



## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is Ground Swell?

Ground Swell is a Take 3 for the Sea Program created to inform and empower the Australian Visitor Economy to collaborate to reduce litter impacts in our beautiful holiday locations in New South Wales (NSW), Australia, and to work towards and maintain litter-free destinations. The Program provides practical tried-and-true strategies and solutions for both operators and their local communities in high traffic tourism destinations dependent on vulnerable nature-based resources.

### Why should I be concerned about litter in tourism destinations?

Litter has a serious impact on the success of tourism and vice versa. The irony is not lost with those of us who work in the Visitor Economy.

We love exploring! In NSW in 2021, 71.8 million\* visitors enjoyed holidays and adventures in the State's beautiful and diverse environments, spending \$22.3 bn on 91.6 million overnight stays. Whilst it's good positive economic news for tourism destinations and businesses, an unfortunate downside to tourism success is what's left behind... 25,000 tons# of litter in NSW alone.

*\*Source: National Visitor Survey, Tourism Research Australia*

*# Source: NSW EPA Don't be a Tosser Campaign.*

In 2021, Take 3 for the Sea conducted industry-wide surveys which showed that 82% of survey respondents (Visitor Economy businesses) believe there is a visitor litter issue and are committed to taking action to reduce it.

### How do you define litter?

Litter is anything unwanted that has been thrown blown or left in the wrong place.

### My location is inland and not near the beach – is Ground Swell still helpful?

Litter is harmful anywhere and much of it ends up in waterways (via rain run-off or wind) and ultimately in the sea. People knowingly or unknowingly leave litter behind in coastal, country, urban and remote or outback locations and Ground Swell helps participants understand the causes and provides strategies and solutions for any location.

### How much does it cost to participate Ground Swell?

\$0. There is no cost for NSW businesses to participate. This project is a NSW Environment Protection Authority Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy initiative, funded from the waste levy.

For ATEC (Australian Tourism Export Council) members in other states and territories, the program has been funded by a Qantas Regional Grant, supported by an extensive consumer facing marketing campaign.

### What type of business can take part?

The Program is relevant for every sector of the Visitor Economy. For example:

- Accommodation of all types
- Tour and transport operators of all types on land and water
- Attractions and visitor experiences of all types
- Cafés, takeaway kiosks, bars, restaurants, breweries, wineries etc
- Retail precincts in tourism hubs
- Visitor information centres, travel agents, inbound tour operators, local and regional tourism organisations, sector-specific tourism organisations and marketing bodies.
- Conference, festival and event organisers and venues
- Landowners e.g. NPWS, Forestry - local and head office representatives
- Councils' economic development and sustainability/waste teams

### I am an inbound operator or transport provider – how is the Program relevant to me?

There are opportunities for you to make a difference in all your touch points with your customers. Your marketing and promotional material can reflect how your company is proud to take care of the environment and local wildlife, and that you are committed to positive impact. Your booking and sales agents, your drivers, guides and translators all have influence and can be well versed in positive examples of how you do this, encouraging your customers to prevent visitor litter and harm to the environment. See our toolkit for examples on how to weave these messages into your narrative.

### How is the program relevant to Councils?

The program will reduce the Cost of Litter to Council and to ratepayers, and encourages positive engagement with businesses in the area. Ground Swell provides a platform for conversation and connection. Common litter challenges, solutions and actions can be openly shared, leading to stronger understanding and commitment by all to tackle issues in a positive and collaborative way, sending a powerful anti-litter message to the community and visitors alike.

### How long does the Program take?

The Program delivery takes approximately 5 hours spread out over 12 months.

### What are the benefits to my business?

Ground Swell introduces the identifiable underlying causes of littering, provides recommended solutions and coaches participants to develop a tailor-made action plan, enabling their businesses to:

- identify, understand, and measure existing litter hotspots specific to their business and their area.

- blend litter reduction solutions and source reduction (especially plastic) best practice into their core values.
- weave litter prevention into their customer-facing narrative through positive involvement and storytelling, informing and empowering their teams, visitors and community at large.
- monitor positive impacts and share successes.
- take confident leadership within their community and reap the rewards of enduring success in maintaining a litter-free environment.
- collaborate with like-minded operators, share challenges and solutions.

