CONTAINER REFUND SCHEMES – CHARITY CHARTER

Charitable Recycling Australia believes that the primary objectives of a Container Refund Scheme (CRS) should include the opportunity to:

- Grow community benefits by providing sustainable service and employment opportunities and income to charities and other NFP community organisations (charitable enterprises)
- Significantly reduce the number of beverage containers in litter or the environment more broadly
- Increase recycling of containers
- Create new jobs and business opportunities in resource recovery

The charitable reuse and recycling sector is collectively and individually interested in participating in CRS, including:

- As recognised service providers or network operators
- Providing collection/redemption points for eligible containers and paying refunds, where they can claim a handling fee for container returns
- Providing collection points for donated containers, where they can claim the refund from each eligible container
- Receiving donated refunds from supporters
- Recycling of the actual containers

The development of appropriate infrastructure and arrangements for the collection, processing and recycling of eligible containers is designed to encourage partnerships between the network coordinator and any collector organisations. As a sector interested in delivering these services, charitable enterprises may consider appropriate joint arrangements within our sector and/or with other potential partners. These partnerships offer the opportunity to maximise the efficiency of the collection network and optimise the benefits to charitable enterprises.

Charitable Recycling Australia seeks commitment from governments that when designing a Container Refund Scheme, that the appropriate features are in place to support sustainable opportunities for charitable enterprises to participate.

Refund and Processing Centres

Establishing and running a processing centre providing refunds to the community, entails financial risk and also the opportunity to generate employment and drive significant revenue that can make a substantial positive impact on the services offered by charitable enterprises.

In order to make the opportunity for more charities to participate, we support the following key design features for refund and processing points:

- The fewest number of container splits reducing complexity for the handling containers
- The efficient use of depot storage and logistics arrangements to reduce rental liabilities
- As little paperwork to report collections as possible, with a preference for automation
- Supportive procurement arrangements for acquisition of capital equipment, its maintenance and insurance
- Efficient, reliable and flexible transport arrangements to collect containers from depots
- Clear multi-year contracts and exclusive catchment 'zones' that safeguard collection volumes by allocating a viable territory and population catchment
- A handling fee that is not able to be eroded by unpredictable costs and is sufficient to cover ongoing costs and deliver a sustainable revenue stream to support charitable enterprise involvement
- Regular, timely and frequent handling fee and refund payments from the overall manager of the network
- Active public education, website and social media campaigns informing the community about CRS refund opportunities particularly for charities who may not have extensive marketing budgets.

Earning Income from Refunds

Convenience of access to refund points is a critical aspect for local groups to obtain refunds. In addition, CRS operators and government should undertake the following actions:

- Provide grants for collection equipment and storage
- Create opportunities for donation campaigns
- Develop a registration process for charitable enterprises to receive donations from any refund point and for appropriate charitable enterprises to become refund donation points
- Utilise social media to profile charity collections

Ongoing Engagement with Charitable Reuse and Recycling Sector

Container Refund Schemes have wide community support and require transparency and accountability to ensure ongoing public support. Scheme managers need to implement formal and regular processes to engage the public and specifically charitable enterprises about scheme performance and plans for improvement.

The benefit or return to community needs to be considered as an integral part of the formal assessment and/or tender processes. The initial and ongoing successful completion should have a weighting on community benefit that is aligned to societal needs including but going beyond just employment.

Involving the sector in promoting the scheme and utilising the reputation and networks of charitable enterprisers to this end, will make the introduction of the scheme significantly easier and more practical.

It would also be advisable for the charitable sector to be involved in providing input to and reviewing the code of practice for private sector organisations that partner with charities and how they remunerate the charities and use the charities brand.