

Background:

Current inconsistencies in smoking regulations for beaches and outdoor dining areas are contributing to secondhand smoke exposure and an increase in cigarette butt litter on the Mornington Peninsula.

Peninsula Health partnered with Mornington Peninsula Shire (the Shire) to support the roll out of a municipal Smoke Free Environment Policy aimed at reducing the prevalence of smoking and protecting people from the damaging effects of secondhand smoke by extending smoke free areas beyond current legislative requirements.



Aim:

To enable the rollout of the Shire's municipal Smoke Free Environment Policy by trialing smoke free zones.

Approach:

Following consultation with key community groups, smoke free signage and messaging, and new cigarette butt bins were placed at trial zones over a 10-month period. The trial zones consisted of three foreshores, a recreation centre, a beach, the Shire offices, and Main Street in Mornington. Businesses participating in the Shire's Summer Parklets Program (car parking spaces used for outdoor dining) were also offered branded smoke free signage. Print media, radio and social media were used to promote the initiative and enable community support.

The general public and businesses were surveyed for observational data collection and feedback. Community groups assisted with cigarette butt litter data collection.

Key Findings:

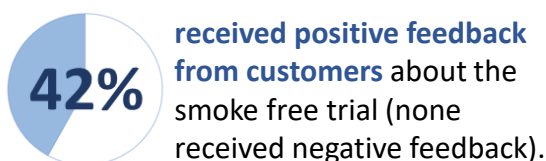
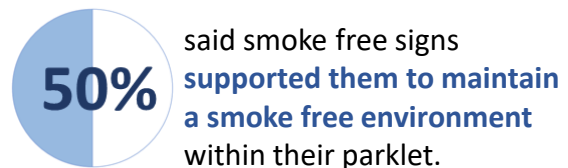
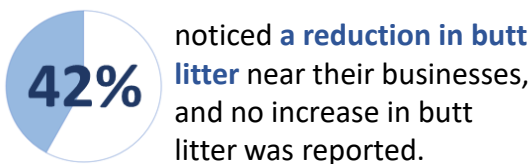


Strong community support was consistently highlighted through qualitative feedback

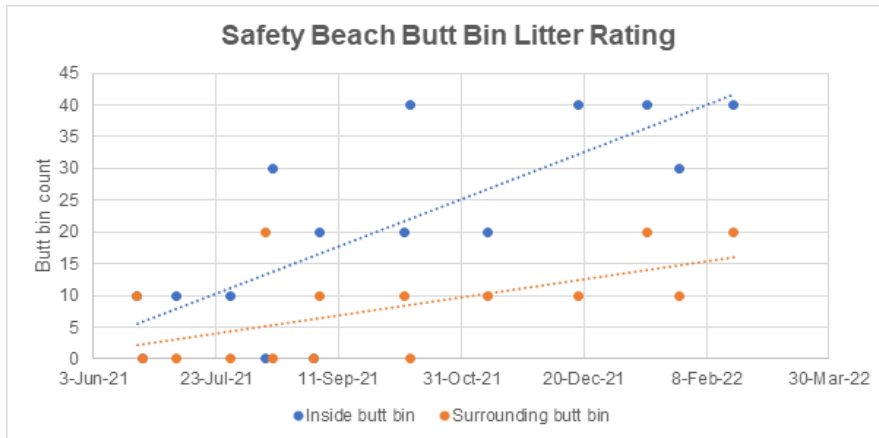
"I am very pleased to learn you have started to introduce a smoking ban to some areas of the peninsula and look forward to you hopefully extending the ban to all areas."

"The general public should not be surprised to have smoking banned on a popular Bay beach such as Rye."

Of businesses surveyed...



Key Findings:



Note: the increase in smoking is likely attributed to greater beach use during warmer weather and the move towards COVID Normal.

Key Butt Litter Sources

- Stopped vehicles
- Picnic tables/BBQ areas
- Passing foot traffic
- Toilet blocks
- Stormwater, wind, and ocean tides/currents

Implications:

The smoke free trial received strong support from the community. It was successful in helping businesses maintain smoke free environments and reduce nearby butt litter. Given the positive outcomes from the trial, these findings will contribute to the successful roll out of the Shire's municipal Smoke Free Environment Policy.

Throughout the trial, cigarette butt count was consistently higher inside the butt bin than the areas surrounding the butt bin. This presents a strong argument for the presence of bins to support litter prevention.

Key Learnings:

A key enabler of this initiative was the high level of community support for smoke free environments in all public areas. Well-developed stakeholder partnerships were also key. Community groups were invaluable in collecting butt litter data, particularly during COVID-19 restrictions.

