



ACT
Government

Container Deposit Scheme

Discussion Paper

Transport Canberra and City Services



A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



In September 2016 I announced that the ACT Government would introduce a Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) in early 2018 to reduce litter, recover eligible containers, increase the recycling rates of used beverage containers and help engage the community in active and positive recycling behaviours.

Under the CDS a 10 cent refund will be provided for empty beverage containers that are returned to an approved collection point.

This will provide an incentive for everyone to avoid littering, increase recycling and promote a cleaner environment.

Many ACT households are proud of their recycling efforts and the CDS provides an opportunity to develop these initiatives as well as providing additional opportunities for the Canberra community to recycle away from home.

Currently empty beverage containers consumed at home and away from home may end up in a recycling bin, in a waste bin or as litter in the environment.

The contents of around 180 million containers are consumed in the ACT each year.

The CDS will help reduce the amount of littered beverage containers found in Canberra's waterways, parks and roadsides. The CDS will also reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and significantly improve recycling rates through improved resource recovery.

The CDS will increase employment within the recycling industry and bring additional community benefits in the form of income generated for Canberra's economy.

In addition, local schools, charities, sporting groups and community groups can also benefit by collecting empty cans, bottles and other eligible containers and returning them to a designated drop off point to obtain a 10 cent refund. This refund can then be utilised to purchase additional equipment, improve facilities or keep memberships affordable.

The CDS is a real opportunity for government, industry and the Canberra community to work together to make a real difference to improving the health and ecological balance in our environment.

I would encourage all readers to have your say on the content of this Discussion Paper and enhance the implementation of the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) to provide the best results for the Territory.

Meegan Fitzharris MLA
Minister for Transport and City Services

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INTRODUCTION

This discussion paper provides information about the confirmed elements of the Scheme and written submissions are encouraged from the Canberra community and industry sectors.

For further information on how to make a submission including the close date go to www.yoursay.act.gov.au

The ACT will establish a Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) in early 2018. Consumers will be able to return eligible beverage containers to approved collection points and receive a 10 cent refund for each container.

The CDS will be brought in to ensure beverage suppliers take greater responsibility for packaging after beverages have been sold. It is an effective and popular means of reducing litter and encouraging community participation in recycling.

A CDS requires beverage suppliers to ensure that a system is in place for the recovery and recycling of their empty beverage containers. Container Deposit Schemes operate in approximately 40 countries around the world. Many schemes have been operating for a number of years - in some cases, such as British Columbia and South Australia, since the 1970s. Several schemes have evolved from, or are still operating in parallel with, refillable bottle return schemes.

Beverage containers make up a significant proportion of the litter stream and are manufactured from materials such as aluminium, plastic and glass that are readily able to be recycled.

The Scheme will be supported by a legislative framework comprising of amendments to the *Waste Management and Resource Recovery Act 2016*. The CDS will operate in conjunction with kerbside recycling services and forms a key component of the ACT Government's commitment in the *ACT Waste Management Strategy 2011–2025* to reduce the amount of recyclable containers littering the environment.



BENEFITS

Beverage containers are a highly visible waste stream and in the ACT the contents of approximately 180 million of these containers are consumed each year. These containers break down over time and contribute to the plastic pollution in waterways and the environment. Currently containers that may be eligible for the Scheme whether consumed at home or away from home may end up:

- in a kerbside or public recycling bin,
- in a kerbside or public waste bin or
- as litter in the environment.

The CDS will assist schools, charities and community groups to generate income and increase business and employment opportunities in the recycling industry.

The ACT Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) will:



reduce beverage container litter by providing an incentive for the Canberra community to keep, collect and return the containers for a 10 cent refund



reduce the environmental impact of litter on the natural environment and on wildlife



reduce the costs associated with litter removal for the ACT Government and the community



increase recycling and recovery rates



provide an opportunity for the community to **participate** in recycling activities and help schools, charities and community groups to generate income



increase business and employment opportunities

HOW WILL THE SCHEME IMPROVE RECYCLING?

