserves.

Definitions and legislation

Addressing litter in Cockburn's coastal areas is supported by a clear legislative framework that defines what constitutes litter, establishes clear penalties, and empowers a range of agencies to act.

The *Litter Act 1979* defines litter as —

> (a) all kinds of rubbish, refuse, junk, garbage or scrap; and
>
> (b) any articles or material abandoned or unwanted by the owner or the person in possession thereof, but does not include dust, smoke or other like products emitted or produced during the normal operations of any mining, extractive, primary or manufacturing industry.

The Act further provides that litter is deposited where it is —

> allowed to fall there or be carried there by the action of wind or water, or both.

The *Litter Act 1979* empowers the Keep Australia Beautiful Council WA (KABC), local government, police and authorised officers to take action against those who litter, either through on-the-spot fines or reports submitted to KABC. Established under the *Litter Act 1979*, KABC is the authority responsible for litter prevention, education and enforcement in Western Australia. Penalties range from $200 for general littering to $500 where a public risk is created e.g. batteries, hazardous chemicals, broken glass or syringes, with maximum court penalties of $5,000 for individuals and $10,000 for corporations. KABC may also issue infringements in response to reports submitted by registered community litter reporters.

The City's Rangers are authorised to issue infringements under both the *Litter Act 1979* and the City of Cockburn (Local Government Act) Local Law 2000 (Local Law).

Under the Local Law —

> 3.3 A person shall not on a reserve, foreshore or beach:

(q) break or permit to be broken any glass, metal, bottle or utensil or deposit or leave any rubbish, refuse, bottle, can, tin, paper, broken glass, china or litter of any kind other than in receptacles provided for that purpose.

The Local Law also contains specific provisions for construction litter, with the City's Enforcement Officers authorised to issue infringements for non-compliance.

Purpose

This CLMP aims to reduce litter in the City-managed coastal areas of Cockburn, enhance the quality of the City's coastal environments, and promote responsible waste management behaviours among residents and visitors. The Cockburn ‘coastal area’ boundary applicable to this CLMP is shown in Figure 2.

Objectives

1. Prevention

- Reduce the volume of litter entering coastal environments and its detrimental impact on ecosystems.
- Support circular economy principles through waste diversion.

2. Compliance

- Improve current litter management and enforcement practices.
- Comply with relevant legislation and environmental standards.

3. Engagement

- Improve community awareness about what constitutes litter and the negative impacts it has on the environment.
- Address behavioural change in litter prevention and reduction strategies.

Scope

This CLMP applies to all coastal areas within the City's administrative boundaries, encompassing beaches, foreshore reserves, coastal parks and recreational areas (Figure 2). It does not extend to inland waterways or private land.



Figure 2: Aerial map of Coastal Area Boundary relevant to this CLMP.

Litter Management

Managing litter in coastal environments presents a unique set of challenges for Local Governments and communities. Coastal areas are heavily used public spaces that attract a diverse range of activities, including tourism, recreation, and events. These environments are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of litter due to their proximity to marine ecosystems and the high volume of visitors, especially during peak seasons. Wind and water movement can quickly transport waste from land into the ocean, where it can cause long-term environmental damage, including harm to marine life and degradation of natural habitats.

Public littering in coastal areas is often difficult to monitor and control with transient users, limited infrastructure in remote locations, and varying levels of public awareness contributing to the problem. In addition, the visual and environmental impacts of litter can undermine community pride, reduce public amenity, and increase the cost and complexity of waste management operations.

Current data

Western Australia has made significant progress in reducing litter over the past decade. The Litter Prevention Strategy for Western Australia 2020–2025 successfully met its overarching goal of reducing litter by 30% on 2019 levels and has since been superseded.

Litter prevention objectives are now incorporated into Beyond WAste 2030, which replaces the standalone litter strategy and sets an amended goal of a further 20% reduction by 2030, recognising that while significant gains have been achieved, persistent challenges remain.

