



Ms Sophie Dunstone  
Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications  
ec.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Ms Dunstone

Thank you for your email of 15 October 2012 regarding the Senate Environment and Communications References Committee's inquiry into the pricing and revenue allocation practices of the beverage industry in the container deposit schemes operating in South Australia and the Northern Territory.

The Standing Council on Environment and Water (SCEW) has been undertaking an assessment of policy options for better managing packaging in Australia, including national container deposit schemes. In accordance with the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) process for considering possible regulatory action, the SCEW released a Consultation Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) for public comment in December 2011. In August 2012, the SCEW noted the strong public response to the Consultation RIS and agreed to proceed with the development of a Decision RIS to further assess policy options.

The committee may be interested to review the Consultation RIS and its technical attachments, as well as the non-confidential public submissions, which are available at: [www.scew.gov.au/strategic-priorities/packaging-impacts.html](http://www.scew.gov.au/strategic-priorities/packaging-impacts.html). In particular, I bring the committee's attention to Attachment B – Appendix B, a report examining international best practice approaches to packaging stewardship, which may be of relevance.

I note that the inquiry's terms of reference also include consideration of matters relating to the *Product Stewardship Act 2011* (the Act). The passage of this legislation delivered on a key commitment by the Australian Government under the *National Waste Policy: Less Waste, More Resources*, which was agreed by governments in November 2009 and endorsed by the COAG in August 2010.

The Act provides a framework to effectively manage the environmental, health and safety impacts of products, and includes provisions for voluntary, co-regulatory and mandatory product stewardship. The Act provides for the products and persons subject to obligations under the Act to be determined by regulations - a flexible and practical approach to product stewardship which recognises that each product, material and industry is unique. This framework approach avoids the need for product-specific legislation and promotes a consistent approach to matters such as reporting, compliance and enforcement.

Further information on the Act is available at:  
[www.environment.gov.au/settlements/waste/product-stewardship/index.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/settlements/waste/product-stewardship/index.html).

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance to the inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Dr Diana Wright  
First Assistant Secretary  
Environment Quality Division  
26 October 2012