

New partnership launched to 'Unsmoke' Cape Town

Philip Morris South Africa (PMSA), together with the Central City Improvement District (CCID) and City of Cape Town, aims to tackle the cigarette butt litter problem in Cape Town's CBD by raising public awareness and encouraging smokers to dispose of butts responsibly.



PMSA recently launched its Unsmoke campaign in South Africa. “Unsmoke” means to rid your life of smoke. “If you don’t smoke, don’t start. If you’re a smoker, quitting is the best choice you can make. If you don’t quit, change to a better alternative. In this way, we can ‘unsmoke’ ourselves, our family, our friends, our city, and our world,” says Marcelo Nico, MD of PMSA.

Part of the campaign includes addressing the issue of cigarette butt litter. “As a tobacco company, we believe it’s important to partner with authorities and the public on the problem of cigarette butt litter. We aim to ‘unsmoke’ Cape Town and raise public awareness about keeping the city clean. Cape Town is not an ashtray,” says Nico.

Public display of cigarette butts

A public activation was held in the CBD on Thursday, 26 September, together with the CCID and City of Cape Town. Teams of Philip Morris employees spread across the CBD to clean up cigarette butt litter. The massive pile of cigarette butts was displayed in St Georges Mall during the busy lunch hour.

The CCID sweeps and picks up, on average, 2,400kg of litter from the streets in town seven days a week. A key reason for cigarette butt litter is the absence of disposal infrastructure. To address this, the CCID has placed 300 cigarette butt bins at hotspots around the CBD from which around 300kg of cigarette butts are removed each month.

Says CCID CEO Tasso Evangelinos: “It costs the CCID R30,000 per day to clean the CBD, which amounts to nearly R11m per year. This is in addition to the mass waste removal (through the emptying of black wheelie and green street-pole municipal bins) done by the City of Cape Town.”

PMSA also intends to expand this initiative to other cities.

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