

Establishment of illegal dumping baseline data

Project details:

Duration

EPA Grant: June 2017–July 2018

Cost

\$19,890 plus in-kind contributions

Approaches used

- Analysis of data in RIDonline
- Prevention measures
- Education and awareness

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Illegal dumping hotspots in the Bathurst local government area have been identified with funding from the EPA's *Combatting Illegal Dumping: Clean Up & Prevention Program* and baseline data established

What was the problem?

Illegal dumping was identified as a matter of significant concern to Bathurst Regional Council (BRC). Continued dumping in the regional area had potential to pollute the Macquarie River, negatively impact upon local amenity, compromise community values and was expensive for council to enforce and clean up. Illegal dumping data was collected in the council database, however, this had limited ability to record and compare the waste types and volume of material dumped.

What did we do?

Entered historical incident data into RIDonline

Over 800 illegal dumping incidents, from 2010 to 2018 were extracted from BRC's database. The incidents were filtered and more than 600 were entered into RIDonline.

Analysed illegal dumping data

Seven dumping hotspots were identified, two of which were not previously known as problem sites. Common characteristics of these areas included:

- open areas, easy to access from the city
- areas with a history of dumping (rubbish attracts rubbish)
- low traffic and visibility
- close proximity to the waste management centre.

Mitigation options were then assessed to see what measures might reduce dumping and where to install them. As well as infrastructure, public education was required and surveillance options were considered for hotspots with high activity.

Raised awareness of illegal dumping

The BRC website was updated to include information on how to report illegal dumping using RIDonline. Ten ads were printed in the local newspaper.

Radio ads were used to communicate the impact of illegal dumping and its cost to the community, local businesses and council, while encouraging people to report it. Six posts were published on social media, highlighting the cost of correct disposal versus the cost of a dumping fine and clean-up.

Media releases were later used to promote surveillance cameras and installation of signs and fencing to deter dumping.

Installed prevention measures

Fourteen Report Illegal Dumping (RID) signs were installed along road sides to deter dumping. Two earth mounds, four gates and 50 meters of fencing were installed at dead-end public roads to restrict vehicle access.

Three solar-powered remote surveillance cameras with motion-activated lights were installed at dumping hotspots. Footage was monitored regularly.



Figure 1 Surveillance camera installed in June 2018 at a hotspot to deter dumpers in Bathurst. Credit: Bathurst Regional Council



Figure 2 Image captured in June 2018 by the surveillance camera of a potential dumper in Bathurst. Credit: Bathurst Regional Council

What was the result?

Over 600 incidents of illegal dumping were entered into RIDonline. The data was used to create heat maps of dumping activity which identified seven hotspots that required prevention measures.

Fences and mounds immediately reduced unauthorised vehicle access to vacant land. The overt cameras have been very effective in reducing dumping vehicle activity and anti-social behaviour at some of the hotspots.

What did we learn?

Most people did not know actual disposal costs, instead quoting figures 5-50 times greater than the actual disposal cost at a waste facility. Also, people perceived waste disposal costs as a reason to validate dumping. In response to these misconceptions, a frequently asked questions page was created with correct information about how to do the right thing with household waste.

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