

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

**Submission No:** 028

**Submission By:** Battery Stewardship Council

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Office of the Health, Environment and Innovation Committee  
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14 April 2026

Dear Health, Environment and Innovation Committee,

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

The Battery Stewardship Council (BSC) welcomes the Queensland Government’s focus on strengthening the Container Refund Scheme (CRS) through the Waste Reduction and Recycling (Strengthening the Container Refund Scheme) Amendment Bill 2026. Although BSC’s core mandate is battery stewardship, the Bill sets important precedents for how Queensland structures, governs and regulates producer-funded recovery schemes more broadly.

From BSC’s perspective, a well-designed CRS is a critical part of Queensland’s resource recovery and circular economy architecture, and an early test of how producer-funded schemes can operate at scale with clear roles, robust oversight and strong public confidence. The governance, performance and transparency settings adopted for the CRS will inevitably inform expectations for future mandatory stewardship arrangements, including for high-risk, high-value products such as batteries.

BSC’s interest in this Bill is therefore twofold:

- + First, as an adjacent stewardship body that works closely with many of the same manufacturers, retailers, logistics providers and recyclers, BSC is keen to see Queensland’s CRS operate as an efficient, trusted and investable scheme that supports high-quality recovery outcomes for containers.
- + Second, as the national ACCC Authorised Product Stewardship Organisation responsible for advancing battery stewardship, BSC is interested in ensuring that the legislative chassis Queensland adopts for the CRS is capable, where appropriate, of supporting later stewardship schemes, without changing the Bill’s immediate focus on containers or pre-empting future policy decisions.

On that basis, this submission offers a small number of targeted refinements aimed at:

- + clarifying that the CRS can support fit-for-purpose shared container recovery infrastructure and services, especially in regional and remote Queensland, where this improves access and efficiency and is delivered under appropriate safety and standards frameworks.
- + calibrating governance and oversight settings, particularly ministerial, special-manager and complaints provisions, so that strong public accountability is achieved in a way that remains compatible with lawful board governance, investment confidence and fair treatment of delivery partners.
- + strengthening traceability and end-market transparency for containers, with a greater emphasis on where material goes and how it is processed, to bolster public confidence and align with contemporary expectations of producer-funded schemes.
- + giving clearer statutory content to the concept of “good governance of the scheme” by linking it to recognised stewardship principles such as high producer participation and compliance, independent and skilled governance, transparent financial arrangements and continuous improvement.

These suggestions are offered in a supportive spirit. They are not intended to alter the fundamental policy intent of the Bill or to broaden its scope beyond containers. Rather, they are proposed to help ensure that Queensland’s strengthened CRS is not only effective in its own right, but also provides a credible, practical reference point for any future schemes the State may choose to develop.



Taken together, the eight proposed amendments are put forward for the Committee's and Department's consideration on that basis. They are designed to refine, rather than re-direct, the Bill, and to support a container refund scheme that is robust, investable and trusted by Queenslanders, while remaining firmly within the Government's stated policy intent.

Consistent with Recommendation 16 of the Committee's report on improving Queensland's container refund scheme, the Battery Stewardship Council is also open to working with COEX, WRIQ and other stakeholders to accelerate safe battery collection and handling through complementary initiatives, helping to keep Queenslanders safe from battery-related fire and safety risks. The BSC B-cycle accreditation model is already fit for purpose to enable strong cooperation and collaboration in support of this aim. In other jurisdictions, B-cycle accredited Drop off Points are indeed co-located at container refund locations.

### 1. Scheme collaboration, interoperability, standards and shared infrastructure

#### Relevant Bill sections: sections 102AK and 102AL

**Recommended amendment:** Amend the Bill to expressly provide that the Organisation may support, co-fund, develop or participate in shared infrastructure and service models with other recognised product stewardship or recovery schemes to support economies of scale, including co-located stewardship services where this is safe and practical. The Bill should also make clear that operators are not to be unreasonably restricted from participating in other approved recovery streams, subject to appropriate safety, storage, handling and transport controls for higher-risk materials, and subject to any prescribed standards, accreditation requirements or approved operating conditions relevant to the material stream.

