
EMBARGOED UNTIL: Thursday, 10 April 2008

SA LEADS NATIONAL PUSH FOR CONTAINER DEPOSIT LEGISLATION

South Australia will be pushing for national adoption of container deposit legislation when Australian and New Zealand Environment Ministers meet in Melbourne next Thursday.

Minister for Environment and Conservation Gail Gago says “South Australia took the lead on industry responsibility for clean up and recycling of beverage containers 31 years ago and it’s time for the rest of Australia to catch up.”

Minister Gago has recommended Ministers agree to look at how to introduce a national container deposit system, taking into account the success of the SA scheme and the results of investigations undertaken for a similar scheme in WA.

“SA’s record speaks for itself, recycling considerably more than any other Australian State,” says Ms Gago.

“For 31 years we’ve heard the beverage industry argue why other States can’t introduce a container deposit scheme, but now it’s time to act.

“This week there are claims from the Total Environment Centre and other bodies that a National Packaging Covenant agreed between industry, States and Commonwealth is reportedly failing to meet a targeted 65 per cent reduction in the amount of packaging disposed to landfill with claims that a recent audit is showing less than half was recycled.

“In SA we recycle one third more aluminium cans than other States and 85 per cent of glass soft drink bottles, compared to 36 per cent nationally. Here beverage containers make up less than 20 per cent of litter by volume compared to 50 per cent in other States.

“Australians would clearly welcome this with a nationwide Newspan survey commissioned last year as part of the Clean Up Australia Day campaign finding that 82 per cent of respondents considered a 10-cent deposit would encourage more people to recycle bottles and cans.

“In SA a 2004 community awareness survey showed that 92% of respondents support CDL.”

A national scheme would:

- significantly reduce the waste stream of particular products,
- promote sustainable economic activities,
- result in a more equitable and effective waste management regime,
- reduce greenhouse gas emissions and water and energy use,
- support resource recovery and reuse and
- engage Australians in a popular program of environmentally sustainable behaviour.

SA is offering to lead the development of the implementation details for a proposed national scheme.

South Australia recently flagged a doubling in the container deposit from its original 5c to 10c per container to stem a recent decline in return rates. This will be effective before the end of the year.