

To: Productivity Commission Inquiry: Waste Generation and Resource Efficiency in Australia  
 Fm: The Boomerang Alliance of environment ngo's and local government  
 Date: 8 February 2006  
 By email: [dlanning@pc.gov.au](mailto:dlanning@pc.gov.au)

Please find attached four documents the Boomerang Alliance would submit to the Productivity Commission as representing the views of this unique grouping of the environment movement and local government regarding waste recovery. These documents are:

1. Say No To The Waste Club
2. Toward a Zero Waste Society
3. A recent Packaging Council of Australia criticism of container deposits
4. A Boomerang Alliance critique of deposits

The Boomerang Alliance of environment groups and local government campaigned extensively around the development of the National Packaging Covenant (NPC) MKII, and groups represented by the alliance have varied and lengthy involvement in the development of waste policy in Australia.

The alliance campaigned around a platform of introducing Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) into waste management in Australia. The alliance views packaging waste as a ideal early vehicle for EPR in its ability to simply engage the public – through their day-to-day consumption – in taking increased responsibility for their waste and shifting the burden of waste from rate payers and local government to consumers and brand owners.

In addition, the alliance believes a new set of recovery systems for packaging waste can drive broader recovery to additional sectors including, e-waste, white goods etc. Community 'drive through' recycling centres are an innovative example of the direction waste management could go in Australia. A major impediment to this shift however is funding such infrastructure.

The case of packaging waste is illustrative of the waste challenge.

Reliance on kerbside recycling as the sole recovery mechanism fails to recognise behavioural changes or indeed the escalating cost of the service for local government, let alone the fact brand owners make no contribution to the recovery of the waste generated from consumption of their product.

Over 50% of packaging waste is generated 'away from home' – kerbside can never capture this waste. As the NPC Council grapples with how best to recover from this growing source a fundamental question is funding. The Boomerang Alliance estimates that a comprehensive public place recycling scheme will cost around \$180M p.a. and yet no agency exists to pay for such a scheme.

Because of this funding challenge the alliance has advocated a container deposit approach to drive high rates of recovery and operate as a self funded program and more detail on this can be found in our submissions.

### The Boomerang Alliance:

 Australian Conservation Foundation	 Clean up Australia	 Conservation Council of Western Australia	 FRIENDS OF THE EARTH AUSTRALIA	 TOTAL ENVIRONMENT CENTRE	 Conservation Council	 GREENPEACE	 Tasmanian Conservation Trust
 Arid Lands Environment Centre	 Environment Victoria	 NATURE CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF NSW Inc.		 Local Government Association of NSW		 Shires Association of NSW	

While deposits on containers are important for packaging waste management they represent merely an example of the shift required to tackle the scourge of waste in Australia – and indeed the failure to recognise the value lost and the cost imposed of these resources being dumped in landfill that in turn pollute the atmosphere and waterways.

Governments need to play a role in creating the market conditions for effective resource recovery in Australia – voluntary schemes or periodic education campaigns which are not underpinned by market based programs simply do not create the necessary conditions for markets to grow and resource recovery to be the business it needs to be sustained.

END