### **How can Ground Swell fit with our existing sustainability strategy or accreditation?**

Building on existing environmental sustainability accreditation such as Ecotourism Australia or Earth Check, Ground Swell is visitor litter-specific (especially plastic) and provides a valuable and deeper layer of environmental sustainability education to those dependent on tourism in any natural ecosystem.

### **What should I expect?**

The Ground Swell program delivery takes place in four parts:

1. Litter Lab Workshop: Virtual or in-person and led by the Take 3 Tourism Team, the workshop spans 60-90 minutes. This workshop will enable participants to:
  - Gain insights into the six crucial litter factors and their relevance to specific challenges, including the associated cost of litter.
  - Engage in collaborative discussions to discover solutions, leveraging the Tourism Operator's Litter Prevention Toolkit and associated collateral.
  - Acquaint themselves with the Action Plan template, supported by relevant case studies, and be encouraged to craft individual Litter Prevention action plans.
  - Learn about a Location Observation and the significance of measurement and monitoring.
2. Mentoring/Coaching Sessions: A personalized 60-minute Session will be held individually (1:1) for all participants. This session will:
  - Delve into integrating actionable plans within the core values and day-to-day business operations.
  - Provide strategies to inspire both staff and visitors to actively participate in litter prevention efforts
  - Provide tools to enable easy and consistent measurement and monitoring.
3. Quarterly Impact Check-ins and Data Collection: Throughout the program, quarterly 30-minute video calls will be conducted to assess progress, impact, and outcomes. This collaborative review will include the collection of Location Observation data, contributing to the comprehensive evaluation of the program's effectiveness.
4. Success Workshop: Annually, a 60-minute Success Workshop will convene either in person or online. The session offers an opportunity to reunite and celebrate success stories and is led by Take 3 Tourism Team.

### **How do I get my team leader and chain of command and colleagues to be supportive and get started?**

Please listen or watch [this interview](#) with Angie Christofis from Wyndham Destinations – full of helpful examples as to how one colleague started the Company’s environmentally sustainable journey in the Asia Pacific region.

### **How can I encourage my clients to do the right thing?**

We have so many suggestions in our Toolkit as to how to weave visitor behaviour expectations around litter into your business narrative. There are very positive ways to attract and engage customers in your sustainability and litter prevention efforts. More and more visitors are preferring to choose holiday options that are sustainable, environmentally friendly and that respect and protect wildlife.

### **I don’t own the area on which my business operates – how can I make a difference re signage, bins and cleaning?**

When talking with landowners about litter issues, it helps to have data to support anecdotal stories. The Ground Swell Location Observation is an excellent and easy data collection tool that can help you present the litter issue in a way that cuts through and provides undisputable evidence of litter issues.

We find that inviting your appropriate landowner representative to join Ground Swell with you helps enormously. You can work together to understand the issues and find solutions. Ask us for examples of where this has approach has been effective.

### **What impact have businesses had?**

Please view various Case Studies [here](#).

### **What are the six key factors?**

We know people litter for different reasons and under different circumstances. therefore, there are lots of ways to influence behaviour. We use the following 6 key factors to understand the causes behind any litter challenge and we have a suggested path forward for each.

1. Cleanliness
2. Infrastructure
3. Education
4. Enforcement
5. Empowerment
6. Source reduction

### **What is a Ground Swell Action Plan?**

A simple one-page grid featuring ready-made boxes and the following headings:

- Describe your challenge
- Match it with one or more key litter factor
- Using ideas from the Toolkit, how would you solve this challenge?
- How can you measure the result?
- List your actions
- What was the impact?

### What is a Location Observation?

An easy-to-complete two-sided A4 form, a Location Observation is a useful tool which provides you with a methodical and efficient way of gathering a consistent, accurate story and data across time about litter in your area of operation. Use the form to measure your initial litter challenge, and to monitor your overall impact each quarter.

