



# The Great Northern Clean Up

MAJOR PARTNERS



## Media Release

11 October 2016

### NORTHERN AUSTRALIANS TAKE TO THEIR STREETS

Across northern Australia an estimated 3,656 volunteers have picked up a bag, donned a pair of gloves and joined neighbours and friends at 96 Clean Up sites under the banner of the Great Northern Clean Up.

This is an increase of 15 locations over 2015; with an additional 3 sites in the Territory, 8 in Queensland and 4 in Western Australia.

Together they have removed around 211 ute loads of rubbish from parks, roadways, beaches, rivers and town centres north of the Tropic of Capricorn donating 7,312 hours of labour to their community.

Ian Kiernan AO, founder and Chairman of Clean Up Australia, saluted volunteers, recognising the efforts of the thousands who continue to demonstrate their commitment to the local environment by cleaning up, often at least twice a year; some even monthly.

“Rubbish removed this year represents 66kms of end to end fully laden utes – which is a fantastic result”, said Ian Kiernan.

The Great Northern Clean Up was created in 2009 after feedback that March weather made it difficult for North Australian communities to participate in Australia’s national day of action – Clean Up Australia Day.

Since then more than 30 thousand volunteers have removed around 1,800 tonnes of rubbish from 813 locations across northern Australia.

Pre-empting 2016 rubbish survey results, Ian Kiernan noted his disappointment that beverage containers and fast food packaging continue to top the charts when it comes to reported rubbish.

“In Western Australia and Queensland we predict beverage containers will again top the charts at around 25% of surveyed items. In the Territory, where they have a container refund scheme, bottles and cans will be closer the half that amount, and each one will be worth 10c to the collector.” said Mr Kiernan.

“What is encouraging is that both Queensland and Western Australia have pledged introduction of a beverage container refund scheme in 2018. Based on experience in the Territory we predict a spike in collected containers in the first year after which numbers steadily drop as bottles and cans are no longer considered to be rubbish – they are a 10c piece waiting to be redeemed.”

As a single item cigarette butts continue to be our nation’s number one issue – averaging 7.8% of reported rubbish across northern Australian locations.

“Why is it that a large number of smokers think it is OK to toss their butts?” lamented Mr Kiernan

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Not only are butts a fire hazard they are also leaching nicotine and pyrene into our waterways and soil as they break up. The leaching is quick – around about an hour of exposure. Butts then take up to 12 months to break up in fresh water and five years in seawater.

“I don’t know about you but I am sick and tired of irresponsible smokers treating our precious environment like a giant ashtray. I urge smokers to stop and think before you become a tosser.”

-ENDS-

## LOCATION RESULTS – THE 2016 GREAT NORTHERN CLEAN UP

State/Territory	Registered sites	Estimated Volunteers	Estimated Tonnage	Volunteer Hours
Northern Territory	9	839	19.8	1,678
Queensland	73	1,594	160.6	3,188
Western Australia	14	892	30.8	1,784
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>3,656</b>	<b>211.2</b>	<b>7,312</b>

For further media information, interviews and photographs, please contact Tracey Wigg at Gaia Communications on 0419 141 266

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