

Stakeholder Advisory Group on Best Practice Container Deposit Systems for Western Australia

Communiqué

The Stakeholder Advisory Group was established by the Minister for the Environment in January 2006 to investigate best practice Container Deposit Systems for Western Australia and provide advice to the Minister.

Container deposits are small refundable fees on items such as cans, bottles and other packaging items which can be redeemed on return of the used containers to specified locations. Systems of this nature encourage the return of containers for recycling and discourage the inappropriate disposal and/or littering of these items.

The terms of reference for the Advisory Group

To provide advice to the Minister for the Environment on best practice container deposit systems for Western Australia having regard to the following important focus areas:

- *Maintaining and improving on existing kerbside recycling programs.*
- *Away from home recycling and litter*
- *Employment and business opportunities*
- *Regional and rural recycling*
- *Sustainable recycling programs*
- *Consumer costs*
- *Regulatory Impact*
- *Scope for target containers*
- *Community participation*

Background

The Advisory Group has now completed the first phase of its investigation which was focussed on gathering information and building an understanding of the various systems elsewhere in Australia and around the world. During this time a delegation from the Advisory Group visited facilities in South Australia to gain a first hand understanding of a working container deposit scheme.

The Advisory Group recognises that Container Deposit Systems are operating successfully in many jurisdictions elsewhere, including Canada, the United States, Europe and in Australia. Where these systems operate, rates of recovery for deposit containers typically range from 50-90%. This is significantly higher than rates achieved in jurisdictions where non-deposit systems of collection are used, including Western Australia.

The Advisory Group is pleased to be able to report a number of interim expectations from the investigation so far. These are designed to inform stakeholders in their engagement with the investigation and to give the community a sense of the direction the Advisory Group is taking.

The Stakeholder Advisory Group expects to produce best practice Container Deposit Systems for Western Australia that:

- 1) At least, double the rate of recovery for applicable deposit containers in Western Australia.**
- 2) Reduce overall cost to local government, the wider community and the environment.** This is achieved by shifting more of the burden of waste and litter management to the producers and consumers responsible for those wastes (according to the principles of polluter pays and Extended Producer Responsibility). As producers and consumers are those that can affect changes in the recyclability and the recovery rate of containers, they are best placed to reduce the overall management cost.
- 3) Support the principles of sustainability,** in particular, by providing improved resource efficiency and increased economic opportunities as outlined in the Western Australian State Sustainability Strategy.
- 4) Are designed for system efficiency.** This would be achieved by sorting and processing applicable deposit containers by material type and colour (avoiding sorting to container brand), and through enabling the use of technology to assist with container handling.
- 5) Utilise different methods to collect applicable deposit containers to suit local conditions.** This would avoid mandatory return to point of sale (POS).
- 6) Encourage and support local waste management and reprocessing industries to operate and/or expand in Western Australia.** This can be supported by providing a steady stream of high volume uncontaminated materials for reprocessing, and through other incentives.
- 7) Assist non-metropolitan participation in recycling activities.**
- 8) Can include a broad range of containers.** The scope of deposit containers in a scheme should be chosen to optimise sustainability.
- 9) Can promote improved packaging.** This can be achieved by creating economic and other incentives for companies to improve the packaging they use.
- 10) Provide transparent, open and accountable mechanisms to govern and track the movement of deposit monies and quantities of recycled materials.**
- 11) Support community participation.** This can be achieved through creating container deposit systems that are straight forward and convenient to use, while providing public education and other methods to encourage participation.
- 12) Reduce litter in Western Australia.**
- 13) Can provide new opportunities for the recovery of materials other than applicable deposit containers.** By providing convenient drop off locations for a variety of waste products for which EPR schemes may be established, such as batteries, computers etc.