### What is the Take 3 for the Sea NSW Tourism Award Category?

Introduced at the 2023 NSW Tourism Awards, this new state-based category recognises businesses who go over and above their day-to-day commercial focus, to prevent visitor litter reaching or remaining in the natural environment. Entrants must demonstrate leadership, commitment, permission (including empowerment and resources for staff and customers) and an established process for litter prevention and reduction. [See here for Criteria and Questions](#)

### How was Ground Swell developed?

In 2020 Take 3's Jenny-Lee Scharnboeck considered the role the Visitor Economy could play in litter prevention. During COVID with tourism at a standstill, a once in a lifetime opportunity to re-imagine tourism with less impact presented itself, resulting in Ground Swell.

### Which of the United Nations SDGs do Ground Swell and Take 3's range of Programs address?



### What is First Wave?

First Wave was the name of the original 2021 pilot program – the forerunner to the Ground Swell Program. First Wave introduced the conversation to the VE and through a series of surveys, workshops and informed the development of the NSW Litter Prevention Strategy. Please see this [First Wave Film](#) created to inform tourism businesses about the program.

### What is the role of the Steering Group and who involved?

The Steering Group provides expert advice, engages industry and guides the program. Partners include;

- Destination NSW (DNSW),
- National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)
- Outdoors NSW
- AAT Kings
- The Walshe Group
- Caravan and Camping Industry Association (CCIANSW)
- Business NSW
- Central Coast Council (representing LGA's)

### Do I have to do Ground Swell every year?

Litter prevention requires ongoing commitment and effort. Any participant who has taken part in Ground Swell will have the resources and toolkit with which to

continue their litter prevention journey. We will continue to check in with participants each quarter to collect data and help with tackling new litter challenges.

### **Is a Ground Swell available for new staff members?**

You are welcome to a Ground Swell update or refresher at any time. Please get in contact and we will schedule. We are continually finetuning and adding to our litter prevention resources and knowledge.

### **Where do I find the Ground Swell resources**

Follow this Dropbox [link](#) to view and download the Ground Swell resources.

### **How do I get the Litter Reduction Toolkit for NSW Tourism Operators?**

The Toolkit will be available for you in your Ground Swell welcome pack after you have registered and your Litter Lab workshop has been scheduled.

### **Where can I find your Ground Swell films?**

You can find useful films via the links below.

#### **2022/2023 Ground Swell**

1. [Ground Swell Film for visitors.](#)
2. [VE Vignette Film for industry networks](#) to encourage operators and businesses to join Ground Swell.
3. Ground Swell [Promo 60 sec film](#) for Tourism Awards 2023

### **Who or what is Take 3 for the Sea?**

Take 3 for the Sea (Take 3 Ltd) is an award-winning Australia-based charity whose vision is to conserve the environment and protect wildlife from the impacts of plastic pollution and waste by leading a movement of people connected to the planet.

We deliver educational, community and corporate programs to spread the word about the devastating impact of plastic pollution on the environment. Using solution-based approaches, we educate, inspire and motivate people to take action.

### **What is Take 3's impact to date? (3 January 2024)**

- 42 million pieces of rubbish removed
- 870,000 students educated through Take 3 programs
- 166,000 attendees at Take 3 clean-ups and events
- 22 million people reached through Take 3 social media campaigns
- 129 countries participated in #take3forthesea campaign

For up-to-date impact information head to: [take3.org](https://take3.org)

### **What is Ground Swell's impact so far?**

A sample of just eight participating businesses in March 2023 identified they had educated 54,754 visitors on litter prevention. Based on these statistics the 160 participating businesses in 2022 could well be nearing the mark of educating 1 million visitors on litter prevention. You can find individual Case Studies [here](#).

### What do I have to do to be involved?

[REGISTER HERE](#) We will be in contact to advise suitable Litter Lab dates.

### Who are the Ground Swell Team Members 2024?



**Katelin Giuliano**  
Ground Swell Specialist



**Bec Dawes**  
Tourism Manager  
(currently on maternity leave)



**Juliette Myers**  
Project Manager  
Ground Swell



**Jenny Lee Sharnboeck**  
(née Stefas)  
Head of Partnerships

**Thank you for making a difference.**

**If you have any further questions, please email: [juliette@take3.org](mailto:juliette@take3.org)**

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