The 2020 introduction of Containers for Change has been particularly effective, with a reduction in beverage container litter since 2022. WA's Plan for Plastics has also delivered measurable results, with materials subject to regulation falling from 11.5% of the overall volume of litter in 2022 to 9.90% in 2024–25 (Beyond WAste 2030 Roadmap, WA Government 2025).

University of Notre Dame researcher and lecturer, Linda Davies, oversees a local citizen science program that targets and monitors marine debris in collaboration with community members. The City has supported this initiative through the installation of the iconic ‘Seahorse Bin’ marine debris collection sculpture at Jervoise Bay and by engaging community volunteers in marine debris monitoring/surveying (Figure 3).

Litter levels in Western Australia are now monitored using the Australian Litter Measure (AusLM), a standardised national methodology, replacing the former National Litter Index in 2022. Quarterly surveys will be undertaken by the City in line with the methodologies outlined by the Australian Litter Measure. The changes in coastal litter type and volume will be monitored to inform the progress of this CLMP and provide opportunities for its adaptation.

Key Litter Sources, Types and Impacts

Marine debris, defined as persistent solid material discarded or abandoned in the marine and coastal environment, represents a significant component of litter on Cockburn's coastline. Fishing and boating activity was identified as the single largest identifiable litter source in Cockburn Sound, accounting for 34% of collected items (Davies et al., 2022).



Figure 3: Seahorse sculpture at Jervoise Bay. Photo credit: Dr. Linda Davies.

