

# INQUIRY INTO THE MANAGEMENT OF AUSTRALIA'S WASTE STREAMS

I am writing this Submission to support the call for a national container deposit system such as that outlined in the **Drink Container Recycling Bill 2008, (point f of the Inquiry)**.

- a. The trend is for the increasing production and consumption of packaging waste because the consumer is given no choice when choosing products. Also the trend is for increasing production of non recyclable packaging (foam meat and bakery product trays, foam coffee and Boost Juice cups, different plastics together in/on one container so that separating them for recycling is uneconomic, etc.)
- b. Existing strategies will never become more effective if any cost is involved because the National Packaging Covenant Council will continue to advocate against any measures that cost their members any significant amount. Only legislation and regulation could now improve the reduction, recovery, or reuse of waste.
- c. A proven effective, simple and cheap strategy for reducing, recovering and reusing a huge amount of waste (billions of containers annually) is Container Deposit Legislation.

f. I believe that this Drink Container Recycling Bill is necessary to clean up the cans and bottles that litter our roadsides in all States and Territories, except in many areas of South Australia.

The extent of this problem can be seen from our (myself, my husband and helpers) surveys of **38 'Adopt a Highway' groups** in 2006.

\* **70%** of these groups said that drink containers were either a large or very large proportion of the roadside litter that they collected.

We also surveyed **22** other community groups and individuals that regularly clean up other public areas. **71%** of them said that drink containers were either a large or very large proportion of the litter that they collected. This evidence is significant because **it is grass roots information** which shows that drink containers **ARE A MAJOR LITTER PROBLEM** in a variety of public areas.

The above fact was confirmed also by **109 roadside litter surveys** we ourselves conducted throughout Victoria in 2006.\* Those surveys showed that in Victoria, on outer metropolitan roads there were 42 drink containers per kilometre and 21 per kilometre on country roads (surveying one side of the road only).

Most of these surveys were done from the car travelling at 40 kph and counting what was on one side of the road only. However, 18 of the surveys were done on foot, to check the accuracy of the above findings. The 18 'on foot' surveys showed there were actually **170 drink containers per kilometre on each side of the road**. This figure reflects the large numbers of drink containers that cannot be seen from the car. Many of these were crushed, smashed, shredded or hidden in grass or roadside drains.

We also conducted **27 roadside surveys in South Eastern, South Australia**. These surveys showed that there were **2** drink containers per kilometre on major roads and **7** per kilometre alongside highways. This information along with figures from the 2006 National Litter Index provides strong evidence that a **National Container Deposit system would significantly reduce drink container litter Australia wide.**

A National Container Deposit system would also deliver other social and environmental benefits. These include reduced litter collection costs to councils, fundraising benefits to community groups, increased recycling rates, significant water savings, the conservation of non renewable resources and finite landfill space, and reduced CO2 emissions from the production of fewer new containers. (billions of containers at present are wasted annually.)

For these and for other environmental reasons, I urge your Committee to please recommend legislation for a National Container Deposit System.

\*Surveys of 'Adopt a Highway' groups conducted for the 'Community Litter Report'.

\* Roadside litter Surveys conducted for the 'Community Litter Report'

'Community Litter Report' available at [www.AFROCAB.org.au](http://www.AFROCAB.org.au)

**Rachel M Cook**