

News Release

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Government
of South Australia

Hon Gail Gago

Minister for Environment and
Conservation

Minister for Mental Health and Substance
Abuse

Minister Assisting the Minister for Health

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BIN YOUR BUTTS ON NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION

Environment and Conservation Minister, Gail Gago is urging members of the public and local councils to get behind today's National Day of Action against cigarette butt litter.

"Smokers in South Australia are discarding an estimated **one and a half million cigarette butts** every day of the year," Minister Gago said.

"That's more than 10.7 million butts every week and a staggering 560,000 million butts in a year in our state alone.

"The decision to draw attention to this huge nation-wide litter problem was made at a meeting of all Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers in New Zealand last November.

"Today's 'Small Butt, Big Impact' national campaign involves governments working together at all levels to raise public awareness of the serious environmental impact of cigarette butt litter.

"However, while this one-off national campaign will focus attention on the problem, longer term solutions need to be canvassed with the tobacco companies, including exploring regulatory options to recover the cost of reducing cigarette butt litter.

"Australians discard more than 7 billion butts every year with the recent Keep Australia Beautiful National Litter Index showing that cigarette butts make up 50% of the litter stream. They're not just an eyesore, but cigarette butts are very harmful to the environment and can take years to break down," Minister Gago said.

"Cigarette butts can leach toxic chemicals, such as cadmium and lead into water within one hour of contact and can be carried by stormwater into our rivers and bays, potentially harming our marine life.

"We are also still in the bushfire season, and a carelessly tossed cigarette has the potential to cause widespread destruction to homes and the environment."

Minister Gago said local government and KESAB were already involved in cigarette butt litter campaigns and a number of councils were directly participating in today's National Day of Action.

"For instance, Adelaide City Council inspectors will today be targeting well known CBD 'hot spots' for butt litter, such as the Rundle Mall and bus stops.

"Other councils will have inspectors in major shopping centres in their areas handing out reminders and personal ashtrays to smokers.

"Cigarette butt litter is everyone's problem, but there's a very simple solution to keep our streets clean - ensure your cigarette is extinguished before disposing of it in a bin or ashtray," Minister Gago said.