

Inquiry - Improving Queensland's Container Refund Scheme

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To create an effective container deposit scheme, several key factors must be considered, including ease of collection and the incentive for returning materials. Currently, Queensland's system does not align with international best practices seen in countries like Germany or Norway. The incentive for returning items in Australia is 10 cents, which has remained unchanged for over a decade. In contrast, Germany offers 20 euro cents (approximately 35 AUD cents). This discrepancy means the incentive in Australia does not keep up with inflation and fails to motivate the majority of people. Increasing the refund amount has been shown to boost collection rates (refer to Reloop, RELOOP Factsheet Performance_12I2022.pdf). Improving convenience at collection points could involve exploring alternative collection methods, such as return-to-retail models, and increasing the number of return points. Funding could be allocated to set up reverse vending machines in key locations like shopping centres, high streets, or outside cafes. This would enhance collection ease and transport efficiency. One barrier is the lack of electrical supply, so funding to address this could help councils overcome this obstacle. In the Redlands, there is a need for a service or process to collect containers from island communities. These tourist destinations present a significant opportunity, as holiday homes typically generate higher-than-average container usage. Rottneest Island offers a successful model where tourists are charged to visit, and those funds support sustainability programs like Containers for Change. Transport efficiency could be improved if return points compacted materials, enhancing transport efficiency and reducing carbon impacts. This is particularly relevant for remote and island communities. Other barriers include the need for businesses and government organizations to easily set up accounts with multiple members without being listed as a charity, which has been a challenge for councils establishing internal container collection schemes. Additionally, there should be more engagement with schools and the Department of Education to make it mandatory to have these bins in schools, rather than relying on schools to proactively set them up.