Recycling rates in the ACT are about 25%. Based on information from other states, containers consumed away from home represent around 20–30% of consumption.

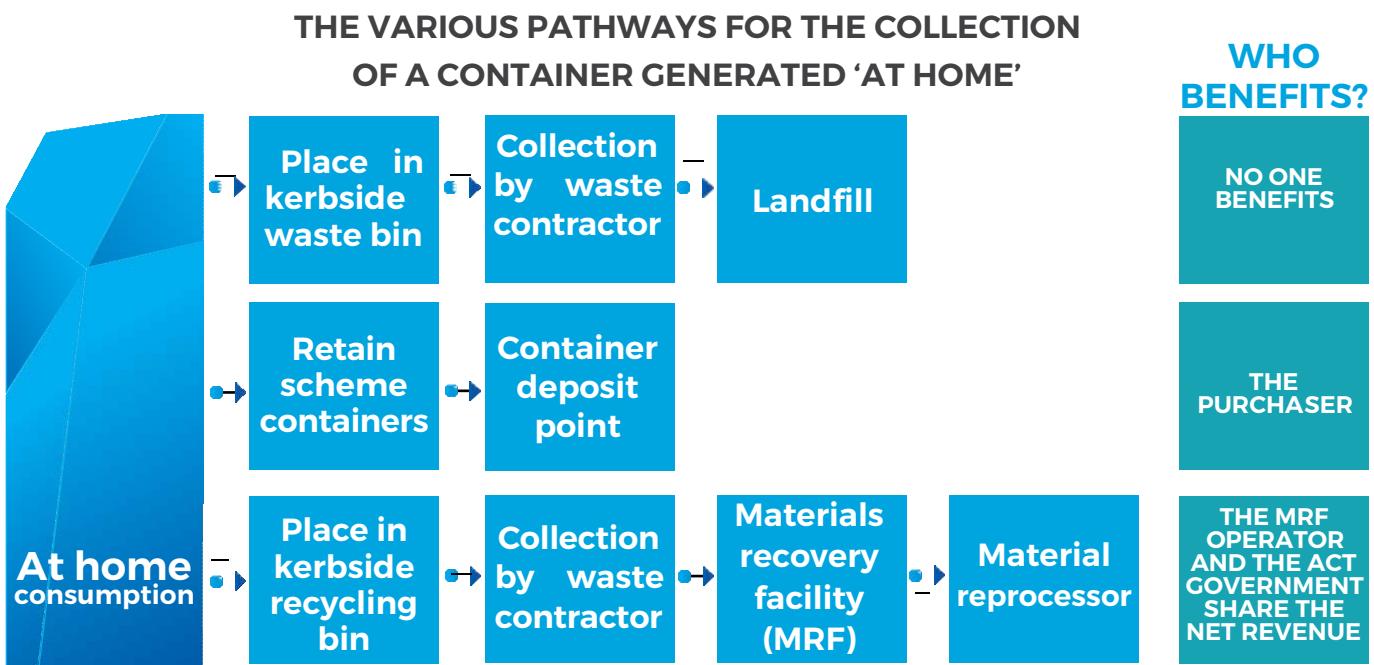
The Scheme will help significantly improve recycling rates at home and away from home by capturing all of the beverage containers that currently don't end up in a recycling bin.

WHAT HAPPENS TO CDS ELIGIBLE CONTAINERS?

AT HOME

The scheme will provide:

