

Inquiry - Improving Queensland's Container Refund Scheme

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Daar Members

I understand that you are currently holding a Queensland Parliamentary Inquiry into the Containers for Change scheme in Queensland.

Having been a regular user of the scheme since January 2022, I wanted to submit the following comments to your inquiry.

I have almost always attended the Tingalpa outlet which was initially known as TOMCRA but is now known as Containers for Change. One particular issue which I have encountered repeatedly since first using the scheme is that the machines often reject what appear to be perfectly eligible items. This has occurred with all types of items including aluminium cans, plastic bottles and glass bottles. On most instances when an item has been rejected, the bar code on the item has indicated that the item is eligible for the scheme, yet the machines will continually reject it. On other occasions a perfectly eligible item will be rejected because a retail label has been placed over the barcode.

On one occasion in October 2023 the machines at the Tingalpa Containers for Change outlet rejected 15 aluminium cans in one session despite all of them being labeled with the 10 cent eligibility.

I recall a friend of mine telling me in November 2020 when the scheme was relatively new, that he had encountered the same issue of what appear to be perfectly eligible items being rejected by the machines at outlets elsewhere in Brisbane.

This is clearly unsatisfactory from a user point of view, and on these grounds, I have to say that the Queensland scheme performs poorly when compared to the counterpart scheme in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). The ACT scheme, operating under the Return It name, has machines that readily accept all eligible plastic, glass and aluminium items, regardless of whether the label and bar code are intact, missing or not. The ACT scheme also accepts cans and bottles that have been crushed or dented, whereas the Queensland scheme currently does not.

The Queensland scheme needs to be improved to the same level of precision as the ACT scheme with all perfectly eligible items accepted and not randomly rejected by the machines as they are at present.

I also believe that my local area on Wynnum and Manly needs more collection points for the scheme. The Tingalpa outlet is several kilometres away from the heavily populated suburbs of Wynnum Central and Manly but I am not aware of any collection points being closer. If they do exist, they need to be better publicized for users of the scheme.

I would also like to highlight an issue affecting some regional operators that I became aware of while travelling in north Queensland in June 2024. During a week long visit to the far north, I deposited items at collection points in both Atherton and Normanton. One of the operators in Normanton mentioned to me that for some remote operators of the scheme, the income they earned from the scheme often did not fully cover the costs of remaining open for a full day on the weekends.

I think it is very important that residents in such remote locations do have access to the Containers for Change scheme. I would encourage the committee to investigate whether remote regional operators can be better supported to keep the scheme running in their communities. Perhaps there is a case for altering the operating hours in those areas in order to reduce cost pressures on the operators, while at the same time maintaining access to the scheme for local residents.

I thank you for the opportunity to submit comments to your inquiry and look forward to receiving your findings and recommendations in due course.

Yours faithfully

Gregory Moore

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Gregory Moore.