

News Release

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Hon Jay Weatherill

Minister for Environment &
Conservation

Minister for Early Childhood
Development

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs & Reconciliation

Min Ast the Premier in Cabinet Bus & Public Sector Mgt

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19 MILLION MORE CONTAINERS RETURNED SINCE REFUND INCREASE

More than 19 million extra drink containers were returned following the increase in container deposit from five cents to ten cents in September last year, Environment Protection Authority figures show.

Environment and Conservation Minister Jay Weatherill released the return rates at a Clean Up Australia Day event at Tranmere today.

“Preliminary results already are showing an encouraging increase in the number of bottles, cartons and cans being returned and diverted from the litter stream and landfill,” Mr Weatherill said.

“I’m pleased to report that more than 153 million containers were returned during October, November and December 2008 – and at 10 cents per container that’s \$15.3 million into the pockets of people who recycle.

“The number of returns compared with 134 million containers in the corresponding three months of 2007 – an increase of more than 19 million.”

In October, November and December 2007, 30.5 per cent of containers were not being returned, but this dropped to 24.4 per cent in the same period of 2008 – equating to a 20 per cent reduction in the proportion of drink containers escaping the refund system.

The most significant increase was noted in liquid paper board containers (eg iced coffee cartons).

Traditionally, these types of containers have had relatively small return rates of as low as 35 per cent. But the return rate has jumped to 53.6 per cent since the introduction of the 10 cent refund.

“South Australia’s container deposit scheme, which was introduced in 1977, is a proven success, with drink container litter far less prevalent here than the rest of the country,” Mr Weatherill said.

“Clean Up Australia day figures show drink containers make up less than 10 per cent of SA’s litter, compared with 40 per cent nationally. But in recent years, return rates had declined, which is why in September last year we increased the refund from five cents to ten cents.

“On Clean Up Australia Day it is important to remember that everyone can do their bit by collecting their empty drink containers and recycling them. Flavoured milks, fruit juices, soft drinks, vitamin drinks, sport drinks, iced teas, beer, alcoholic sodas, spirit-based mixers and some wine base drinks are among containers that attract a refund. Containers with the old five cent label also attract the new 10 cent refund.”