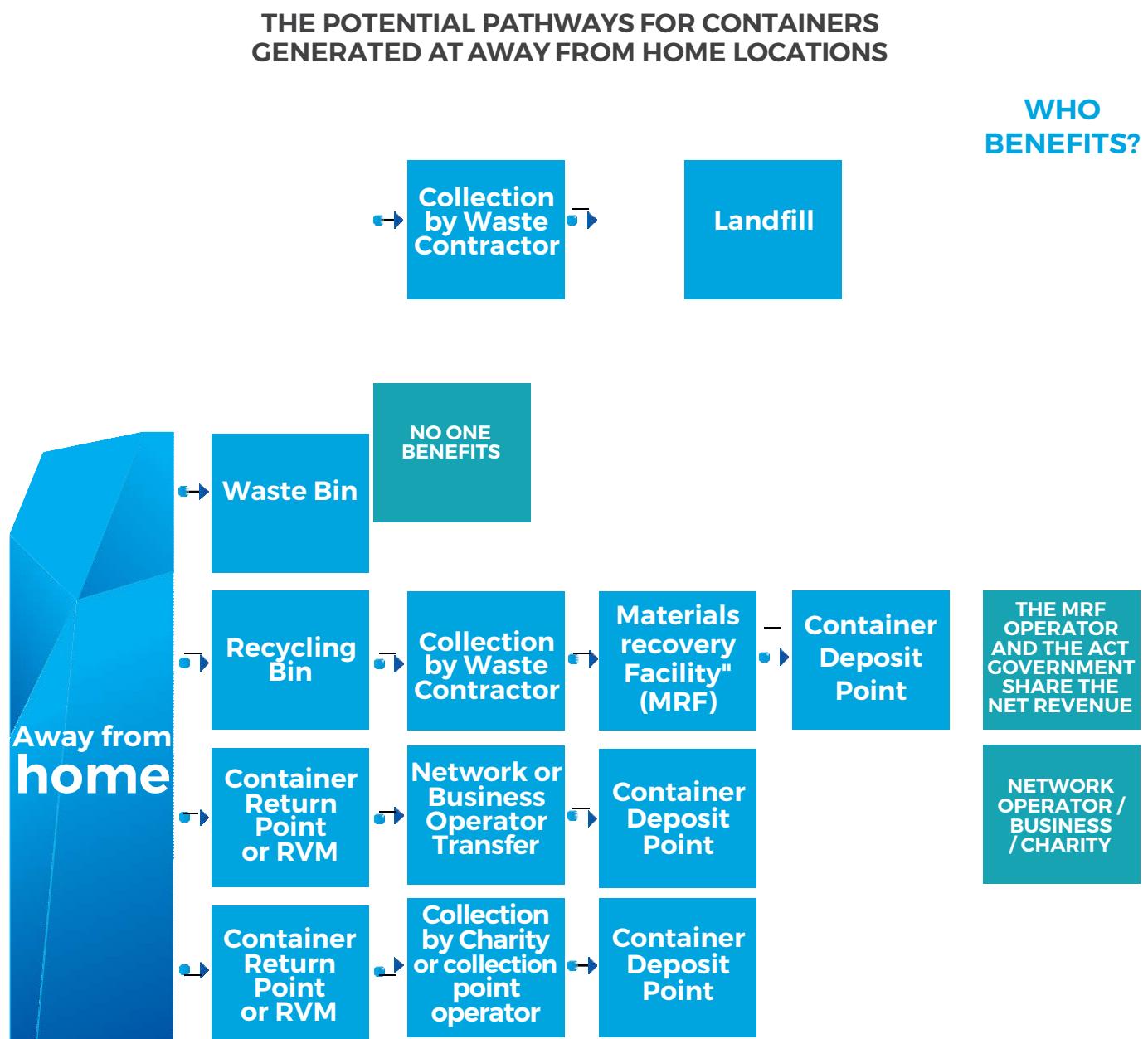
- additional methods for collecting and recovering beverage containers, many of which are made from highly recyclable material
- access to recycling services for the ACT community in order to recycle effectively.



AWAY FROM HOME

The Scheme will provide:

- an incentive for the Canberra community to recover and recycle empty beverage containers at away from home locations (such as cafes, food courts and restaurants, pubs, clubs and hotels, charity events, sporting events, pop up sites and many open air settings).



**CHARITY /
COMMUNITY
GROUPS /
COLLECTION
POINT
OPERATOR**

HOW WILL THE SCHEME WORK

AGREED ARRANGEMENTS

Some elements of the ACT Scheme have already been decided such as:

- the 10 cent refund amount for the return of empty eligible containers
- logo marking
- consistency with existing schemes in South Australia and the Northern Territory and the emerging schemes in NSW and Queensland.