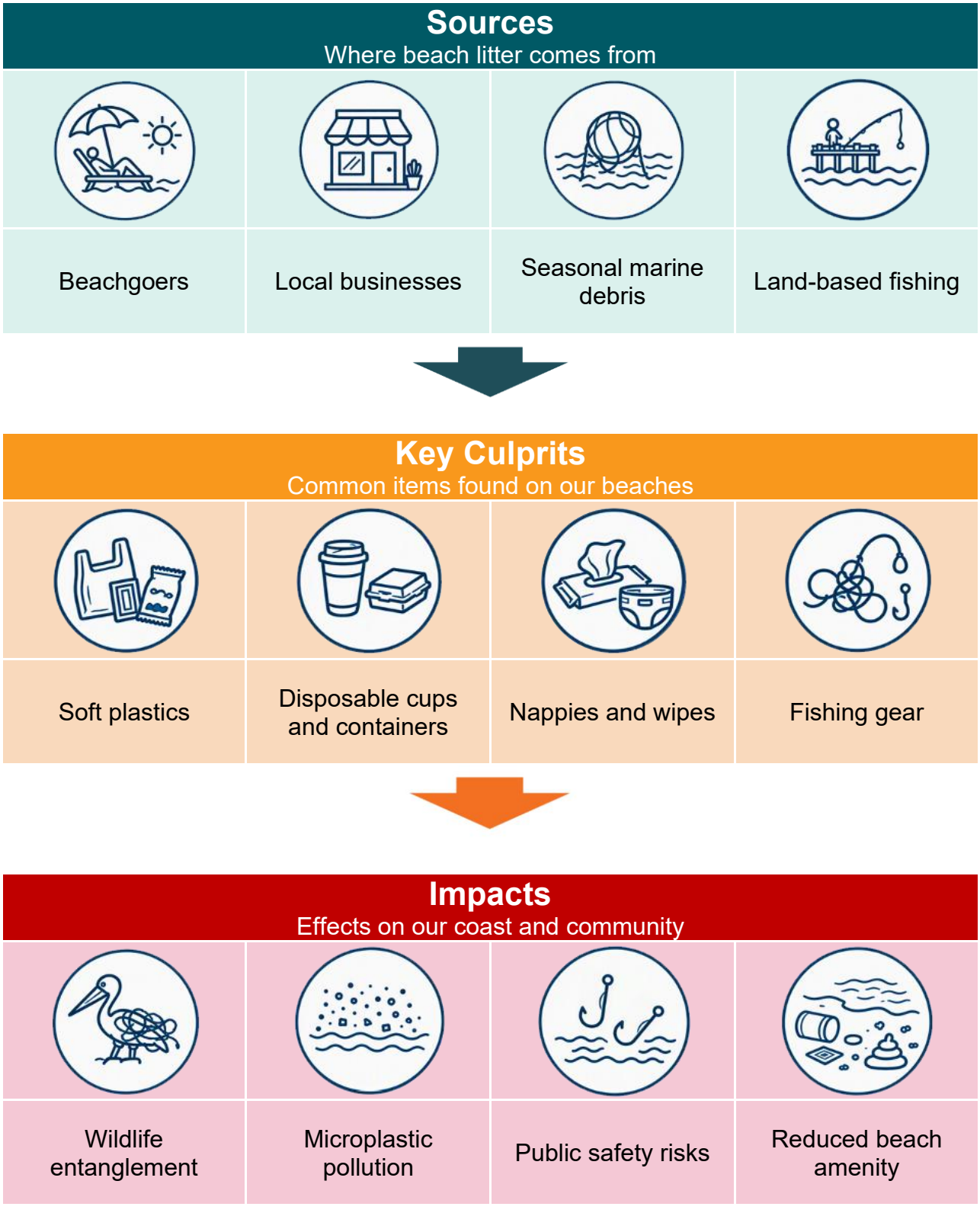


Figure 4: Causal pathway linking major sources of coastal litter to key litter categories and associated impacts.

Progress to date

The City is currently undertaking numerous litter prevention measures that include infrastructure, education, and policy, as listed in Table 1.



Figure 5: Community Waste Education Officer assesses beach bin contents.


Figure 6: Seabin at the Port Coogee Marina.

Action plan

Table 1: Action Plan for Coastal Litter Management

Initiative and Description	Responsible Person/s	Objective	Status	Measure of Success	KPIs
LITTER PREVENTION (INFRASTRUCTURE)					
Public Bins - Servicing of coastal bins, including carparks and reserves - Additional bins / collections during peak seasons - Delivery and servicing of event bins	Service Lead - Waste Collection	**1/2**	**Ongoing**	• Coastal bins are clean, accessible and serviced to meet demand • Overflow incidents are minimised at coastal sites and events	• All bins emptied to meet demand
Waste sorting stations - Facilitate waste sorting stations at all major City events. Provide reusable serve-ware for vendors and divert food waste from landfill.	Events Coordinator, Go2Cup	**1/2/3**	**Ongoing**	• Prevent waste to landfill including food waste. • Reusable containers utilised by all event vendors.	• Design and conduct a survey to determine if the community, including vendors and patrons, are more waste informed post-event.
Signage - Informational, educational and regulatory signage installed along the coast	Service Lead -Parks Service Lead - Sustainability and Climate Change	**1/2/3**	**Ongoing**	• Audit of coastal signage completed • Targeted signage installed and maintained at identified locations	• Reduction in wildlife entanglements and litter recorded at monitored coastal sites (using anecdotal evidence)
Pollution Traps - Continue to maintain drains containing pollution traps	Engineering Services	**1**	**Ongoing**	• Maintenance of pollution traps • Containment of litter in traps	• No spillover or overflowing pollution traps

