



Don't Waste Darebin Creek*

Litter, Waste Wise & Responsible Shopping at Northland Shopping Centre

"Don't Waste Darebin Creek" was a litter project undertaken to promote litter reduction, Waste Wise shopping and responsible shopping trolley use along the Darebin Creek in the vicinity of Northland Shopping Centre in 2003. EcoRecycle Victoria funded the project in conjunction with numerous partners. Students from RMIT conducted initial research on the litter issue at Northland, while students from East Preston Islamic College assisted in delivering the litter campaign. Shopping trolleys and other litter is an on-going issue in the Darebin Creek.

Project Background & Approach

The Darebin Creek Management Committee (DCMC) has a catchment level approach to the management of the Darebin Creek. A study of the Darebin Creek entitled "Litter Hotspots of Darebin Creek" (2001) by RMIT students identified Northland Shopping Centre as a litter hotspot. A visual in-stream litter assessment found a number of trolleys in the creek and a significant amount of litter in the vicinity of Northland shopping Centre. This was coupled with community concern for litter in the area and the awareness of wildlife, including sightings of echidnas, which identified this site as a high priority. The DCMC was successful gaining a litter grant from EcoRecycle Victoria to undertake an integrated project involving key stakeholders.



Photo: Shopping trolleys dumped in the Darebin Creek at Northland is a local litter issue.

The project was multifaceted and incorporated data collection, awareness raising, enforcement and an education campaign at Northland Shopping Centre including a Litter Display. Educational messages were reinforced by promotional materials including calico bags, posters and stickers. A clean up of the Darebin Creek and revegetation complimented project activities, raising awareness and attracting local media.

Objectives

- Increase awareness of the negative effects of littering and reduce the amount of litter in the Darebin Creek in the vicinity of Northland shopping Centre
- Increase responsible use of shopping trolleys at Northland Shopping Centre
- Promote Waste Wise shopping
- Improve the visual amenity of the area

Partnerships

The following partners assisted the DCMC in the project:

Australian Retailers Association
Banyule City Council
Coles Supermarket
Darebin City Council
East Preston Islamic College
EcoRecycle Victoria
Friends of Darebin Creek
Melbourne Water
Northland Gandel Retail Trust
Northern Regional Waste Management Group
RMIT University

Key Messages

Don't Waste Darebin Creek *



Litter Harms Our Locals

Be a Responsible Shopper

Picture: The Little Pied Cormorant, a local to the Northland area was used in educational materials.

*Slogan courtesy of Don't Waste Australia-Do the Right Thing Foundation

Project Activities

Step 1

- Partnership building with East Preston Islamic College and activities with students, including bird watching and litter audit
- Pre-education research on shopper attitudes and behaviours with RMIT University
- Generated messages with schools for the educational campaign to be developed into stickers and promotional materials
- "Before" audit of rubbish (visual impact) at School
- Gained support from Darebin and Banyule City Council's law enforcement officers on litter and shopping trolley dumping
- Articles in local paper, Northland and school newsletters

Step 2

- Produced stickers and calico bags for display and promotions at Northland Litter Display
- Litter Display for one week at Northland Shopping Centre. DCMC staff, Friends of Darebin Creek, Green Corps and students undertake promotions, give away calico bags and stickers and ask shoppers to sign up for the 'Shoppers Contract'
- Removed litter and shopping trolleys from Creek
- Planting with East Preston Islamic College and City of Banyule in the vicinity of Northland Shopping Centre and school
- Articles in local paper and local government news



Photo: East Preston Islamic College students learn about their own litter issues through a litter audit.

Step 3

- "After" litter audit (visual impact) at school
- Rubbish removed from the Darebin Creek by contractors, 27 shopping trolleys were removed
- Follow up with Northland Shopping Centre on litter and shopping trolley issues
- Litter Display goes on tour in Banyule & Darebin Councils
- Articles in local paper and local government news



Photo: Students talk to shoppers about the local litter issues and ask them to sign the Responsible Shopper Contract.

Key Successes & Learnings

- Building a relationship with the school, we gained assistance with artwork and participation in promotions in Northland. **Students were empowered to educate shoppers** from what they learnt about litter at their own school, and were the most successful at engaging shoppers.
- A pre-education survey of shoppers at Northland undertaken by RMIT students helped in the development of a **targeted education campaign**.
- **Ownership of the project was transferred to local friends groups, the school and Northland** by including them in every stage of the project. Media was also included at every stage to maintain interest and coverage in local litter issues
- The Litter Display in Northland Shopping Centre gave students, volunteers and staff the opportunity to speak to shoppers directly. This **increased awareness of the Darebin Creek** and educated them about links between littering, responsible and waste wise shopping and the natural environment.
- **The Shoppers Contract was a great way to engage shoppers** who were eager to learn what the contract meant and then commit to the project. Shoppers were happy to accept calico bags as an alternative to plastic bags.

Evaluation

- Approximately 1000 shoppers were directly approached to discuss litter issues, 700 stickers and 170 calico bags were distributed and 150 shoppers signed the Responsible Shopper Contract during the week of promotions at Northland
- Nine articles reported on local litter issues at Northland through the project
- A visual assessment of litter was undertaken by students from East Preston Islamic College before and after the project
- Data on shopping trolleys in the creek was gathered to provide baseline data for future monitoring