It will also help reduce consumer confusion and costs for the beverage industry and the Scheme as a whole.

Detailed arrangements for the implementation of the Scheme are currently being developed in line with NSW. The Canberra community will be informed through feedback received from this Discussion Paper on the Your Say website at www.yoursay.act.gov.au.

The ACT Government is working to develop suitable container return points that offer easy access and aim to meet the recycling targets for the ACT Container Deposit Scheme.





CONTAINER DEPOSIT PAYMENT

A 10 cent container refund payment will be provided for all empty, eligible containers taken to an approved Container Collection Point.

How can the refund be made?

The refund could be provided in a number of ways including:

- cash
- utilising electronic transfer methodology to a specified account
- other credit arrangements (e.g. MyWay card top-up)
- loyalty reward program / prize draw.

In the longer term, the Network Operator and Container Collection Point operators may choose to set up other types of account management arrangements to suit the needs of the Canberra community.

The *Waste Management and Resource Recovery Amendment Bill 2017* will provide flexibility for the Container Collection Point operator to choose how they want to make the refund payment. For example, it may not be possible for all operators to deal in cash, or their ability to do so may be limited. Refunds for commercial volumes of containers may need to be made via an electronic transfer to an account. This would reduce the amount of cash held at premises at any given time, along with the security risk to both the site operator and the person receiving the refund amount.

The determination for making cash payments could be by a threshold set in regulation, either by the monetary value or the number of containers or it could be left to the discretion of the Network Operator.



ELIGIBLE CONTAINERS

Most aluminium, glass, PET, HDPE, steel and liquid paperboard beverage containers between 150ml and 3L (inclusive) will be eligible containers under the Scheme.

The ACT Scheme will align with the eligible containers that are covered by the emerging NSW and Queensland schemes. This will help avoid consumer and beverage industry confusion across the ACT, Queensland and NSW.

Further information and the eligible container list can be found on the TCCS website www.tccs.act.gov.au/recycling-and-waste/resources/container-deposit-scheme

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EXCLUDED CONTAINERS

There are a number of different types of beverage containers that will not be eligible for a refund under the Scheme. Containers less than 150ml will not be eligible for a refund and suppliers of beverages in these containers will not have obligations under the Scheme. These excluded containers ensure alignment with the emerging NSW and Queensland schemes and will help avoid consumer and beverage industry confusion across the various Schemes.

Other excluded containers are:

- plain milk containers
- glass containers which have contained wine or pure spirits
- large containers (one litre or more) which have contained flavoured milk, pure juice, cask wine or cask water
- cordial and vegetable juice containers
- sachets above 250ml that have contained wine
- registered health tonics.

The reasons for this are:

- beverages sold in very small containers are relatively inexpensive comparative to the potential included costs of collecting the containers under the Scheme
- evidence shows that beverage containers under 150ml rarely turn up in the litter stream as they are predominantly consumed at home. Further information can be found on the TCCS website www.tccs.act.gov.au/recycling-and-waste/resources/container-deposit-scheme.



CDS MARKINGS

All eligible containers will be required to carry a marking that identifies them as eligible for the Container Deposit Scheme.

It is important that this refund marking is legible and obvious to the consumer, retailer and Container Collection Point operator.

The type and design of the refund marking is being developed and the ACT Government is working closely with the NSW Government and other jurisdictions on this issue.

Options for the Container Deposit Scheme marking

Traditionally the deposit scheme marking is printed on the product label. However, missing or illegible labels may result in otherwise eligible containers being rejected. It may be preferable for the marking to be a physical mark or identifier on the container itself, rather than printed on the label.

The refund marking may be in the form of a:

- logo or image on the container or printed on the label or barcode or
- words printed on the label, similar to the South Australian and Northern Territory requirements, “10c refund at SA/NT collection depots in State/Territory of purchase”.



LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK COVERING THE CONTAINER DEPOSIT SCHEME

Regulatory framework of the Scheme will be supported by amendments to the *Waste Management and Resource Recovery Act 2016*.

The legislative framework is outlined in the *Waste Management and Resource Recovery Amendment Bill 2017*.

NOTE: A link to this legislation will be available on the TCCS website once the Legislative Assembly pass the Bill into law.

The Bill provides for:

- objectives and operational elements of the Scheme
- eligible containers
- refund amount
- refund marking
- obligation for suppliers of eligible beverages to participate in the Scheme
- the obligations for the Scheme Coordinator and the Network Operator
- reporting, performance and auditing framework and requirements
- approval criteria for Container Collection Point operators
- offences and penalties.

Non-regulatory framework

A number of formal arrangements will also form part of the CDS structure:

- Container recovery arrangements—an agreement between the beverage supplier and the Scheme Coordinator for the collection, identification and sorting of containers. Under this agreement the beverage supplier declares its ACT sales and pays the refund and handling fee.
- Contracts—between various parties, for example the ACT Government and the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) operator which details obligations, material ownership and any revenue-sharing arrangements.
- Guidelines—will be developed to explain the Scheme's operating principles.

ACT CONTAINER DEPOSIT GOVERNANCE, OPERATIONS AND STRUCTURE

11 ACT SCHEME GOVERNANCE

The ACT Government is committed to establishing a CDS that is consistent with the emerging NSW scheme to reduce confusion and duplication for industry and consumers. However, it is important that the ACT CDS has the most appropriate governance, structure, and operating arrangements for the ACT to operate a successful CDS. Latest news from NSW regarding the NSW CDS can be found on this link <http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/resources/MinMedia/EPAMinMedia17072901.pdf>

12 SCHEME OPERATIONS AND STRUCTURE

GOVERNMENT ADMINISTERED SCHEMES

Governance arrangements and scheme structures differ across jurisdictions, both in Australia and overseas.

Schemes administered by the government generally involve:

- public sector control of the flow of funds and information, as well as scheme regulation
- physical flows of containers can be delegated to private sector operators or managed by government entities.

The advantage of this arrangement is that it provides government with direct control over the delivery of its public policy objectives for the scheme and the ability to identify and restrain fraudulent practices.

INDUSTRY-BASED SCHEMES

- Industry-based schemes operate in South Australia and the Northern Territory.
- The beverage industry is required by legislation to organise and run the scheme and operate under broad government regulation to ensure that a system is in place for the recovery and recycling of their empty beverage containers. The role of government is to provide the legislative framework for the scheme and to enforce the provisions.

The advantage of this arrangement is that it can be more cost-effective because the beverage industry has logistics expertise and a clear business incentive to minimise operating costs so providing for a more cost efficient scheme.



13 SCHEME COORDINATOR AND NETWORK OPERATOR

The ACT Government is committed to developing a CDS that is consistent with the emerging NSW scheme. The ACT scheme will have both a Scheme Coordinator and a Network Operator role.

ACT SCHEME COORDINATOR

The ACT will have the same Scheme Coordinator as NSW.

The responsibilities of the Scheme Coordinator will include reporting to government against scheme performance measures, financial accountability, ensuring transparency in the scheme to prevent fraud and entering into a container recovery arrangement with beverage suppliers.

An approval process and assessment criteria is provided in the legislation. A person would not be able to operate as a Scheme Coordinator without ACT Government approval.

The Scheme Coordinator will be responsible for:

- delivering the most appropriate Scheme for the ACT including value for money
- overall operation of the Scheme, including operating system cost determination and control of the flow of funds and information.

ACT NETWORK OPERATOR

The ACT Government will set performance targets for the Network Operator. This provides the opportunity for industry to determine solutions for collecting and sorting that are cost effective and meet the needs of the Canberra community.

The Network Operator will be responsible for:

- establishing and managing a network of collection points which they can establish directly or be entering into agreements with collection point operators. Examples of collection points include depots, shop fronts and reverse vending machines
- delivering the most appropriate and best-fit scheme for the ACT, including providing value-for-money
- overall operation of the Scheme, including operating system cost determination and control of the flow of funds and information.

