



Eyes On It

The City of Canterbury–Bankstown’s *Eyes On It* anti-dumping campaign reduced dumping incidents by 39% and tripled community reporting.

This effective campaign targeted illegal dumping of household waste on the kerbside, with a high-profile media campaign and on-ground signage including tape, stickers and postcards.

What was the problem?

The *Eyes On It* anti-dumping campaign was developed to combat illegal dumping through education rather than enforcement action. A survey of Canterbury–Bankstown residents found 90% were concerned about illegal dumping and generally wanted a ‘clean and green’ city. Having a clean and green city was also seen to have a positive effect on the city’s health and economy.

What did the council do?

The council created an on-ground campaign designed to turn illegal dumps into anti-dumping billboards. It was based on five steps, namely:

- find every dump in the local government area (LGA)
- identify it as illegal with tape, stickers and postcards
- report it
- leave it for 72 hours to allow the dumper and others to see the message
- after 72 hours, remove it.

This process made it very clear that putting items on the street was wrong and helped change the social norm.

These on-ground activities were supported by a high-profile local media campaign with a reach of 3.5 million people. It included:

- railway and road billboards
- bus backs
- posters in local shopping areas and town centre
- digital screens in libraries and council centres
- rates notices
- council e-news channels
- social media
- local and ethnic newspapers
- translated materials in six languages.

Figure 1 The *Eyes On It* communications campaign

Council used various activities to educate residents that leaving items out without a booked clean-up was illegal.



The council deployed a cross-functional team of

- waste operations staff
- city cleansing and resource recovery staff
- contractors
- the RID squad
- community members

to work in the field across three phases of the campaign (a total of 16 weeks), covering the entire LGA.

The team targeted an area each day, identifying dumps and then applying warning tape and stickers to make clear the dump was illegal. The team also left postcards in nearby letterboxes.

Forty-three per cent of dumps were removed by the dumpers themselves. The council even received apologetic calls from residents who hadn't realised they were dumping illegally.

Figure 2 Illegal dumping was taped and stickered and its location logged



Engaging council staff

The campaign needed many council teams to work together, to do everything from developing collateral to collecting dumped items.

Figure 3 Working as one team
Many teams across the council were engaged and critical to the success of the program.

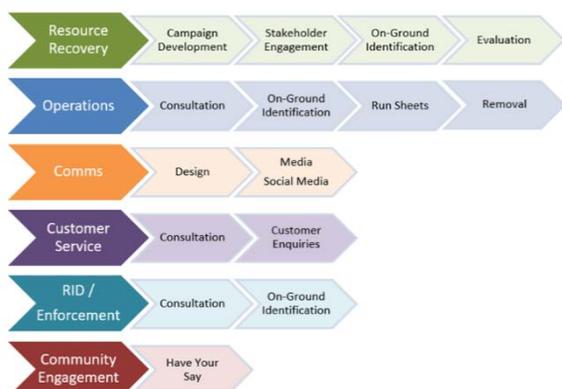


Figure 4 The on-ground *Eyes On It* team



What was the result?

During the 79-day campaign:

- 6,686 illegal dumps were taped, reported and removed.
- the media campaign reached 3.5 million people
- community reports of illegal dumping tripled – a sign that residents had become more aware of illegal dumping
- dumping incidents fell by 39%
- 43% of dumps identified with tape and stickers were removed from the kerb within 72 hours, leading to significant savings for the council.

Characteristics of ‘hot spot’ suburbs

The campaign collected a large dataset that provided insights into dumping hot spots, behavioural drivers and demographics. Combined with demographic data, it showed that ‘hot spot’ suburbs were characterised by:

- older housing stock
- higher concentrations of small to medium-sized multi-unit dwellings
- more tenants than owners
- high turnover of tenancy
- high social disadvantage
- language barriers.

Intervention and education are crucial

The campaign also showed the negative effect of a policy to remove illegal dumps without intervention or education. Where this policy had been in place in parts of the city, dumping rates had been twice as high: the policy was essentially providing a free service to residents, and reinforcing incorrect behaviour. By contrast, the *Eyes On It* campaign showed that leaving material in place for a period (72 hours) clearly labelled as

The council also prioritised promoting free booked clean-ups for bulky waste and providing easier online access. This coincided with changes to its waste collection service that give opportunities to optimise the service for anti-dumping.

Eyes On It was a successful campaign because it was integrated. Media, waste operations and on-ground teams worked together to send a consistent and cohesive message: **putting items on your kerb is illegal and you could be fined up to \$4,000.**

Financial impact

Delivering *Eyes On It* cost \$150,000. This project is a NSW EPA *Waste Less, Recycle More* initiative funded from the waste levy.

The council was able to better understand the cost of illegal dumping to it, through savings on landfill fees (as residents bought items back in from the kerb) and management costs (through the reduction in dumping incidents). It was also able to:

- identify where some internal operations could be made more efficient
- gain a better idea of the cost of effective delivery for this type of program.

Legacy

As a result of *Eyes On It* the council now better understands how dumping behaviour is related to language, demographics and experiences with waste management systems. Understanding these links has improved how it develops and delivers communications and educational resources.

Renters were identified as an especially important target audience for clean-up and dumping messages. The council is trialling initiatives to engage them through:

- 'welcome packs' sent directly to new tenants using addresses
- data gathered from rental advertisements and sites.

The council has funding to continue the campaign and has two-FTE officers who focus their efforts on 'hot spot' suburbs.

Eyes On It as a model

The campaign's approach was so successful it has become a model for other council initiatives. *Eyes On It* was used as the basis for developing the *Clean City Strategic Plan*. This developed into the *Four Pillars Clean City Model*, which engages stakeholders from across the organisation to build our response to issues based on:

- data
- education
- infrastructure and services
- enforcement measures.

This model is now being used to guide the council's work in areas such as:

- bird feeding
- litter reduction
- laneway improvement.



Photos

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