

Mr N Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Legislative Assembly of Queensland
Parliament House
Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE Q 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 27 March 2003 forwarding a copy of an E-petition tabled in the Parliament on 25 March 2003 regarding the introduction of a Container Deposit Scheme in Queensland.

In Queensland the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is currently developing a new Waste Management Strategy that will set the direction for waste management in the State for the next fifteen years. The process includes a stakeholder consultation phase. Assessment of economic drivers to maximize resource recovery, including *Extended Producer Responsibility* options such as Container Deposit Legislation (CDL), should take place within this process to ensure a strategic and integrated approach to waste management in Queensland.

The New South Wales report into CDL recommended that agreement at a national level for the adoption of Extended Producer Responsibility legislation be sought to address constitutional and cross – border issues. At present, all levels of government in Australia are considering the CDL option. The implementation of CDL can have significant impact on local councils and the community. The National Packaging Covenant, the framework document for the management of used packaging materials in Australia, has the advantage of dealing with packaging waste through its whole life-cycle rather than solely at its end-life, which is the focus of CDL.

The Covenant expires in less than two years. Whilst this voluntary initiative has enjoyed the support of Australian Governments and progress has been encouraging, the main administering body, the Covenant Council, needs to ensure that outcomes envisaged are achieved and are demonstrable. It is noted that the Covenant Council has agreed to a robust evaluation process which should be completed in time to allow the Environment Protection and Heritage Council, comprising the Commonwealth and State Ministers for the Environment, to consider options, including CDL, and whether the covenant should be extended.

The Queensland Government is, through the EPA, constantly developing Smart State initiatives that will contribute to a reduction in waste disposal and consequently a reduction in costs for all Queenslanders.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

DEAN WELLS
Minister for Environment