


Inquiry - Improving Queensland's Container Refund Scheme

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There are some key issues impacting why the return rate of 85% target that is legislated and highlighted in the 'Parliamentary Inquiry launched into Queensland's container refund scheme - Ministerial Media Statements' has not been met. 1. Initial enthusiasm for the scheme has subsided. When you only get 10 cents a container is it worth all the effort to bring them to a recycling facility? Not really as the average household may only use 30 – 40 such containers a week (milk containers are not recyclable). So why make an effort for a return of \$4? That would not pay the petrol for many people to drive to a recycling facility and back. How many people have the room to stockpile them for a year and then take them in? The stored containers attract vermin by the way. 2. The only way that the scheme can be 'profitable' to any individual recycler is if they make it their hobby and return thousands of containers. That is a big ask and very few people want to do that or have the means to do so. Also, when you return in bulk and leave the processing of each container to the centre operators there is no assurance that you will get back what you put in. They always give back less than they should as they get to keep the returned ones that may not be scanned through first go. 3. Since the scheme commenced in 2018 I would say there has been a proliferation of more and more containers for products vying for smaller and smaller schisms of the market e.g. Kombucha drinks, hundreds of different beverages etc. Since COVID people tend to order food and drinks in more is also my observation. So more containers are being used, I would think. This makes the 85% legislated target an unrealistic one. Other Matters: The companies involved in the scheme e.g., TOMRA and Containers for Change, MUST make the customer the centre of the process and ensure that they do all they can to ensure customers receive back 10c for every eligible container. Staff at the collection centres should have the skills to put customers first - currently this is not always the case. There should be greater transparency in relation to the drop off process used by Containers for Change. As there is currently no way that a customer can precisely know if their containers are reimbursed once they enter, operators should have to email the details of the numbers of containers accepted and the ones rejected and why. This information is recorded on the bag drop off form once processed by C for C but not shared with the customer. It should be so customers can have confidence in the scheme and know why their returns are being rejected.