

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 27 November 2003 forwarding a copy of a petition tabled in the Parliament on 26 November 2003 regarding the introduction of Container Deposit Legislation similar to that operating in South Australia.

Container Deposit Legislation (CDL), this is just one of the approaches that can be taken to prevent drink containers ending up as litter and ensure a high collection rate of recyclable containers. A negative impact of this scheme, however, is the potential to reduce the amount of valuable recyclable materials going into household recycling bins and drop-off centres. This potential reduction in materials, particularly the high value materials such as glass and aluminium, can reduce the viability of local government recycling schemes.

Action has been implemented nationally regarding the management and reduction of packaging materials. The National Packaging Covenant (NPC) is a voluntary agreement between companies involved in packaging and all Australian Governments. The NPC provides a national framework for companies through the development of action plans, to reduce their packaging waste, as well as providing funds to support improved kerbside recycling.

Actions implemented by companies through their action plans are likely to have flow on benefits for the ultimate recyclability of materials. Under the NPC, if signatory companies fail to meet their obligations under the Covenant they are caught by safety net legislation that places greater requirements on those companies for the reduction of packaging waste materials entering the waste stream. This Legislation also applies to companies that have not signed the Covenant.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) contributed approximately \$400 000 to NPC projects in 2002-03. The NPC is due to finish in 2004, after which time Governments will undertake a review and consider any future arrangements to promote resource recovery in Australia.

The EPA also funds a number of initiatives to increase levels of recycling through the National Packaging Covenant. These include a Kerbside Best Practice Recycling guideline and matching grant scheme that provides financial incentives for Queensland local governments to kick-start or enhance existing kerbside and drop-off recycling programs. Also included are educational programs to help local governments increase the number of people involved in recycling and the level of knowledge about materials that are collected for recycling.

There is also a need for programs to promote collection of recyclables consumed away from home. These materials represent around 50% of all recyclables. In November 2002, I launched the EPA's WasteWise Initiative. A key component of WasteWise seeks to promote and support the collection and recycling of beverage and other containers in public places. Under this Program, recycling schemes have been implemented at a number of public venues such as the Doomben Racecourse, the Gabba Cricket Ground and Suncorp Stadium, and events such as the Beef 2003 Festival in Rockhampton and the RiverFire Festival in Brisbane.

The Queensland Government is, through the EPA, constantly developing SmartState 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