**Rationale:** This would embed product stewardship best practice by preserving flexibility for multi-material recovery models, particularly in regional, rural and remote areas, while recognising that some materials, including batteries, require distinct safety and operational safeguards. It would also help avoid inefficient duplication of single-scheme infrastructure and support fit-for-purpose, standards-based co-location of approved stewardship services.

### 2. National harmonisation and establishing a legislative baseline for future stewardship schemes in Queensland

#### Relevant Bill sections: section 99I, section 102AA or section 102AK

**Recommended amendment:** Insert a principle recognising the desirability of nationally consistent approaches on eligible scope, refund settings, labelling, public education, reporting categories, network standards and compliance architecture, and of ensuring the legislative and regulatory framework established by the Bill is capable of informing future product stewardship schemes in Queensland where appropriate. The framework should support a consistent legislative baseline while allowing product-specific standards, targets and operational requirements to be prescribed where appropriate.

**Rationale:** This would support alignment with nationally consistent product stewardship arrangements while helping ensure the Bill establishes a sound legislative and regulatory baseline for future schemes in Queensland. Given this framework may inform later stewardship arrangements for other products and materials, including batteries, it is important that the legislation is clear, balanced, adaptable and capable of supporting both consistency and material-specific design.

### 3. Independent complaints, dispute resolution and fair market conduct

#### Relevant Bill sections: Part 5, Division 7, Subdivision 3 and section 102BO(1)(j)

**Recommended amendment:** Strengthen the Bill to require an independent external complaints and dispute resolution pathway for operators and scheme participants, with a defined implementation timeframe, rather than relying solely on the Organisation's internal complaints management framework. Consider also requiring the framework to support fair treatment of participants and transparent escalation pathways where disputes relate to access, contract terms, infrastructure use, or participation in other approved stewardship activities.

**Rationale:** In a single-scheme environment, internal complaints processes alone may not provide sufficient confidence or procedural fairness. An external pathway would better reflect stewardship best practice, support transparency, and reduce perceived or actual power imbalances, particularly where infrastructure, service delivery or access arrangements may intersect with other stewardship streams over time.

#### 4. Traceability, chain-of-custody integrity, end-market transparency and data interoperability

**Relevant Bill sections:** sections 102BV, 102CA and 102CE

**Recommended amendment:** Amend the Bill, or support regulations under it, to require more detailed public reporting on recovered material pathways, including domestic reprocessing, export volumes, end-market destination, and the proportion of material recycled locally by stream, and recovery rates. The reporting framework should also support, where practicable, chain-of-custody integrity and interoperable data systems capable of tracing material across collection, consolidation, transport, processing and end-market pathways, using nationally recognised stewardship reporting categories and traceability systems where available.

**Rationale:** This would strengthen accountability for actual recycling outcomes, not just collection volumes, and align the scheme with contemporary stewardship expectations around traceability, auditability, circularity and public transparency. It would also improve comparability across schemes, reduce duplication for national scheme participants, and support future integration with other stewardship systems, including batteries.

#### 5. Stewardship principles, good governance, compliance and free-rider control

**Relevant Bill sections:** sections 102AA and 102AG

**Recommended amendment:** Amend the Bill, or support regulations under it, so that the concept of “good governance of the scheme” is expressly informed by recognised stewardship principles, including clear scheme objectives, high producer participation and compliance, effective monitoring and enforcement, minimisation of free-rider behaviour, independent and skilled governance, transparent and predictable financial arrangements, fair treatment of delivery partners, and regular reporting and continuous improvement. In addition, strengthen section 102AG so that board capability more expressly includes practical stewardship expertise such as resource recovery markets, logistics, regional service delivery, infrastructure planning, scheme design, risk management and regulatory compliance.

