

About Container Deposits

Cash for Containers (Container Deposits) involves the provision of a 10-cent refund on all eligible beverage containers. The refund is redeemed on return of the container.

Eligible containers include all glass, aluminium, plastic and liquid paperboard containers between 150ml and 3 litres. It could include other items in the future.

Return can be through automated collection points such as Reverse Vending Machines, bag drops, depots or pop-up services (e.g. at events)

Beverage manufactures and suppliers are expected to fully fund the scheme. This means that in addition to providing a 10 cents refund (which they received when they sold the drink to the retailer) - they need to cover the cost of collection, logistics and sorting.

For collectors, who run refund points, their business is funded through the receipt of the handling fee payable on every container returned to and sorted by their designated facility.

Containers can still be collected through kerbside. In this case, the refund will usually be shared by local council and their kerbside collector contractors.

NFP and community organisations can participate in the scheme and boost their fundraising. Some provide collection points; some get involved in collections during public activities. Most refund points also allow for donations to NFP organisations.

Data from South Australia, NSW and QLD shows that a CDS will significantly reduce container litter. Historically, SA had less container litter compared to other states by a factor of three. More recently NSW has reported a 57% reduction in container litter and QLD a 54% reduction.

A CDS is also a job creator with an estimated 1300 jobs created in NSW and QLD in the last 3 years as a result of the CDS.

In Victoria an estimated 2.9 billion containers are used each year - of these 2.1 billion will be covered by the scheme. In 2018-19 alone, these beverage containers represented 47% of the litter stream by volume.

Figure 2: How a CDS works



A Best Practice Container Deposit Scheme for Victoria (Boomerang Alliance)

The Victorian Government will be introducing a container deposit scheme by 2023. Eligible drink glass bottle, can, plastic or carton container sold in Victoria will attract a refund when returned for recycling.

The Government is now asking for public comments on how the scheme should be designed and run. This is a critical issue as it will influence how successful and effective it will be.

A Victorian CDS should have the following primary objectives:

1. To reduce container litter and waste
2. To increase recycling and resource recovery of containers
3. To create more business opportunities and employment in collection and recycling of containers
4. To stimulate social enterprise and encourage community fundraising through collecting cans and bottles

What does a best practice scheme look like? The Boomerang Alliance has identified these 10 key attributes:

1. Its purpose is to reduce both waste and litter and increase recycling of drink containers. It should provide a refund for all glass, plastic, metal and liquid paper board (cartons) containers up to 3 litres in size, so it is harmonised with other state schemes.
2. A refund (minimum 10 cents) should be paid for every eligible returned container.
3. It must be convenient for consumers with return points in shopping centres and other convenient locations, as well as depots for larger quantities.
4. It must be sustainable with negligible cost to the consumer who returns their container; and funded by the beverage manufacturers.
5. It should work in harmony with other recycling collections such as household kerbside collections.
6. The Victorian government should set the rules, access requirements, container return targets and penalties for non-compliance.
7. The Scheme Coordinator (which collects the funds from drink producers and audits performance) should be a separate entity from the Network Operator (which collects containers). Both should be subject to tender.
8. The Scheme Coordinator should be a not-for-profit organisation with clear obligations for accountability and public transparency about performance; and the Network Operator has the sole objective of maximising the container return rate to prevent any influence from drink producers wanting to reduce returns and bolster their profits.
9. Not-for-profit and community organisations should be able to collect and sort containers and receive donated containers from the public.
10. Every Victorian should have realistic and convenient access to a refund point.