CONTAINER DEPOSIT SCHEME ACCESSIBILITY

21 ACCESSIBILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The ACT CDS seeks to ensure that the Canberra community has reasonable access to Container Collection Points.

The ACT Scheme will be cost-effective and provide for efficient and convenient container collection through a network of permanent, temporary and mobile collections and integrating reverse vending machines and automated counting and sorting technology, where appropriate.

22 ACCESS AND CONVENIENCE

There are a number of issues to be considered in establishing and providing reasonable access to the Scheme's Container Collection Points.

NUMBER AND LOCATION OF COLLECTION POINTS

- To ensure convenient access across the ACT for a number of Container Collection Points—both container deposit points and container return points—will be required.
- Reasonable access needs to be available in the highly urban environment.
- The final number of collection points that will be required to adequately service the needs of the Scheme is still to be determined.
- A larger than required number of Container Collection Points could add to the Scheme's operating costs and be considered, upon review, as excess to requirements.
- For a Scheme to remain viable, it is important to provide an optimal number of Container Collection Points.

ACCESSIBILITY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Accessibility performance measures and ongoing community feedback will ensure suitability of collection points and measures may be refined over time.
- The targets are designed to ensure the Canberra community has reasonable access to Container Collection Points. For example, an accessibility performance measure may be the percentage of ACT residents who live within a certain distance of a Container Collection Point.

COLLECTION INFRASTRUCTURE

- Existing waste management facilities and public infrastructure may be able to be used as Container Collection Points, where this is deemed feasible.
- An assessment of suitable available infrastructure will be required prior to commencement of the Scheme.
- The infrastructure in place for current waste management activities will be a key factor in creating operating and cost efficiencies for the Scheme.
- Some existing infrastructure will not be suitable for a Container Collection Point and this will necessitate the identification and establishment of new locations.
- Establishing Container Collection Point infrastructure provides opportunities to create local area jobs and supports social enterprise and community charity activities.

2.3 CONTAINER RETURN ARRANGEMENTS

The ACT Scheme will be made up of a combination of Container Collection Points that include container deposit points and possibly container return points. This mix of container return arrangements will provide for increased access and community involvement, contributing to the Scheme's success.

CONTAINER DEPOSIT POINT

Container deposit points provide a location where consumers can return their empty beverage containers and receive a 10 cent refund payment.

Container deposit points may be:

- permanently located at a dedicated site
- co-located at a facility such as a transfer station
- mobile collection facilities at an event etc
- reverse vending machines at supermarkets, shopping centres, tram / bus stops or other locations
- The design and location of container deposit points is likely to vary depending on location and the needs of the local community
- Container refund point operators will have specific requirements placed on them through an approval process established in legislation. These requirements may include defined opening hours and obligations to accept eligible containers
- All container deposit points will need to provide an accurate container count (manual or automated) in order to provide the correct refund and to receive accurate payment for the containers they have refunded
- Container deposit points will require an approval to operate.



CONTAINER RETURN POINTS

- Container return points provide a location where consumers can return their empty beverage containers—but they won't receive a refund payment.
- Consumers returning containers to container return points will effectively 'donate' the 10 cent refund to the Container Collection Point operator.
- Container return points may be operated by community groups e.g. schools, sporting clubs and charities or as part of events or fundraising activities.
- Container return points may be more informal in operation than a container deposit point and may operate on an irregular or pop up basis.
- Container return points will still be required to meet minimum standards and requirements.



INTERACTION WITH EXISTING RECOVERY SERVICES

31 HOW WILL THE SCHEME WORK WITH EXISTING KERBSIDE RECYCLING COLLECTIONS?

Where possible, the Scheme will be designed and implemented to complement existing recovery services. The Canberra community will still be able to use their existing kerbside recycling, where available, to recycle eligible containers. However, no refund will be payable to the consumer on containers that are collected through kerbside recycling. The experience from other jurisdictions shows that many households continue to use their kerbside recycling bin rather than taking containers to a Container Collection Point. Containers and other materials placed in kerbside recycling bins are transported to the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) at Hume ACT through the normal kerbside (yellow bin) collections.

