

**From:** Richard Hodgens

**Sent:** Tuesday, 13 May 2008 2:34 PM

**To:** Committee, ECA (SEN)

**Subject:** RE: DRINK CONTAINER RECYCLING

Hi,

I am a part time employee as a Waterwatch coordinator and a full time resident of South West Victoria.

In my paid role, I get to travel around the far south west region a great deal. The area is not a densely populated one and most people that live around these parts are pretty good people who deep down care for where they live.

So why do I see drink containers everywhere?

I can be creekside taking a water sample at virtually any waterway in the area and I will guarantee that I will always find a minimum of at least three drink containers on the short journey from my vehicle to the water. Often they are in the water, floating past like water striders, or hiding like mussels on the bottom in the sediment.

Last year I took a group of Grade 3/4 students from Port Fairy on a bit of a tour of a nearby river (the Shaw River). The largest town along this River would be Yambuk - population of about 50 people. We stopped at 5 sites at various places along this river on the day and managed to take home two jumbo sized garbage bags full of predominantly drink containers.

I live in the largest town in the district - Warrnambool - and each day I like to walk the streets around where I live. Things are so bad that I now take a calico bag with me when I walk in order to pick up any litter that I pass. There is barely a day when my bag is not full (approximately 30 containers). I actually take two bags with me following peak litter days (like Saturday nights) because I started feeling a little depressed that I was leaving so many containers behind. What freaks me out is that I live a good 30 minute walk from the centre of town where I am sure the problem would be far worse...

These are just some examples of how enormous I see the drink container problem as being. I shudder to think of what it is like in the major population centres around the country.

The problem clearly is not getting any better. Whatever methods/systems/procedures are in place at the moment are clearly not working.

I personally believe that we need people to learn to value their waste. That way, instead of them disposing of it by the simplest means possible (such as throwing it out of the car door or window or into landfill) they will think before they dump.

A Drink Container Recycling Scheme, similar to that that operates in South Australia, is a simple fix to an ever increasing problem. I do support this idea as I have visited South Aust. many times and been impressed by how few containers there appears to be - particularly out in the middle of nowhere, just like my area here. However, it is only one part of a wider solution. A recycling scheme alone will not stop everyone from doing what they are doing now (i.e. make a behavioural change), just as not smoking in public places like hotels has not made everyone quit smoking cigarettes. But it will mean that other people including many community type groups like scouts, sporting groups and the like will be more prepared to clean up their mess for them.

Certainly I know that at 5c per container in my area I would be able to quit my day job and live off the land (so to speak) and waterways around here...

Best of luck finding a solution. Anything that reduces the rubbish that I see on a daily basis will be a positive.

Sincerely,

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