

Date: 26 February 2026

Rising Illegal Dumping Costs the Community

Illegal dumping crime across the Light Regional Council district has risen sharply, placing pressure on Council resources and creating significant environmental and safety risks. Over the past 20 months, 620 dumping incidents have been reported, with a noticeable increase in discarded car and truck tyres in the southern parts of the region, including Gawler Belt, Gawler River, Kingsford, Shea-Oak Log and Ward Belt.

Council staff continue to encounter a wide range of dumped materials—household rubbish, industrial waste, green waste, construction debris and even asbestos. In several recent cases, tyres and other materials have been discarded in watercourses, creating environmental damage and complicating cleanup efforts.

The financial impact of this issue is substantial. Disposal costs of illegally dumped waste at Resource Recovery Facilities have escalated to nearly \$100,000 annually, while staff time spent collecting, transporting and investigating illegal dumping activity is estimated at well over \$300,000 per year. This clean-up work is often difficult, labour-intensive and carries Work Health and Safety risks for staff.

To create community awareness of the issue Council has launched a media campaign highlighting a simple message: protecting what is ours starts with all of us. Every report helps reduce costs, prevent harm and keep our region clean.

It is believed that much of the dumped material may be originating from outside the district due to the region's proximity to northern metropolitan Adelaide. Opportunities to strengthen collaboration with State authorities and neighbouring Councils are being explored, including improved enforcement activities and joint investigations.

Investigations remain complex and rely heavily on community reporting, witness accounts and cooperation with neighbouring councils, SA Police and the Environment Protection Authority. Surveillance tools, including remote cameras, are used where possible, but the size of the Council district makes effective coverage difficult.

How the Community can help

Residents, landholders and community groups are encouraged to take an active role to report illegal dumping—particularly through the My Local Services app, directly to Council on 8525 3200 or light.sa.gov.au or anonymously to Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000. They can support efforts by:

- Reporting suspicious activity, including vehicle descriptions, number plates, dates and locations.
- Reporting new dumping sites early, especially near watercourses and remote roads.
- Providing evidence, such as CCTV, farm security footage or dashcam recordings.
- Supporting the placement of remote surveillance cameras in hotspot areas.
- Advocating for stronger cross-agency cooperation to address dumping from outside Council boundaries.

Illegal dumping damages the environment we all value, creates road safety risks, spoils our countryside and forces ratepayer money away from important community services. Council is dedicated to caring for our region, but we rely on the community's eyes, information and support to identify offenders and curb this growing issue.

For further information please contact governance@light.sa.gov.au

on 8525 3200 or light@light.sa.gov.au

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