



ORPHAN WASTE

Orphan waste refers to materials that have been disposed of illegally, including materials that have been dumped accidentally or intentionally, and on private or public lands, roads and waterways. This unlawful dumping raises a number of concerns such as environmental and aesthetic degradation, public health and safety, and unnecessary financial costs associated with identifying responsibility and proper disposal. Illegal dumping still costs communities thousands of dollars every year to clean up.

Orphan waste is named because the waste type and the dumper responsible cannot be identified. Therefore, identifying the waste is important in finding out if the waste is toxic. Tests can take anywhere from hours, days, and sometimes even weeks to complete. While substances usually prove to be harmless, many councils don't have adequate storage facilities. This means there is a greater risk of toxic materials being transported and stored in

inappropriate ways.

Financial responsibility for orphan waste includes clean up, transport and disposal and can be a costly exercise, particularly for wastes that need specialist treatment and disposal methods. An Emergency Clean Up Pollution Fund, administered by the state government, has been designed as a last resort for orphan waste disposal where the dumper cannot be identified or is unable to pay.

A great example of how councils can deal with orphan waste is the Regional Illegal Dumping (RID) Squad, located across eight councils in Western Sydney. The RID Squad uses surveillance and deterrence strategies day and night, seven days a week, to target dumping incidents within the council areas and through investigation and prosecution of offenders. This successful program saves the environment and communities thousands of dollars every year.

WHAT CAN I DO?

■ If you see anyone dumping waste, report it to your local council as soon as possible providing as much information as you can. For example, a car registration number or a description of the offender. The Environmental Protection Agency NSW also has a pollution line, call 13 1555.

■ Check out the North East Waste Forums illegal dumping fact sheet for more information.
www.northeastwasteforum.org.au/NEWF/CMS/uploads/ATOZ/ILLEGAL%20DUMPING.pdf

MORE INFORMATION

- www.environment.nsw.gov.au/waste/dumping.htm - Information on illegal dumping in NSW.
- www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au/environment/issues/littering/illegal-rubbish-dumping.cfm - facts on illegal dumping in NSW
- www.environment.nsw.gov.au/education/SPD_LGOV_RID.htm - info on the Regional Illegal Dumping (RID) squad

