

3 September 2020

Media Release

COMMUNITY GROUPS TAKE ON BEVERAGE GIANTS AS GOVERNMENT DECIDES WHO WILL RUN VICTORIA'S CONTAINER REFUND SCHEME

Community and environment groups with hundreds of thousands of members in Victoria are mobilising to stop beverage giants Lion and Coca Cola from taking control of Victoria's soon-to-implemented Container Refund Scheme (CRS).

The Victorian Government is expected to decide this month who will run the scheme set to be rolled out in 2022/23, which will pay recyclers 10 cents for every drink container collected.

"Coca Cola and Lion spent millions of dollars trying to stop a CRS when the idea was first raised but a major community campaign defeated them. Now we need to ensure they don't get their hands on the scheme and we have, first off, launched a [change.org](#) petition. Many comments are quite damning of Coke – people obviously remember what they did," [Boomerang Alliance](#) Director, Jeff Angel said.

"Put simply, the more containers that are recycled, the more it costs the beverage industry, so it's not in a beverage company's interest to create a system that adequately promotes recycling and encourages use of the scheme. A 'split governance' model that puts litter reduction and recycling first and foremost, works better."

[Clean Up Australia's](#) Chair, Pip Kiernan said: "As the last mainland state to adopt a Container Refund Scheme, the people of Victoria deserve the best they can get. The Andrews' government should heed lessons learned from New South Wales' best practice and the poorly provisioned Queensland schemes – where convenience for the community is the key. Every year, more than 200,000 Victorian-based Clean Up Australia volunteers take to their streets, beaches, parks, bushland and waterways to remove rubbish. If well run, a refund scheme can divert enormous amounts of waste from landfill and our precious environment but it must be designed to best serve the community and maximise return rates and recycling."

Mr Angel said: "Queensland's scheme is far inferior to other jurisdictions such as New South Wales, largely because it is dominated by beverage heavyweights Coke and Lion. The Queensland deposit points are open three times less than those in New South Wales (including 50 only open for a few hours a month) and there are half the number of recycling points per head of population making it inconvenient and inefficient."

"A better approach splits the control between a Scheme Coordinator composed of industry, expert and community representatives in charge of managing industry contributions, audits and reporting; and one or more Network Operators whose sole focus is recycling and maximising return rates."

Mr Angel urged the Victorian Government to choose a system which has the best outcomes for both the environment and consumers.

“Once established the new infrastructure is hard to change, so it’s best to get the fundamentals right from the start. We want to see consumers easily able to access their refunds and for positive effects on the environment to begin immediately.”

“This is a legacy project that will play a key role in waste and recycling for decades to come.”

The [change.org](#) petition can be viewed [here](#).

FURTHER SUPPORT FOR THE SPLIT GOVERNANCE MODEL

The ‘split governance’ model is supported by:

- *Boomerang Alliance which comprises of 52 environmental campaign groups*
- *Charities*
- *National Waste and Recycling Industry Association*
- *Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia (quote below)*
- *Australian Council of Recycling*
- *Municipal Association of Victoria*

“WMRR supports a split level scheme (scheme coordinator and network operator) where both levels are publicly tendered by government. This is the only way that Victoria can gain the best scheme that it can for Victoria, with genuine transparency and accountability. It will also ensure the Victorian government has the mechanisms in place to ensure the scheme remains accountable and responsive to the needs of the Victorian community. It is not in the interests of the Victorian community for the scheme to be simply handed to one interested party.”

Gayle Sloan

Chief Executive Officer