32 HOW WILL THE SCHEME WORK WITH MATERIAL RECOVERY FACILITIES?

The Material Recovery Facility (MRF) at Hume will continue to play an important role in recovering containers. Systems and protocols will need to be established to ensure existing operations are complemented, and are not adversely impacted, by the introduction of the Scheme. There are a number of considerations for how MRF operators will sort eligible containers.

SORTING ELIGIBLE CONTAINERS

- The ACT Government provides the current kerbside recycling services and may enter into contractual arrangements with MRF operators to share revenue from the Scheme refund proceeds.
- The MRF operator will collect, identify and sort eligible beverage containers from other containers that come through the kerbside system.
- The MRF operator may be approved to be a Container Collection Point in order to receive the refund.
- The MRF operator would be eligible for a handling fee as well as the container refund as they are providing a value-add service.
- The MRF operator may also consider providing consolidation points for small volumes of containers collected at times and in certain locations. This could provide a cost effective way of transporting material to processors and entitle them to a handling and network fee.



IDENTIFYING AND TRACKING ELIGIBLE CONTAINERS

Containers returned through the Scheme can be tracked and validated, through the use of technology, including:

4.1 BARCODE IDENTIFICATION

As well as the refund marking, a barcode may provide another means of identifying and verifying eligible containers. Barcode scanning to record and control the recovery of used beverage containers is used in a number of schemes around the world. The benefits of using barcodes include:

- cost reduction
- efficiency and transparency throughout the scheme, and
- accurate data collection for reporting and financial auditing.

To realise all the benefits of a barcode-based scheme, including fraud prevention and transparency, it would ideally be employed system-wide.

Barcode identification has some potential issues:

- Where containers are not directly redeemed through a system which incorporates barcode reading technology, the material would be transported to the MRF for verification and compaction in order to effectively devalue (or ‘destroy’) the container through the Scheme
- Not all eligible containers may carry a barcode such as products sold in multi-packs that are not for individual sale. On some of these products, the barcode is typically on the outer packaging not on the individual container.

4.2 REVERSE VENDING MACHINES

A reverse vending machine (RVM) uses shape recognition technology which means it can potentially identify eligible containers without the need for a barcode or refund marking and still have that container accepted by the machine. The RVMs could be located at consumer destination points or larger automated depots.

4.3 COUNTING AND SORTING MACHINES

- Highly automated counting and sorting machines may also be used to quickly count the number of containers presented and sort the containers by material. Containers can be bulk-fed into the machine, eliminating single counting and sorting practices. The benefits of this approach are that it provides accuracy and transparency through the system, as well as a point of validation in relation to the volume of containers on which a refund has been paid.
- There is also no need for additional counting or handling of the returned containers when they are transported to a consolidation or processing facility. Automated systems have considerable benefit where large volumes of containers may be received as they speed up the process and reduce the risk of error and fraud.
- It may not always be practical from a cost and volume perspective to install highly automated sorting and counting machines. A counting only machine will provide similar benefits in that it reduces the risk of miscounting and provides for transparency through the system, without sorting material. These machines may be permanent or mobile.

44 OTHER ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED: RECOGNISING REFUND MARKINGS FROM OTHER STATES

As most containers in the market already bear the refund marking for South Australia and Northern Territory, it is likely that the ACT scheme will allow for any eligible container to be returned for a refund in the ACT irrespective of its state of purchase, subject to:

- the beverage being purchased in a jurisdiction where a scheme operates
- the container bearing a valid refund mark or other identifier recognised under the Scheme.

SCHEME TARGETS

The ACT Scheme will be made up of a combination of Container Collection Points that include container deposit points and possibly container return points.

This mix of container return arrangements will provide for increased access and community involvement, contributing to the Scheme's success.

