

Mr R Doyle
The Clerk of the Parliament
Legislative Assembly of Queensland
Parliament House
Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE Q 4000

Dear Mr Doyle

Thank you for your letter of 6 December 2002 forwarding a copy of a petition tabled in the Parliament on 4 December 2002 regarding container deposit legislation.

I released a report 'The State of Waste & Recycling in Queensland 2000/2001' on 16 July 2002. The news is good. It is encouraging looking at the details of this report to see how Queenslanders and local authorities are positively responding to waste reduction and recycling strategies.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has provided around \$400,000 annually over the past three years to assist local governments improve recycling collection efficiencies. This year the government has allocated over \$500,000 towards this cause. This funding is earmarked for recycling projects under the National Packaging Covenant arrangements – a program involving all state and territory governments, and industry that is designed to lighten the load on local governments by sharing the costs and improving management of consumer waste. While some programs are best delivered regionally or across the State, all programs are designed and delivered to assist local governments with their recycling efforts.

The WasteWise initiative was launched in November of this year. The program is being rolled out by the EPA with its local government partners. WasteWise is a free voluntary program open to all businesses around the State. Through WasteWise participation business can achieve significant savings in material input costs and significant savings in waste disposal costs. The WasteWise initiative puts government and industry in a partnership role, working together to reduce resource consumption, cut waste, increase recycling and save business plenty of dollars at the same time.

Funding provided by the government under the National Packaging Covenant arrangements is matched dollar-for-dollar by industry. Approximately \$180,000 has been provided to local councils around the state for implementing Best Practice recycling, community education on recycling to ensure government funding meets its full potential in increasing recycling levels in provincial areas.

Community groups provide an ongoing and invaluable service to local governments by assisting with household recycling programs. In Bundaberg for example a non-profit organisation, Independent Recyclers, provides employment, skills and training in recycling for local people with disabilities. In the Beaudesert Shire, Noah's Ark provides a similar service at the Jimboomba landfill site, and the Kingfisher Centre and Reverse Garbage provide similar community services within the Brisbane metropolitan area.

In Queensland the EPA is currently developing a new Waste Management Strategy that will set the direction for waste management in the State for the next fifteen years. The process includes a stakeholder consultation phase. Assessment of economic drivers to maximize resource recovery, including *Extended Producer Responsibility* options such as Container Deposit Legislation (CDL), should take place within this process to ensure a strategic and integrated approach to waste management in Queensland. The New South Wales report into CDL recommends that agreement at a national level for the adoption of Extended Producer Responsibility legislation be sought to address constitutional and cross – border issues. The introduction of CDL is to be discussed at a national level between the States and the Commonwealth Government at future meetings of the Environment Protection Heritage Council.

The Queensland Government is, through the EPA, constantly developing Smart State initiatives that will contribute to a reduction in waste disposal and consequently a reduction in costs for all Queenslanders.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

DEAN WELLS
Minister for Environment