Dumping threatens Browns River restoration

Illegal rubbish dumping along Browns River and Proctors Road in Kingston is undermining environmental restoration efforts, with authorities confirming thousands of dollars have been spent cleaning up dumped waste and penalising offenders.

The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has identified Proctors Road as an illegal dumping hotspot and confirmed the area has been subject to targeted surveillance.

Dr Chiara Danese, Convenor of the Browns River Restoration Group, whose property borders Browns River at Proctors Road, said household rubbish, vehicle parts, tyres, bitumen, green waste and concrete wastewater had repeatedly been discarded in the area.

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Rubbish dumped in bushland near Proctors Road, an area identified by the EPA as an illegal dumping hotspot. PS

Concrete wastewater in Browns River, where ongoing dumping has raised concerns about impacts on the waterway and restoration efforts. PS

Illegal dumping comes at a cost

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"The ongoing illegal dumping of rubbish is undermining the considerable time, effort and resources being invested in restoring and protecting this area," Dr Danese said.

Community volunteers dedicate significant time to cleaning and revegetating Browns River, its mouth and surrounding areas to improve water quality and protect the local environment.

When Dr Danese and her family purchased their property two years ago, they removed four large trailer loads of rubbish, including 34 tyres and numerous discarded household items.

More recently, she spent about two hours cleaning up another recent dumping incident, including small pieces of plastic she feared could eventually make their way into Browns River and towards Kingston Beach.

EPA figures show nine environmental infringement notices totalling $8,920 have been issued in the Kingborough area, including five relating specifically to Proctors Road totalling $3,905.

In a recent Proctors Road case, information provided by a member of the public helped identify an offender and resulted in a $1,065 infringement notice.

The EPA said illegal dumping remained a persistent problem across Tasmania, particularly along isolated roads and in bushland where surveillance was limited.

Kingborough Council has also revealed it spent $31,000 cleaning up illegally dumped waste during the 2025-26 financial year.

A Council spokesperson said Council may investigate dumping on Council-managed land and roadsides and arrange removal where appropriate, while responsibility for removing waste dumped on private property generally rested with the landowner.

Dr Danese has raised the possibility of additional signage, surveillance cameras or other deterrents being used along Proctors Road.

Council said signage and other measures could be considered where illegal dumping became an ongoing problem, with each location assessed individually.

Physical barriers such as bollards had been used elsewhere but could simply shift dumping to another nearby location rather than stop it, Council said.

The EPA said individuals found guilty of illegally depositing general waste could face fines of up to $39,000 under Tasmania's Litter Act 2007 and could also be required to remove dumped material at their own expense.

Residents who witness illegal dumping are encouraged to report it to Council or the EPA and, where safe, record the location, date and time, vehicle registration and description, and photographs or video.

"While most people dispose of waste responsibly, there remains a mindset among some individuals that roadside reserves, bushland and remote areas are acceptable places to discard unwanted materials," Dr Danese said.

"It's an issue we need to bring up and address."