Initiative and Description	Responsible Person/s	Objective	Status	Measure of Success	KPIs
Beach Bins - Installation of 13 general waste bins on Coogee Beach, during the peak season (Nov-Apr) - Servicing of bins regularly (3-7 times per week) based on peak periods (e.g. public holidays) - Collection of litter along the beach bin circuit and record data - Provide ad hoc face-to-face education to beachgoers	Service Lead - Waste Collection Community Waste Education Officer	1	Ongoing	• Bins installed • Bins emptied and not overflowing • Litter collected • Community engaged with	• Reduction of beach litter each year (based on data collected) • Increased public awareness on litter and waste management
Seabin Project - Continued use and maintenance of Seabin at Port Coogee Marina	Port Coogee Marina	1/3	Ongoing	• Removal of marine debris from waterways • Seabin operational and maintained	• Data collected and incorporated into CLMP reporting and monitoring
Containers for Change - Monitor various community container exchange points along the coastline and report any changes in community behaviour	Waste Education Program Officer	1/2	Ongoing	• Exchange points monitored	• Reduced number of containers in general waste bins • Reduced container litter in the area • Low contamination in exchange points
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (EDUCATION)					
Keep Australia Beautiful Council - Provide education and resources for community clean-up events for the City to distribute	KABC, Waste Education Program Officer	1/3	Ongoing	• Resources provided	• Increase in community participation at clean-up events
Volunteer Litter Collection - Seek opportunities to partner with not-for-profits which support volunteer litter collection and coastal waste education	Waste Education Program Officer	1/3	Ongoing Contract to FY 28/29	• Contract agreed and signed	• Delivery of 20hrs on-ground/in-class marine and coastal activities • Engage 300 students • Delivery of a microplastics specific workshop
Plastic Free July (PFJ) - Participate and promote in Plastic Free July (PFJ)	Waste Education Program Officer	1/3	Ongoing	• Delivery of PFJ workshops	• Increase in participation from previous years

Initiative and Description	Responsible Person/s	Objective	Status	Measure of Success	KPIs
Take 3 for the Sea Campaign - Install a photo trail in conjunction with the Coogee Maritime Trail Volunteers	Waste Education Program Officer, CMT Volunteers	1/3	New	• Campaign promoted by the City during workshops and events • Photo trail/competition installed	• Increase in social media engagement by the community during the photo trail campaign • Community engagement with Education Officers and CMT Volunteers • Reduction in beach litter
Pick Up Pet Poo Campaign - Promote responsible disposal of pet waste	Waste Education Program Officer	1/3	Ongoing	• Promotion of campaign at events	• Reduction of pet waste in coastal areas and reserves
Coastal Café Campaign - Engage and educate local coastal cafes - Trial waste-free programs and initiatives e.g. circular cup system	Waste Education Program Officer	1/3	New	• Cafes educated • Trial of circular cup system	• Conversion of local cafes to 'zero waste' coastal cafes • Reduction of single use cafe waste in beach bins
Fishing Litter Campaign - Promote responsible fishing practises - Target sources of fishing-related litter and the negative impacts on wildlife - Investigate installing additional signage in no-fishing zones - Investigate educational tours of the sea-bin and opportunities to showcase the data to penholders	Waste Education Program Officer	1/2/3	New	• Campaign rollout • Signage installed • Educational tours conducted	• Decrease in illegal fishing in Cockburn, measured by Ranger/CoSafe reports • Increase in infringements issued • Decrease in injured wildlife (anecdotal evidence) or call outs to WA Marine Bird Rescue • Decrease in litter found within the marina environment
WasteSorted Schools - Support and promote Waste Sorted Schools program in providing resources and education for schools	Waste Education Program Officer	1/3	Ongoing	• Registration of schools with WasteSorted	• Increase in school participation of programs • Increase of schools with a WasteSorted accreditation
Big Emu Bob – Litter Picking Program - Participate in Big Emu Bob community litter-picking and behaviour change program across Cockburn's coastal areas	Waste Education Program Officer	1/3	New	• Big Emu Bob program delivered	• Increase in community-led litter picking events • Community behavioural change around littering, measured through community surveys
Incursions/Excursions - Devise and deliver waste related programs to schools	Waste Education Program Officer	3	Ongoing	• Programs delivered to schools	• Increase in school interest and registration of education programs

