

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Strengthening the Container Refund Scheme) Amendment Bill 2026

Submission No: 004

Submission By: Douglas Shire Council

Publication: Making the submission and your name public

YOUR REF: Douglas Shire Council Submission
OUR REF: Council Officer Submission (Resource Recovery Officer)

08 April 2026

Health, Environment and Innovation Committee

Dear Committee

RE: Waste Reduction and Recycling (Strengthening the Container Refund Scheme) Amendment Bill 2026

Douglas Shire Council (DSC) supports the findings of the Committee inquiry and the Queensland Government's response, as reflected in the Waste Reduction and Recycling (Strengthening the Container Refund Scheme) Amendment Bill 2026.

Council supports all recommendations aimed at strengthening:

- Governance and oversight of the Scheme Coordinator (COEX)
- Transparency and accountability
- Scheme performance and recovery outcomes
- Regional access and participation

Council particularly supports increased focus on:

- Improving access to return points in regional and remote areas
- Addressing participation barriers in high tourism locations

However, Douglas Shire Council does not support any increase to the container refund value currently. Council considers that current performance challenges are primarily related to governance, accessibility, and system efficiency, rather than the refund amount.

Support for Committee Recommendations and Government Response

Douglas Shire Council supports the Committee's recommendations and the Government's response, including:

- Strengthened Ministerial oversight of the Scheme Coordinator
- Improved Board governance and appointment processes

- Enhanced transparency and reporting obligations
- Introduction of performance monitoring and accountability mechanisms
- Improved data collection and accessibility
- Increased focus on regional access and participation

Council considers these reforms essential to improving Scheme effectiveness and equity across Queensland.

Governance and Oversight of the Scheme Coordinator

Council supports the Bill's provisions to strengthen governance, including:

- Ministerial oversight and intervention powers
- Board composition and appointment controls
- Mechanisms for review and accountability

These reforms are necessary to ensure appropriate management of Scheme funds, alignment with public interest outcomes and improved Scheme performance.

Transparency and Reporting

Council strongly supports enhanced transparency requirements, including:

- Publication of strategic and operational plans
- Improved financial reporting
- Greater visibility of Scheme performance

Council recommends the reporting should include:

- *Regionally disaggregated data*
- *Clear reporting on investment and service delivery in regional and remote areas*
- *Accessible data for local government use*

Scheme Performance and Recovery Rates

Council supports the introduction of stronger performance monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

Improving recovery rates should be achieved through:

- Increased convenience and accessibility
- Improved system efficiency
- Strengthened governance

Douglas Shire Council does not support increasing the refund value as a primary mechanism to improve performance. Increasing the refund amount:

- Does not address structural issues such as access and system design
- May increase costs to consumers and businesses

- Risks unintended economic impacts without guaranteed improvement in recovery rates

Local Government Role and Representation

Local governments play a critical role in the success of the Scheme, including:

- Managing public place waste and litter
- Providing supporting recycling infrastructure
- Delivering education and behaviour change programs

Council recommends the Bill should:

- *Include local government representation on the Scheme Coordinator Board*
- *Establish formal mechanisms for ongoing engagement with councils*

Financial Transparency and Reinvestment

Council supports improved transparency of Scheme financial flows. Local governments continue to bear costs associated with:

- Litter collection
- Public place infrastructure
- Management of unreturned containers

Council recommends the Bill should ensure transparency in how Scheme funds are allocated and support reinvestment into:

- *Local government support programs*
- *Enhancing public place recycling infrastructure to maximise recovery*
- *Regional and remote service delivery*

Regional and Remote Access to Return Options

Douglas Shire Council strongly supports increased focus on improving access to return points in regional and remote areas. Current challenges include:

- Limited number of refund locations
- Travel distances and reduced convenience
- Lower participation rates as a result

These barriers directly impact Scheme performance and equity.

Council recommends the Bill should establish minimum service coverage standards for regional and remote areas whilst providing targeted funding or incentives to improve regional service availability

High Tourism Locations and Participation Barriers

Douglas Shire is a high tourism destination with a large volume of domestic and international visitors. Tourism creates unique challenges for the Scheme:

- Visitors are often unfamiliar with the Container Refund Scheme
- Containers consumed by tourists are less likely to be returned
- Councils manage increased volumes of public place waste and litter

Without targeted interventions, these areas may experience lower recovery rates and carry disproportionate operational costs.

Council recommends that the Scheme and its implementation recognise the unique challenges faced by high tourism locations and ensure these areas receive appropriate consideration and support. This may include:

- *Funding support for partnerships with councils promoting the scheme through targeted education and communication approaches for visitors, including multilingual materials*
- *Provision of appropriate infrastructure in high-traffic locations (such as marinas, national parks and key tourist precincts)*
- *Recognition of tourism-driven impacts within funding, service planning and performance frameworks*

Future Expansion of Collection Streams

Council notes potential future expansion of refund points to include additional materials such as batteries and soft plastics.

Council recommends any expansion should:

- *Be supported by appropriate infrastructure and transport funding*
- *Adequately address safety risks (particularly lithium batteries)*
- *Not increase operational burden on local government*

Douglas Shire Council supports the intent of the Bill and the strengthening of Queensland's Container Refund Scheme. To ensure equitable and effective outcomes, it is critical that the Scheme:

- Improves access for regional and remote communities
- Addresses participation barriers in high tourism locations
- Strengthens governance and accountability

Council welcomes continued collaboration with the Queensland Government to ensure the Scheme delivers strong environmental and community outcomes across all regions of Queensland.

Yours faithfully

Emma Egel, Resource Recovery Officer – Environment and Planning



A certified ECO Destination by Ecotourism Australia.