**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Council Launches Operation Lockatoo to Combat Cockie Bin Raids**

**Surf Coast, Australia – November 1, 2023** – In a bid to address the persistent issue of wild cockatoos ransacking residential bins, the Surf Coast Council is set to launch Operation Lockatoo in November 2023. The initiative will see the council fitting locking mechanisms to various types of bins, including Landfill bins (red lid), FOGO bins (lime-green lid), and Recycling bins (yellow lid).

This innovative lock-fitting program is a direct result of extensive trials conducted over the past two years, where nine different bin modifications and locking mechanisms were tested on 500 kerbside bins throughout Lorne. Following a rigorous evaluation process, Surf Coast Council has selected local company LitterLock to supply an inventive locking solution as one of the primary mechanisms driving the program.

The Surf Coast-based start-up LitterLock produces a recyclable, plastic-moulded clip with an extended arm running down the side of the bin. A hinge attaches to the bin body and securely holds the arm in place. Importantly, the clip automatically releases when the collection truck's arm engages with the bin, ensuring seamless waste collection.

The decision to proceed with LitterLock's solution was based on feedback from residents who had the mechanism fitted to their bins, as well as insights from collection truck drivers and Council staff. The collaborative approach aims to address the long-standing issue of wild sulphur-crested cockatoos in Surf Coast neighbourhoods, known for their ingenuity in opening bin lids and foraging for food. These curious birds have often been the cause of litter spilling onto the streets.

In 2021, Colin Cox, a local landscaper and inventor, played a pivotal role in the creation of LitterLock. Outraged by the sight of litter escaping local wheelie bins while working outdoors, Cox embarked on a mission to develop a solution. According to Cox, "It's estimated that 25% of litter in Australia escapes from residential bins. That's approximately 35,000 tons of rubbish every year. To put that in perspective, it's like having ten dump trucks a day unloading their waste directly into Sydney Harbor. If we can prevent this with one simple action, I can't understand why we wouldn't."

LitterLock's estimations suggest that installing locking devices on local bins could result in significant reductions in environmental litter collection costs, amounting to around $290 million in savings annually. Surf Coast Council is committed to the environment and the well-being of its residents. Operation Lockatoo not only aims to reduce litter and improve the cleanliness of the Surf Coast, but it also seeks to protect the unique coastal ecosystem that draws residents and visitors to the region. The introduction of the Litter Lock locking mechanisms promises to be a major step toward achieving this goal.

For more information about Operation Lockatoo or to learn about the LitterLock's commitment to environmental sustainability, please visit the council's [website](https://www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Property/Waste-and-recycling/Bins/Operation-Lockatoo) or contact LitterLock representatives.

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*Note to Editors: High-resolution images* [Images - Google Drive](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1r8hPgL95IFwrR1pF5_N5UBwtuLBLBxD2) *Video News Release* [Video - Google Drive](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1lJujwM3pWeRq2WmSb3aMWDyou7AXig-K)

*About Litter Lock: Litter Lock is an environmental solutions company founded in 2021 in the Surf Coast of Victoria. Their mission is to help communities lock in a clean environment with a simple, sustainable bin-lock that eliminates litter escape from residential wheelie bins.*