

CONTAINER REFUND BILL

Presentation to Tasmanian Legislative Council

24 Nov 2021

Jeff Angel

Director

jeff.angel@boomerangalliance.org.au

www.boomerangalliance.org.au



How we know about Container Refund Systems (CRS)

- 56 groups across Australia with local knowledge
- Campaigned since 2004 and extensively researched CRS here and overseas
- Participated in government advisory committees (NSW, QLD, WA, VIC, TAS)
- Have a role in an automated sorting depot in NSW (ie, have seen how it operates on the ground)

Who also Opposes an Inquiry?

- City Mission
- TasCOSS
- Local Government Association Tasmania
- 56 environment groups in the Boomerang Alliance
- Peak waste and recycling industry groups (Australian Council of Recycling, Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association, National Waste and Recycling Industry Council)

Scouts Tasmania and St Vincent de Paul have announced a partnership to garner refunded containers under the Government's scheme (2/11/21).

Lion's Club support the Govt's scheme

Profit v Non-Profit Argument

- Does not compare apples to apples as all those (commercial or charity) involved in collection points under any scheme model, want to make a profit.
- Comparing Scheme \$: Qld Coordinator (ie, Coke/TasRecycle model) has a surplus of over \$61m*; NSW scheme has zero surplus (as required by govt) at end of each year – this explains why cost per container handled and impact on consumer, is more in Qld.
- **Qld has lower return rate which benefit the profits of the big bottlers like Coke and Lion as they don't need to pay as much for the CRS operation; nor pay back the 10c refunds.**
- Despite set targets, the Qld model is failing with only 61% return rate compared to its 2020-21 target of 79% - costing consumers \$52m.
(<https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/politics/queensland/queenslanders-miss-out-on-52m-in-bottle-recycling-refunds-20210714-p589ht.html>)

* COEX Annual Financial Reports

Why have the NSW “split responsibility” model with a Network Operator who can plan and also run some collection points?

- The split between those who are levied to pay for the CRS and a Network Operator, removes the conflict between low cost/lower returns vested interest – and – maximising collections, consumer convenience, recycling and litter reduction.
- Need a coordinated state plan for collection points developed by those experienced in delivering recycling and refunding consumers.
- Some collection points need technology (eg reverse vending machines near retail in more densely populated areas) to assist consumer convenience.
- Other places in Tas can have manual operations run by charities or others.

The primary objective of a CRS is environmental and should not be overtaken by social objectives

Donated refunds and sorting depots

St Vincent de Paul:

“The profit-sharing model proposed by the Tasmanian Government will most benefit community groups and charities. It is the only viable option for a CRS in Tasmania. Charities here do not have the multi-million dollars cash reserves required to establish processing facilities across the state. Building, running, and maintaining a recycling plant is best left to professionals so community groups can concentrate on their core activities - building better communities and assisting the most vulnerable in our society.” (2 Nov '21)

BUT if you want to run a depot, the Network Operator can offer **on top of** your handling fee of 5c per container (as in NSW):

- free transport for sorted containers
- free data tracking and reporting
- free sorting machines, insurance and maintenance
- NSW model has charity operators of 11 big depots - St Vinnies, CitizenBlue, Hoxten Industries, CRA

Govt Bill supports charity involvement and maximises recycling

Why No Inquiry?

- The research has been done on Coke/TasRecycle and NSW options to the nth degree. Tas and Vic agree the NSW split responsibility model is the best choice.
- TasRecycle have run a misleading campaign in Tas and Vic. Lily D'ambrosio, Vic Environment Minister has described the bottlers' campaign as *"spreading misinformation" and "stoking unfounded fears" about the recycling scheme.*" (Margin Call, The Australian, 15/4/21). It should not be rewarded.
- An inquiry will delay and potentially derail a CRS. After 20 years the community is expecting and ready for the CRS to be implemented in 2022.