

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

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 25 August 2003 forwarding a copy of a petition tabled in the Parliament on 21 August 2003 regarding the introduction of Container Deposit Legislation similar to that operating in South Australia.

In Queensland the Environmental Protection Agency (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.

At present, all levels of government in Australia are considering the CDL option. The New South Wales report into CDL recommended that agreement at a national level for the adoption of Extended Producer Responsibility legislation be sought to address constitutional and cross – border issues. The implementation of CDL can have significant impact on local councils and the community. CDL works by adding a charge or levy that is greater than the refund offered, resulting in greater expense to the consumer. The levy is greater than the refund because the program has to be administered and collection facilities have to be managed and staffed.

The National Packaging Covenant, the framework document for the management of used packaging materials in Australia, has the advantage of dealing with packaging waste through its whole life-cycle rather than solely at its end-life, which is the focus of CDL. The Covenant expires in less than two years.

Whilst this voluntary initiative has enjoyed the support of Australian Governments and progress has been encouraging, the main administering body, the Covenant Council, needs to ensure that outcomes envisaged are achieved and are demonstrable. It is noted that the Covenant Council has agreed to a robust evaluation process which should be completed in time to allow the Environment Protection and Heritage Council, comprising the Commonwealth and State Ministers for the Environment, to consider options, including CDL, and whether the Covenant should be extended.

It should also be noted that CDL may take some of the most valuable recyclable materials out of the household recycling stream. In turn, this may reduce the yield so significantly that it would be unviable for councils to continue with the household service. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is currently working with local councils to improve waste and recycling services, and community awareness of the 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' principle. A significant part of the program is the implementation of recycling facilities in public places and better litter management.

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**