

Inquiry - Improving Queensland's Container Refund Scheme

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3 April 2025

Health, Environment and Innovation Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Re: Submission on Parliamentary Inquiry into Queensland's Container Refund Scheme

Re.Group welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to the *Parliamentary Inquiry into Improving Queensland's Container Refund Scheme*. We play a significant role in Queensland's recycling sector, and we are proud of the impact our Return-It team as a Major Operator in the CRS. We have, however, had various frustrations with the current scheme, and we believe better outcomes can be achieved for the Queensland community through a more collaborative and balanced approach that embraces the experience of front-line operators, rather than a command and control type relationship.

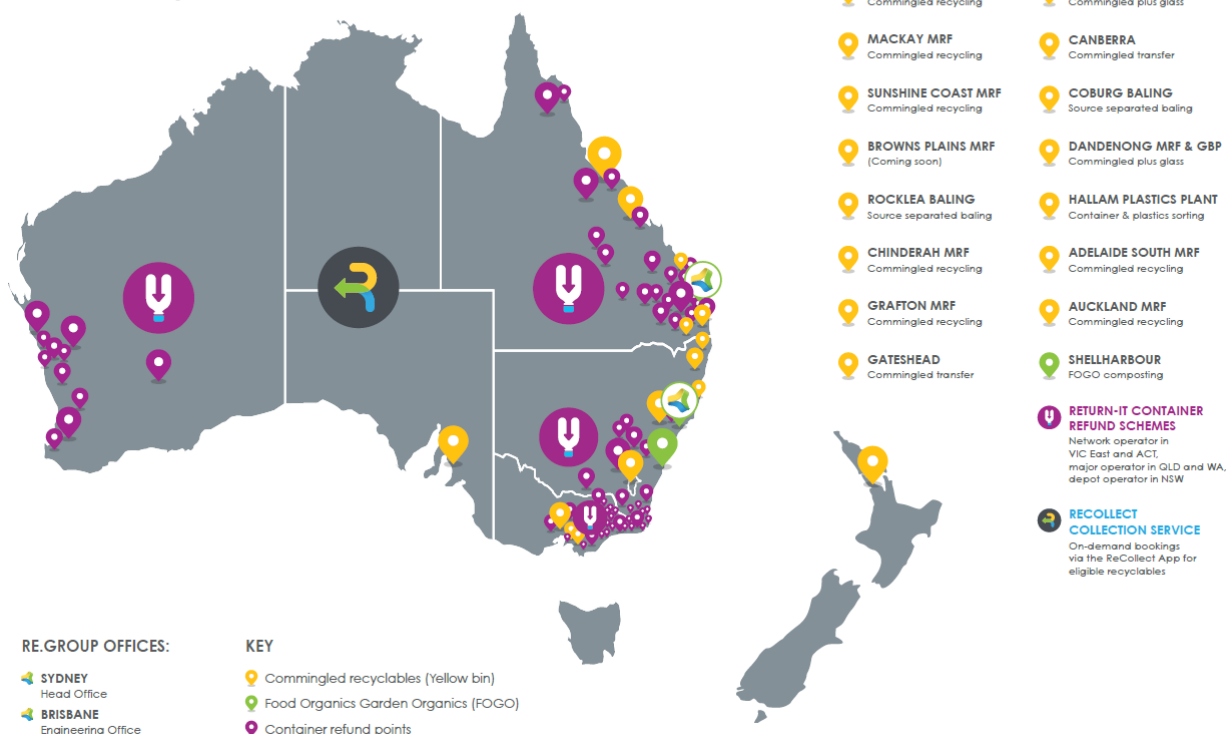
About Re.Group

Re.Group is the only Australian company that designs, builds, owns, and operates recycling systems. Since our formation in 2013, Re.Group has created Australia's largest network of recycling facilities. We service more than 40 Councils, handle 500,000 tonnes of recycling per annum, and support recycling outcomes for over 5 million Australians and New Zealanders who roll their bins to the kerbside every week. In addition, we are the largest operator of staffed container refund depots across Australia, servicing thousands of people and handling some 20 million used beverage containers per week. We directly employ over 900 people and also support various partner organisations to create meaningful work.

Re.Group is a multi-faceted resource recovery company with three key pillars:

1. **Re.Cycle:** the entity focused on commingled or "yellow bin" recycling at our Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs). Re.Cycle also includes source separation and beneficiation plants, as well as processing Food and Garden Organics (FOGO).
2. **Return-It:** Leaders in managing and facilitating operations that focus on recycling for Container Refund Schemes. Convenient locations and innovative technology enable a seamless recycling experience at fully staffed depots and unmanned collection points.
3. **RDT Engineering:** Designs and builds recycling facilities and systems for the Re.Group entities, as well as commercial clients in New Zealand and Australia.

The map below provides an overview of the scale of our recycling network.



Key Recommendations

Re.Group's key recommendations to enhance the environmental, economic, and community benefits of the Queensland CRS are:

- Increase the container refund value from \$0.10 to at least \$0.20, with periodic review and CPI indexation to maintain impact.
- Reform governance, increasing transparency, reducing conflicts of interest, and allowing government more direct oversight of outcomes, as per the outcomes being delivered through 'split responsibility' schemes in NSW, the ACT and VIC.
- Redesign the return network using a strategic master plan to optimise geographic distribution and protect existing investments.
- Promote infrastructure investment in modern sorting, compacting, and recycling technologies to increase material recovery and reduce emissions.
- Transition the scheme away from cash payments to digital, secure, and efficient refund methods.

- Launch targeted marketing campaigns using behavioural insights to improve participation, particularly in underperforming areas.
- Encourage innovation among Container Return Point Operators (CRPOs), and service expansion to other recyclable materials.
- Strengthen data transparency and performance-based incentives to ensure continuous improvement and measurable social impact.

These reforms will help Queensland reach its target of an 85% return rate while ensuring the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of the Container Refund Scheme.

Re.Group prides itself on working in collaborative partnerships with stakeholders. To date, we have not been able to develop the same spirit of partnership with COEX as we would very much like to achieve. However, we do remain fully committed to delivering the best outcomes for the Queensland community, and we hope our feedback into this inquiry process will help result in reforms that do allow a more collaborative and balanced approach to improving the performance of the scheme.

We would welcome an opportunity to discuss these matters with you as part of the Parliamentary Inquiry process.

Kind Regards,

David Singh
Managing Director

Marc Churchin
CEO – Return-It