

23 May 2008

The Senate Standing Committee on Environment,
Communication and the Arts
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Chamber of
Commerce
NORTHERN TERRITORY

Dear Committee Members

I am writing in relation to the current inquiry into Australia's Waste Streams and in particular, the consideration of the Drink Container Recycling Bill 2008.

The Chamber of Commerce NT has a membership of 1,300 businesses from across the Northern Territory and has a long history in relation to the matter of Drink Container Recycling. We have provided the following after consultation with members and the local branch of the Australian Hotels Association.

We note that the Bill is for an Act to provide for product control and payment and refund of deposits in relation to certain drink containers in order to protect the environment, and for related purposes.

We remain strongly opposed to the introduction of this legislation because of the cost to business and the hurdles imposed by the isolation of the Northern Territory. In particular;

- The Northern Territory has only one waste recycling facility located in Darwin, in an area comprising one sixth of Australia's landmass
- Any bulk collections of drink containers would need to be transported interstate for disposal, a costly process
- That single facility has no ability to handle glass containers, all glass waste is currently crushed and buried
- There are major problems with the storage of waste drink containers during the cyclone season, due to the need to secure waste piles in case of high winds and cyclonic conditions
- Collection of drink containers from remote Indigenous communities is problematic as there is no public land available for placement of container receptacles
- The cost of transporting waste drink containers from remote communities to central collection points has a cost in Greenhouse gas emissions
- The climatic conditions in both the tropical North and the desert South of the NT lead to higher consumption of canned/bottled liquids, the introduction of container deposit legislation will impact on family budgets to a higher level than Southern States.
- The red tape associated with beverage bottlers obtaining accreditation to participate in the container deposit scheme in South Australia is overly bureaucratic and time consuming. The administration of the scheme is an additional cost to business, for which they are not recompensed.
- We also note that beverage containers are only 10% of the waste stream, more should be spent on changing peoples habits in relation to waste disposal
- Introduction of Container Deposit Legislation would undermined kerbside collection making it unviable there most likely increase problems with other wastes.

The Chamber of Commerce NT recognizes the need for continued improvement in the handling of all waste streams and will continue to support developments in this area, but cannot support the introduction of Container Deposit Legislation in such an isolated jurisdiction as the Northern Territory.

Please contact the undersigned if you require any further information.



Chamber of
Commerce
NORTHERN TERRITORY

Yours faithfully

Greg Bicknell
Manager, Industry Councils
Chamber of Commerce NT
GPO Box 1825
Darwin, NT, 0801
Australia
ph: +61 8 8982 8128
fax: +61 8 8981 1405
mob: +61 417 847 504
email: gbicknell@chambernt.com.au
web: www.ibr.org.au www.mc.chambernt.com.au