




Speech By
Hon. Meaghan Scanlon

MEMBER FOR GAVEN

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Containers for Change

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (10.01 am): Last week marked the fourth anniversary of our highly successful container refund scheme. Of course, everyone loves Containers for Change—almost everyone. In fact, Queenslanders love it so much that everywhere I go they tell me they want the scheme expanded. To celebrate National Recycling Week, we are delivering.

As the Premier announced this morning, we will soon start consultation on including wine and spirit bottles and other large beverage containers into the scheme. That means your Tuesday tippie or Saturday spritz could soon be exchanged for the same 10 cent refund currently available on smaller cans and bottles.

Since we introduced the Containers for Change scheme, not only have we seen a dramatic increase in the rate of container recycling but also we have seen a 48 per cent decrease in the rate of beverage litter which means less pollution in our natural environment. With the expansion I think we can increase that even further. Peak bodies agree, with groups from the National Retailers Association, Australian Beverages Council, Australian Council of Recyclers, Boomerang Alliance and the Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia strongly supporting this step.

A detailed discussion paper will be released in mid-December and feedback will help inform any decision to expand the eligible containers with consultation to close in mid-February next year, although I will say it has already been very popular online. On my Facebook this morning we heard from someone who said—

I live in a small rural town where there is no recycling as such. Since the implementation of the Containers for Change program our Chaplaincy program has raised over \$25,000 to support local community groups from the Men's Sheds, School P and Cs, Community Christmas tree event, the local Show, Hospital and hospital auxiliary, Kindy and many more. Allowing the expansion of the system to include wine and spirit bottles would be of great benefit.

I will also be convening a round table of wine producers and distillers to discuss how we can make this work for everyone.

In the four years since we began the Containers for Change scheme more than 5.5 billion containers have been returned to the 359 container refund points across the state, with individual Queenslanders receiving over \$542 million in refunds. A further 1.25 billion containers continue to be collected through available council kerbside services. My favourite part of the Containers for Change program is how the program gives back to the community, whether it is the stories of the more than 800 jobs that have been created, like those in the member for Greenslopes electorate where local mental health organisation Stepping Stone is working with the Coorparoo depot or 10 Cent Tom from my community on the Gold Coast—who I am sure many members in this House would be aware of—who has started his own social enterprise.

We have also seen over \$8.1 million in refunds paid to charities, community organisations and schools, driven by some stand out recyclers. I want to acknowledge one of those Containers for Change heroes here today—Quentin Scott from Longreach who recently passed away. I was lucky enough to meet Scotty, also known as the 'Barefoot Bush Poet', when we were in Longreach for community cabinet last year. Scotty had been collecting containers since 2019, and in 2022 alone had returned 83,000 items, resulting in \$8,300 donated to local charities including the Longreach Lions Club, Landcare and Cystic Fibrosis. I want to place on the record my recognition of Scotty's hard work and his contribution to his community, and I know he is dearly missed.

This is a scheme aimed at reducing litter, but it has done so much more for our community, for employment, for charity and for our environment.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, I need to clarify whether the consultation is going to include the Speaker's Gin, available right here at the Queensland parliament!

Ms SCANLON: Yes, absolutely.