



Joint Media Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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No Butts About It! Calling on businesses to stub out their cigarette butt waste.

Environmental charity uses mushrooms to tackle cigarette butt waste in Melbourne.

Environmental charity, No More Butts is on the hunt for Melbourne businesses with a vision to divert their cigarette butt waste from landfill by taking part in a free trial of an innovative program, CigCycle.

According to No More Butts Founder, Shannon Mead, cigarette butts remain one of the most littered items in Melbourne. Taking up to 15 years to break down, they cause significant damage to the planet by leaching toxic chemicals such as arsenic and lead into the environment.

Mead noted that whilst people often focused on cigarette butts being littered into the environment, it was important for them to also understand the impact cigarette butts had after they ended up in landfill.

Following an initial collaboration between No More Butts and Melbourne-based mycologist, Fungi Solutions, the CigCycle program sets out to explore whether cigarette butt waste has a value.

“As a plastic, we want to divert this waste and recover the resource,” explained Mr Mead.

“Through this program, funded through Sustainability Victoria’s Circular Economy Communities Fund, we hope that businesses will help us investigate potential uses for end-of-life cigarette butts, as well as make smokers pause long enough to consider what their flicked cigarette butt does to the environment.

“To help us with this, we are calling on businesses that already collect cigarette butts as part of their daily operations, to collect them for us.

“Program participants will be provided with all of the information and equipment necessary to ensure a limited change to existing processes,” added Mr Mead.

Post collection, Fungi Solutions will remediate the collected cigarette butts using a method that fuses the mycelium – the root network of the mushroom – with the tobacco filters and other composite materials.

Founder and Head of Research and Development at Fungi Solutions, Amanda Morgan explained that the science behind the project shows that the process becomes more effective with each generation of mushrooms cultivated.

“Our research with No More Butts looks into the efficacy of this process and if there are any opportunities to produce a material by-product from the recycling of the butts.”

It is hoped to find that products such as packaging materials or insulation panels could be created, replacing another problematic waste stream – polystyrene.

Lord Mayor of Melbourne Sally Capp says that the City of Melbourne is taking action to reduce the number of cigarette butts entering our waterways through implementing smoke free areas, cigarette butt disposal bins and signage throughout the city.

“The cleanliness of our CBD is a top priority for the City of Melbourne,” says the Lord Mayor.

“CigCycle will create new possibilities from cigarette waste. “We support and applaud initiatives that reduce the negative impacts of cigarette butts on our environment.”

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

About CigCycle

CigCycle is supported by the Circular Economy Communities Fund delivered by Sustainability Victoria under the Victorian Government's circular economy plan, Recycling Victoria: a new economy.

About No More Butts

No More Butts is taking action on cigarette butts – the single biggest contributor to litter in Australia and around the world. Made from cellulose acetate, cigarette butts are not biodegradable and leach harsh chemicals into the natural environment. It can take 15 years for a cigarette butt to break down, causing damage to marine life. It also has the ability to enter the food chain as a microplastic. Cigarettes are also considered to be a major contributor towards fires.

No More Butts have also been raising awareness of the issue that discarded vaping devices pose on our environment. Based in Queensland, Australia, No More Butts is a registered charity with ACNC and is entered onto the Register of Environmental Organisations.

<https://cigcycle.com.au> | <https://nomorebutts.org.au>

About the Circular Economy Communities Fund

The Circular Economy Communities Fund provides \$5.4M in grants to support local community groups, social enterprises and other not-for-profit businesses working to reduce waste and improve recycling.

Thirty-nine projects will share in \$3.1M in grants under Round 2 of the Fund. Funded projects include repair cafés, community gardens, food rescue operations, recycling or repurposing hubs, and circular economy education initiatives.

Funded projects focus on waste reduction through sharing, repairing and re-purposing through community initiatives, which will help boost Victoria's economy through local circular economy projects and the creation of new jobs. Projects under the Circular Economy Communities Fund will result in approximately 3,000 tonnes of waste being kept out of landfill, 60,000 volunteers taking part, and 100 paid jobs created.