



ACT Container Deposit Scheme expansion

REPORT ON WHAT WE HEARD

The ACT Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) allows people to return eligible, empty drink containers for a 10-cent refund per item. In April 2021 the National Environment Ministers agreed to the harmonisation of containers (size and products), refund amounts and container approvals across Australian jurisdictions by the end of 2025.

Currently the Scheme accepts most aluminium cans, glass bottles, plastic bottles and cartons (flavoured milk and juice boxes) between 150 millilitres and three litres labelled with a '10c' refund mark. These are smaller, more portable containers more commonly found in the litter stream. Over 461 million containers have been returned and recycled through the Scheme since it began in June 2018.

Expanding the Scheme to include other containers such as wine, spirits and cordial would see even more containers recycled and remanufactured through the Scheme, improving resource recovery, and contributing to a circular economy.

We asked for input from the community and key stakeholders on the inclusion of the following items into the Scheme:

- water (inflatable sachets and other packaging types) – one to three litres
- fruit and vegetable juice (at least 90% juice and all container types) – one to three litres
- flavoured milk (all container types) – one to three litres
- concentrated fruit and vegetable juice intended to be diluted before consumption (all container types) – 150 millilitres to three litres
- cordial (undiluted and all material types) – 150 millilitres to three litres
- wine – 150 millilitres to three litres
- spirits – 150 millilitres to three litres
- flavoured alcoholic beverages with a wine base – one to three litres.

The proposed containers align with the items that the New South Wales (NSW) Government has included in the consultation process for their Scheme expansion. Introducing a harmonised expanded scope of containers will make it easier for businesses that supply to multiple states and territories.

Business, industry and the broader community were invited to have their say on the types of containers proposed under the ACT CDS expansion.



THE CONVERSATION

For 12 weeks between 30 May 2023 and 22 August 2023 we asked for comment on the proposed expansion of containers eligible for the 10-cent refund.

We shared information through YourSay Conversations, engaged with the community through social media posts, online newsletters and the Our Canberra flyer reaching 190,000 households.

The ACT Government received 165 submissions during the public consultation period including:

- 12 detailed written submissions
- 153 online YourSay survey submissions.

WHO WE ENGAGED

We engaged with the community, relevant businesses, peak bodies and industry associations (locally, interstate, and nationally).

In May 2023, ACT NoWaste met with the NSW Environment Protection Agency to discuss the proposed scope for the ACT expansion with the intention to seek alignment with NSW on stakeholder consultation, potential development of regulations and potential commencement dates.

139 stakeholders were directly invited to contribute to the ACT CDS expansion engagement including:

- NSW regional councils
- ACT and interstate beverage producers
- the retail and hospitality sector
- wine and distillery peak bodies
- current Scheme operators
- the waste and recycling sector
- peak bodies.



Key insights from the community

Feedback from the community

- The community is broadly supportive of the expansion.
- People generally support the expansion to include wine bottles, and many suggest the scope of the CDS should also include other items not in the scope of the proposed expansion such as unflavoured milk containers and other household recyclables.
- The expansion was generally viewed by the community as having a positive impact on recycling, improving circular economy outcomes, and reducing littering in Canberra's environment and waterways.
- Most respondents saw this as an opportunity to generate more revenue for themselves or local schools, charities, sporting and community groups.
- Some community members highlighted the need for more education to highlight the benefits of the CDS.

Feedback from retail and hospitality industry

- This sector is already participating in the CDS and is broadly supportive of the expansion.
- The retail and hospitality industry generally expressed an ongoing commitment to take responsibility for their packaging and continuing to invest in the circular economy.
- Support for including more containers in the CDS was on the condition that the eligible containers are recyclable and exclude problematic materials.
- The inclusion of additional eligible containers was viewed as positive from many in this sector which would increase the volume of materials available to achieve recycled content targets for packaging, maximise circularity, and reduce or minimise the usage of virgin materials and energy in the production of packaging.
- Significant time is required to allow new Scheme participants to prepare and adapt to the new provisions.
- Concerns for increased costs to current Scheme participants including First Suppliers and Network Operators were expressed.
- Most agreed an expansion may reduce public confusion around containers eligible for a refund.
- Stakeholders also requested that increased communication and education is offered to support new stakeholders and increase community participation in the CDS.

Feedback from waste and recycling sector

- This sector is broadly supportive of the expansion.
- Many support the idea that allowing more containers into the CDS will reduce confusion around eligible containers within the community and increase scheme participation.
- All feedback outlines that it will deliver an increased clean stream of recovered materials and enhanced circular economy outcomes.
- Many suggest that the removal of glass from the yellow kerbside recycling bin will reduce contamination from broken glass and reduce the weight/volume/costs of the kerbside service.
- The key issue raised by this sector is the need to make sure the eligible container materials are recyclable and exclude problematic materials.
- A phased approach is suggested if new materials cannot easily be handled by current technology at drop off points or at Material Recovery Facilities.



Feedback from the wine industry

- Submissions from the wine industry were generally not supportive of the inclusion of wine bottles.
- Strong support exists for a lengthy transition period from announcement to first payment, to allow affected stakeholders to register eligible containers and adapt to the new requirements.
- The retail pathways can be complicated for this sector and determining the First Supplier will be challenging, further emphasising a transition period.
- Concern was raised regarding the cost impacts for the industry, particularly for small, family-owned agricultural businesses in regional areas.
- Other concerns were raised that wine bottles should not be included in the CDS as wine containers are not known to be a common item in the litter stream.
- Feedback outlined a preference by this sector for other glass recycling pathways that did not impose a cost on the producers such as the introduction of a fourth kerbside recycling bin for glass.

Additional feedback outside the scope of the expansion

- There was support across most stakeholder groups for additional drop-off points across the ACT to help boost participation rates.
- Feedback from the community frequently included support for increasing the 10-cent refund amount.
- Many suggest the scope of the CDS should also include unflavoured milk containers and other household recyclable items.
- All sectors recognise an expansion would create jobs.
- Many stakeholders expressed support for the opportunity for additional revenue for local and community organisations which will result from more eligible CDS containers.
- Most sectors encourage a public education campaign promoting an expansion and the benefits of the CDS.

WHAT'S NEXT?

We will consider the feedback raised during this consultation and assess the impacts of options for potentially expanding the scheme.

The ACT Government is expected to consider the preferred option for the proposed expansion in 2024.

To find out more visit [our website](https://yoursay.act.gov.au) and the [YourSay Conversations page](#).



Key Timings

30 May 2023 – Consultation opened on the expansion of the ACT CDS to include additional types of drink containers.

22 August 2023 – YourSay consultation closes.

December 2023 – What We Heard report released (**we are here**).

2024 – Government consideration of preferred option for proposed CDS expansion.

2025 – National harmonisation of Container Deposit Schemes.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

8,000+

people reached through
Facebook and LinkedIn.

900

people visited the YourSay
page.

165

total submissions received.

86%

identified as a community
stakeholder or member of
the public.

91%

were in favour of expanding
the Scheme in any scope.

86%

were satisfied with the
community engagement
experience.

139

stakeholders directly invited
to provide feedback.

476 million

containers collected to date
in the ACT.