Initiative and Description	Responsible Person/s	Objective	Status	Measure of Success	KPIs
Workshops - Deliver waste reduction and sustainable living workshops to the community e.g. clothing swaps, beeswax wraps, repair workshops.	Waste Education Program Officer	3	Ongoing	• Workshops delivered	• Increased community participation of sustainable living workshops • Positive community feedback measured through surveys
Events - Deliver events with waste and sustainability themes and messaging, e.g. Ocean and Earth Festival, Nature Discovery Day - Host and encourage clean-up events including Clean Up Australia Day	Environmental Education Officer, Waste Education Program Officer	1/3	Ongoing	• Events created and delivered	• Increase in requests for Sustainability and Environment presence/programs at events • Increase in community-initiated clean-up events
Social Media Campaign - Roll out social media campaign to highlight the impacts of littering along the coastline	Communications Officer, Waste Education Program Officer	3	Ongoing	• Use of social media to educate and inform the community of coastal litter challenges	• Increased engagement with posts • Increase in community reach
Sustainability Grants for coastal litter projects - Provide funding opportunities to the community via the following: Sustainability Grants, Environmental Education Grants and Community Grants	Grants Coordinator, Sustainability and Water Projects Officer	1/3	Ongoing	• Grants approved and allocated	• Support community projects delivering coastal litter outcomes through existing funding programs, based on merit and community/environmental benefit.
COMPLIANCE (POLICY)					
Wastewise Events Policy - Continue to apply policy to all events held in Cockburn, run by the City or external parties	Waste Education Program Officer	1/2	Ongoing	• Enforcement and promotion of policy	• 100% of City run events comply with the Wastewise Events Policy • Decrease in litter from community events in coastal areas
Community Funding for Community Organisations & Individuals (Grants, Donations & Sponsorships) Policy - Promotion of grants to coastal environment groups	Grants Coordinator	1/2/3	Ongoing	• Funds allocated and distributed to community initiatives that support coastal litter reduction, education and stewardship • Funds acquitted	• Increase in funded projects that deliver coastal litter outcomes

Initiative and Description	Responsible Person/s	Objective	Status	Measure of Success	KPIs
Climate Change Strategy 2020-2030 - **Smart City Innovation:** Investigate and implement smart technology solutions to reduce litter and microplastics on the Cockburn coastline	Sustainability and Climate Change Officer	**1/2**	**New**	• Feasibility study completed • Smart litter reduction technology trialled on Cockburn coastline	• Uptake and roll out of smart technology Initiatives along the coast and beaches
Waste Strategy 2020-2030 (5-Year Review) - **Objective 1: Waste Reduction and Education Programs** Deliver research-based behaviour change programs addressing coastal and marine litter through school programs, community events and Council facilities - **Objective 3: Pollution Management** Address litter in the City's coastal areas through targeted programs and a dedicated management approach	Waste Education Program Officer	**1/2/3**	**New**	• Explore latest behaviour change research • Education programs delivered	• Deliver education programs based on proven behaviour change models • Reduction in litter at monitored coastal sites
Litter Infringements - City Rangers to issue infringement notices under the *Litter Act 1979* and Local Law 2000 - Building Compliance Officers to infringe on construction site non-compliance in coastal areas (e.g. open skip bins) - Investigate current challenges and opportunities for improving success of infringements and other methods for deterring littering.	City Rangers, Building Compliance Officers, Waste Education Program Officer	**2/3**	**Ongoing**	• Infringement notices issued • Increase in Ranger patrols along the coast • Investigation completed	• Reduction in litter at monitored coastal sites • Increased number of infringements issued
SCHEDULED SERVICES / DATA COLLECTION					
Manual Litter Collection - Coastal litter collection in dunes and parks during the peak season (August-April)	Service Lead - Parks, Environmental Supervisor	**1**	**Ongoing**	• Undertake litter collections twice a week	• Reduction in litter at monitored coastal sites

Initiative and Description	Responsible Person/s	Objective	Status	Measure of Success	KPIs
Litter Surveys - Conduct litter transect surveys along four sections of the City's coast on a quarterly basis, as per AusLM methodology	Community Waste Education Officer	1	New	• Complete surveys	• Establishment of litter baseline and ongoing litter trends
Nu-Trac Beach Cleaning - Removal of seaweed and litter debris from the beach via mechanical means during the peak season (August-April)	Service Lead - Parks, External Contractor	1	Ongoing	• Coogee Beach cleaned twice a week	• Reduction in litter at monitored coastal sites

Key Responsibilities

Litter prevention and management across the City's coastal areas is a shared responsibility, undertaken collaboratively across multiple City teams, as outlined in the table below.

