

Inquiry - Improving Queensland's Container Refund Scheme

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When in Germany recently I noted how effective their container refund system is. You can go to almost any grocery store and there is a reverse vending machine to take eligible items. You then get a retail voucher or cash. No account is needed which made it very easy for us as visitors there for 3 months to participate in the scheme. The nearest vending machine is a 3 hour round trip away from where I live here in Qld. How do we get more reverse vending machine in grocery stores so they are easy to access? It is so time consuming having to save them up and take a trek in to the town depot which is not open on weekends. In Germany the refund can be up to 42 AUD cents (approx). In 3 months driving and cycling around Germany I found 1 discarded bottle. And it was one without a refund sticker (ineligible). No one discards eligible containers. People also place them NEXT to regular bins so homeless people or students or anyone can pick them up and get the refund. Some towns even have donation collection racks on street posts so you pop your empty bottle in the rack (holds 3-4) to donate it. They provide a dignified options to do this and different towns do it differently without detracting from the visual appeal of a beautiful old town. 10c in Australia is not incentive enough, people still litter, returning is hard work and does not account for seasonal workers/overseas visitors. Go to any public rubbish bin outside a service station in Queensland - you'll find plenty of eligible items. We also have a local refuse station where we take our weekly waste. We throw our rubbish into a giant skip bin. Every time, I see dozens of eligible items. Partly because people are lazy and don't see a good enough reason to separate their waste, partly because the financial incentive isn't attractive. At this rate it is a double whammy because they are not even recycling the items, they go into general waste. Please make the system more accessible. Can we start with more reverse vending machines in supermarkets so we don't have to make separate trips to actually get the refund. Supermarkets should be encouraged or subsidised to dedicate retail space for this purpose. In Germany the system is set up as a deposit scheme, not a refund scheme. When you buy a drink in a supermarket you will see two entires on the receipt. One is the price of the drink, the second is the deposit amount. Various supermarkets have a reverse vending machine set up (this is sometimes manned). The idea is you take your small crate or bag of containers to the shop and deposit them prior to grocery shopping. This simplifies the process. You don't need a complicated system or storage shed at home. You can take a small amount whenever you go to the grocery store. Some Germans keep a milk crate style container in the boot of the car. The drink manufacturers will provide these drink crates. I urge you to consider how European countries like Germany make this work. It was obvious it works. It was easy and effective.