



Container Exchange (QLD) Limited  
Level 17, 100 Creek Street  
Brisbane QLD 4000

31 July 2020

**RE: SUBMISSION TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES, AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**INQUIRY INTO THE WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING (PLASTIC ITEMS) AMENDMENT BILL 2020**

Please find following COEX's submission to the Committee.

**BACKGROUND**

As the Product Responsibility Organisation (PRO) responsible for administering the Container Refund Scheme (CRS) in Queensland, Container Exchange (QLD) Limited (COEX) is uniquely placed to provide input into the Queensland Government's Waste Reduction and Recycling (Plastic Items) Amendment Bill 2020.

*Containers for Change*, Queensland's container refund scheme was introduced on 1 November 2018 to help clean up our environment. COEX is the not-for-profit organisation appointed by the Queensland Government to establish and operate the scheme. The *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011* (the Act) is the legislative framework which the Containers for Change scheme operates in. The Act requires the scheme to operate under the principle of product stewardship – an environmental management strategy that means all entities involved in the lifecycle of a product are responsible for managing its environmental, social and economic impact.

The scheme is funded by the beverage manufacturing industry paying a scheme price on every eligible beverage container sold in Queensland. The key elements of the scheme are:

**Beverage Manufacturers** - Companies who produce non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages in containers that are eligible for a refund under the scheme.

**Retailers** – Outlets which sell eligible beverage containers to Queensland customers

**Customers** – who purchase beverages and collect beverage containers in Queensland

**Container Refund Points** – CRPs are contracted private commercial businesses where customers return eligible containers for a refund. They can be depots, bag drops, mobile and pop-up services or Reverse Vending Machines (RVMs).

**Logistic Providers** – Contracted transport companies that move scheme material from CRP sites to processor sites.

**Processors** – Contracted facilities where containers are sent to be consolidated and prepared for sale.

**Material Recovery Facilities** – Private businesses contracted to local councils where eligible containers that are disposed of in yellow top kerbside bins are retrieved and baled ready for sale.

**Auction Portal** – COEX managed portal through which beverage containers from Processors and MRFs are available for purchase to an approved panel of recyclers.

**Recycling Panel** – Accredited panel members purchase scheme material (baled beverage containers) from the auction portal and must recycle it.

**CIRCULAR ECONOMY COMMITMENT**

COEX's overarching aims are to reduce beverage container litter in our natural environment and landfill and increase recycling rates in Queensland. Each year around 2.7 billion beverage containers are sold in our state and a 2018 litter survey found that beverage containers were one of the most littered items.

As at 19 July 2020, Queensland's container refund scheme had recycled two billion containers through the network, more than half a billion collected through Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) for a total of 2.62 billion containers recycled through the scheme in just over 18 months. Department of Environment and Science Litter Surveys indicate that there has been a reduction of beverage container litter by more than 48% since the scheme's introduction. For more information on the scheme's performance please visit, [https://www.containerexchange.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/COEX\\_Monthly\\_Dashboard.pdf](https://www.containerexchange.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/COEX_Monthly_Dashboard.pdf)

CRPs collect and sort the returned containers for transport to processors who bale containers for sale to recyclers through COEX's auction portal. The material collected and processed through the scheme is of the highest quality and is in high demand in the global commodity market. As indicated with the Amendment Bill, single-use plastic items are predominately unable to be recovered for recycling and can end up contaminating recycling streams thereby potentially impacting on the value of Queensland container refund scheme material. Banning single-use items such as straws will further improve the low contamination rate of scheme material and continue to build an efficient and effective container refund scheme.

In 2019, Container Exchange participated in the Queensland Government's Circular Economy (CE) Lab with partners Everledger, Evolve Plastics, Rio Tinto and Astron Sustainability. The CE Lab project provided the team with a platform to demonstrate that PET plastics collected and returned in Queensland could be recycled into other products introduced back into the market and used by Queenslanders, demonstrating the circular economy at work. Please visit <https://www.containerexchange.com.au/> to view the video of this trial. COEX is committed to working with government, industry and the community to transform the way plastic is recovered, reused and recycled – creating new jobs and industries for Queensland.

## WAVE OF CHANGE EDUCATION PROGRAM

The *Containers for Change* scheme has become a part of the fabric of Queensland and demonstrates the wider community's commitment to reducing waste and increase recycling. Our Change Maker series of videos clearly demonstrates our state's success to date <https://www.containerexchange.com.au/change-makers/>. To support this commitment COEX has invested in supporting behaviour change programs including our partnership with *Plastic Oceans Australasia* (POA). POA is a charity that is part of a global affiliate that exists to promote the conservation and protection of the physical and natural environment by raising public awareness of the effects of plastic waste on the environment, through education, business and science. The partnership demonstrates COEX's commitment to educating Queenslanders on keeping Queensland beautiful and working to improve the environment.

The partnership delivers a multi-level awareness program *Wave of Change*, to fifty (50) primary and secondary schools across the state, equipping students with the knowledge and tools to change behaviour in their schools, households, and communities. The program provides world class educational resources through curriculum-based learning modules and lesson plans to a range of regional and metropolitan schools already participating in the container refund scheme. The lesson plans fit within the Australian National Curriculum across several subjects allowing teachers to link single use plastics into their core subject curriculum objectives. Schools are provided with the lesson resource materials, the 20-minute condensed version of our *A Plastic Ocean* documentary and Science Review material, that supports and demonstrates the factual scientific content of the film.

Schools that register will not only increase their students' knowledge on the impacts of plastic litter within the natural environment, but also increase their recycling and fundraising efforts. An assessment of the Wave of Change program will be undertaken by COEX in 2021. This assessment will determine whether further *Wave of Change* partners such as industry and government are sought to enable additional schools to participate in the education program.

## CONCLUSION

COEX is committed to supporting the Queensland Government's objective of becoming a single-use plastic free state. Our goals, initiatives, activities, and investments, outlined in the Container Exchange Strategic Plan 2021-2023 (attached) is consistent with the Queensland Government's Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy, the aims of *Tackling Plastic Waste – Queensland's Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan* and the objectives of the Waste Reduction and Recycling (plastic Items) Amendment Bill 2020.

Should you require further information on this submission, please contact Glenda Viner at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Noye'.

**Ken Noye**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Container Exchange (QLD) Limited



## Our evolving strategy

# COEX will keep Queensland beautiful by operating a world-class beverage container refund scheme

### Our strategic goals



#### 1. Eliminate beverage containers in landfill and the Queensland environment

##### Our Initiatives

- Understand our customers
- Increase participation & maximise convenience
- Maximise accessibility with existing and new network models

##### Our measures of success

85% of eligible containers recycled

50% Consumer Net Promoter Score (NPS)



#### 2. Increase participation within the circular economy and minimise scheme costs

##### Our Initiatives

- Drive circular economy participation
- Improve business systems and digital tools
- Minimise scheme costs

##### Our measures of success

90% Material recycled on-shore

1c Reduction in cost per container collected



#### 3. Build a sustainable scheme for our community

##### Our Initiatives

- Manage safety and risk
- Invest in the community
- Collaborate with core stakeholders and execute strategic partnerships

##### Our measures of success

15% Increase in transactions with social enterprise

100% Supplier WHSE compliance

### Our operational targets:

80% public awareness by 2022



307+ continued Container Refund Points



98% of payments made on time



95% execution of Container Recovery Agreements



100% conformance to audit plan



### Our values:

Environment and sustainability



Customer and community



Respect



Integrity



Ownership and accountability