**Rationale:** This would give clearer statutory content to the concept of good governance and better align the scheme with contemporary product stewardship best practice. It would also help ensure the board capability settings are not only representative, but operationally relevant to delivery of the scheme and informative for future stewardship governance models in Queensland.

#### 6. Stewardship design, lifecycle outcomes, standards and sovereign recovery capability

**Relevant Bill sections:** section 99I, sections 102AA and 102AK, and section 102BL

**Recommended amendment:** Amend the Bill, or support regulations under it, so that the legislative framework and the Organisation’s functions are more clearly informed by contemporary product stewardship principles, including resource recovery, circularity, material traceability, prescribed standards or accreditation requirements where appropriate, support for local reprocessing, and compatibility with future stewardship schemes in Queensland. This could be reflected through section 99I, the concept of “good governance” in section 102AA, the Organisation’s functions in section 102AK, and the prescribed outcomes framework in section 102BL. The framework should also be capable of supporting approved pilot or demonstration models for multi-stream stewardship infrastructure where these improve access, efficiency or recovery outcomes.

**Rationale:** While the Bill materially strengthens governance and oversight of the container refund scheme, it remains primarily an operational governance framework for a single scheme. Incorporating a clearer stewardship and lifecycle lens would better align the Bill with contemporary product stewardship design, strengthen its relevance beyond container recovery alone, and help ensure the legislative and regulatory settings provide a more credible foundation for future stewardship schemes in Queensland. It would also better support sovereign recovery capability and higher-value domestic circular outcomes over time.





7. Special manager and sanctions: align intervention powers with directors’ duties, the Corporations Act and practical scheme governance

Relevant Bill sections: sections 102CG–102CK, 102CL–102CR and 102DD

Recommended amendment: Retain a strong intervention regime, but amend the Bill so that the triggers for conditions, suspension, cancellation and appointment of a special manager are more clearly confined to serious non-compliance, governance failure, financial distress, or material risk to scheme integrity. The Bill should also prescribe minimum qualifications and relevant experience for a special manager, require consultation with the Organisation and, where practicable, an opportunity to respond before coercive powers are exercised, and clarify that the exercise of special-manager powers is to operate, to the greatest extent practicable, consistently with directors’ duties and the governance framework otherwise applying under the *Corporations Act 2001* and the Organisation’s constitution, except to the extent expressly displaced by the Act.

Rationale: This would preserve strong Ministerial oversight while improving proportionality, procedural fairness and certainty for directors and the board. It would also help ensure the sanctions and intervention framework does not create unnecessary tension with directors’ statutory and fiduciary duties under the *Corporations Act 2001*, or make those duties unduly difficult to discharge in practice.

8. Governance settings: calibrate the Minister’s powers over directors and scheme operations

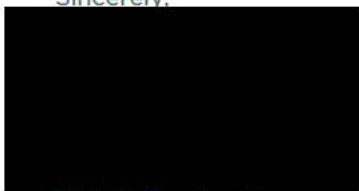
Relevant Bill sections: sections 102AI, 102BM, 102BN and 102BQ–102BS

Recommended amendment: Amend the Bill so that the Minister’s power to withdraw approval of a director is linked to stated grounds, or at minimum accompanied by reasons. More broadly, introduce clearer guardrails around Ministerial directions and control of corporate documents so that the Bill distinguishes between legitimate strategic oversight and day-to-day operational control.

Rationale: As drafted, the Bill gives the Minister broad powers over directors and over the Organisation’s planning and operations. Refining those settings would improve governance certainty, board independence and accountability, while still preserving strong public oversight of the scheme.

For further information regarding this submission please email [contact@bsc.org.au](mailto:contact@bsc.org.au) or phone 1300 853 820.

Sincerely,



Libby Chaplin  
CEO

BATTERY STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL & B-CYCLE



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