Table 2: Key Responsibilities of internal City departments.

Department	Key Responsibilities
Waste Services	- Collection and disposal of waste - Illegal dumping - Provision, installation and maintenance of bin infrastructure
Sustainability and Climate Change	- Education and strategic oversight - Beach bin program and education - Data collection
Port Coogee Marina	- Managing responsible waste disposal among boat owners - Illegal dumping into local (marina) waterways - Seabin
Building Services	- Building permits - Compliance and infringements of construction sites
Rangers	- Compliance and infringements - Routine patrols
Parks and Environment	- Litter management at parks and natural areas - Mechanical beach cleaning
Customer Experience	- First point of contact for public enquiries and complaints
Engineering Services	- Management of pollution traps

Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships

Successful implementation of this CLMP requires collaboration across government, community and industry. The stakeholders listed below are integral to delivering the actions within this plan, raising awareness and driving lasting behavioural change in coastal litter prevention.

Table 3: List of current stakeholders.

Stakeholder Group	Organisation/Group
State Government	Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER)
	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD)
	Keep Australia Beautiful WA (KABWA)
Environmental Organisations	Tangaroa Blue
	Perth NRM
	Sea Shepherd
	WA Wildlife
	WA Seabird Rescue
Non-Government Organisations	Recfishwest
	Notre Dame University (Dr. Linda Davies)
	Coogee Beach Surf Life Saving Club
Community Groups	Woodman Point Regional Park Community Advisory Committee
	Cockburn Sustainability and Environment Reference Group
	Coogee Maritime Trail Volunteers
	Dive clubs: Underwater Explorers Club of WA, Manta, MUD
	Port Coogee Community Association (PCCA)
	Coogee Beach Progress Association (CBPA)
	Save Cockburn Sound
	Coastal volunteer groups including participating schools/public in KABC Adopt-a-Spot programs, Coastcare, Dive for Debris
Businesses	Hospitality businesses and retailers e.g. cafes
	Henderson Industries Group
	Cockburn Power Boat Association
	Jervoise Bay Sailing Club
Visitors and Recreational Users	Tourists
	Recreational fishers
	Marina tenants
	Local residents and ratepayers
	Beachgoers and dog walkers

Resourcing

Successful delivery of this plan requires managing stakeholder engagement, delivery of education programs, and monitoring and reporting. This level of coordination requires a dedicated team member. The Waste Education Program Officer will oversee implementation of the CLMP and drive lasting behavioural change in coastal litter prevention across the City of Cockburn. The City will also pursue State and Federal grant opportunities to support delivery of additional actions within this CLMP.

Monitoring and Review

The implementation of this CLMP will be monitored by responsible officers across all relevant City departments. Progress against KPIs will be collated and reported annually to the Director Sustainable Development and Safety, with the Action Plan updated accordingly. The CLMP will be formally reviewed biennially to assess its effectiveness and ensure it remains responsive to emerging issues and new data. This litter data will be used to inform future education campaigns.



Conclusion

The City of Cockburn's coastline is a significant environmental, recreational and economic asset for the community. As the City continues to grow, the pressure on these coastal areas will intensify, making proactive and coordinated litter management not only desirable but essential. Staff resourcing needs to reflect this increasing need.

This CLMP establishes a framework for addressing coastal litter across the City's beaches, foreshore reserves and coastal parks through to 2031. It draws on state and national policy directions, local data and community consultation to deliver a plan that is evidence-based, practical and measurable. The actions outlined reflect the City's commitment to prevention, compliance and engagement as the three pillars of effective litter management.

The City recognises that lasting change requires more than infrastructure and enforcement. Shifting community attitudes and behaviours toward responsible waste management is a long-term investment, and one that this plan is designed to support through targeted education and meaningful partnerships.

The City of Cockburn is committed to delivering on the actions within this plan, reporting transparently on progress, and refining its approach in response to emerging data and community need. In doing so, the City reaffirms its commitment to protecting and enhancing its unique coastal environment for current and future generations.

References

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