Targets will be established to ensure the Scheme meets its objectives.

Territory wide recovery and recycling targets are likely to be established. There is potentially a need to establish 5–25 collection points across the ACT. Appropriate targets will need to be established for the initial start-up period and for the longer-term.

The following performance targets may be established:

- reduced litter impact from beverage containers (measured by counts of beverage container litter volumes)
- improved resource recovery (measured by audits of beverage container recycling amounts)
- enhanced community benefits
- accessibility of Container Collection Points.

DEFINITIONS

CONTAINER COLLECTION POINT

A formal, or informal, collection point that has been approved by the ACT Government to operate within the Scheme. A Container Collection Point may be a container deposit point or a container return point.

CONTAINER DEPOSIT POINT

A formal collection point that has been approved by the government at which empty beverage containers can be presented in exchange for the 10 cent refund amount payable on that container. A container deposit point may be permanent or mobile.

CONTAINER COLLECTION POINT OPERATOR

A government approved operator of a Container Collection Point.

CONTAINER RETURN POINT

A collection point that has been approved by the government at which empty beverage containers can be presented for collection without any refund amount paid. These locations may be informal and non-permanent locations established for special events.

SCHEME COORDINATOR ARRANGEMENT

The arrangement established under legislation for one Scheme Coordinator for the ACT.

NETWORK OPERATOR

The entity that is responsible for the logistical management of CDS eligible containers within the ACT. This includes establishing and managing a network of collection points which they can establish directly or be entering into agreements with collection point operators to implement the Container Deposit Scheme in the ACT.

NETWORK OPERATOR ARRANGEMENT

The arrangement established under legislation for one Network Operator for the ACT.

DIRECTORATE

Directorate of Transport Canberra and City Services as part of the ACT Government.

ELIGIBLE CONTAINER

An approved container that is designed to hold a beverage and that meets the requirements for the refund of 10 cents under the Scheme.

IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

The group of stakeholders established by the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate to provide advice and input into the implementation of the Container Deposit Scheme in the ACT.

RECYCLE / RECYCLING

A set of processes for converting recovered materials, which would otherwise be disposed of as waste, into useful materials or products.

REFUND MARKING

The identifying mark indicating that the container is eligible for a 10 cent refund under the Scheme.

REVERSE VENDING MACHINE (RVM)

This is a device that accepts empty beverage containers and returns money or another form of consideration to the user. An RVM may be a single container/material feed machine or designed to accept bulk feed/material types.

SCHEME COORDINATOR

The entity responsible for oversight of the Scheme, including entering into beverage supplier and Network Operator arrangements, and transparency and accountability of the Scheme, including financial management, auditing, performance monitoring review and reporting.

HAVE YOUR SAY

REFUND MARKING

- Is a logo or picture to represent the refund marking easier to understand than the text, similar to that used in South Australia and Northern Territory?

For example, beverages covered by the legislation in South Australia and the Northern Territory look something like this image.

- Would you support the Scheme providing flexibility to allow for the use of more than one way to identify an eligible container i.e. barcode technology, container shape, manual identification etc.?



REFUND PAYMENT METHODOLOGY

- How should the refund be made?

The refund could be provided in a number of ways including:

- cash
- utilising electronic transfer methodology to a specified account
- other credit arrangements (e.g. MyWay card top up)
- loyalty reward program / prize draw

ACCESSIBILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- How far would you be willing to travel out of your way to redeem your containers?
- Where would be a convenient location (i.e. public places and buildings, supermarkets, transfer stations, local shopping centres, existing Resource Management Centres or Recycling Drop Off Centres).
- How can the convenience for redemption of containers and equitable access to all in the community be enhanced?
- Would you use a reverse vending machine to return bottles?
- Would you be happy to pay more for a scheme that offers more services and is easily accessible or do you wish to see a minimal cost CDS that provides a funding source for the ACT litter recovery and recycling initiatives?

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

- What do you think might be an acceptable overlap period for the recognition of containers from other states and territories? For example; containers from the SA/NT Scheme.