

12 April 2005

Sydney goes back to the future to tackle bottle rubbish

Community groups are building a mountain of plastic bottles in Hyde Park on Wednesday to highlight their call for the return of refundable bottles and cans.

The Boomerang Alliance, representing Australia's leading environment and local government organisations, has been collecting from Sydney schools, refunding 10 cents for every plastic bottle – money that will go to valuable resources such as library books. Refunds will also be offered to anyone who brings clean plastic bottles to Wednesday's event.

Clean Up Australia chairman and Alliance spokesperson Ian Kiernan said a refund scheme would tackle the masses of throwaway, single use containers polluting Australia.

"Plastic and glass bottles have dreadful recycling rates in Australia, with fewer than a third being recovered, while South Australia is recovering over 80% due to its container refund scheme.

"Putting a value on an otherwise worthless commodity reinforces good recycling habits and provides kids with a bit of extra pocket money.

"Container refunds also provide valuable funding for sporting clubs, charities and schools."

NSW Local Government Association President Genia McCaffery said the packaging and beverage industries' total reliance on kerbside recycling to manage waste is irresponsible.

"We consume around 50% of bottled and canned drinks away from home, away from kerbside recycling services. We need an incentive for people to recycle these containers.

"It's also time for industry to take on its fair share of the \$300 million annual cost burden to run kerbside recycling in Australia. Refund programs are an ideal example of producers and consumers sharing responsibility for the real costs of managing waste."

Environment ministers will be meeting in Darwin tomorrow to decide targets for the recycling of packaging waste.

EVENT: Call for national action to bring back container refunds

WHEN: 12pm, Wednesday 13 April 2005

WHERE: Hyde Park North (near fountain), Sydney

SPEAKER: Ian Kiernan, AO – Chairman, Clean Up Australia

CONTACT: Angela Greenwood, Boomerang Alliance
02 8221 8836 or 0408 211 914

The Boomerang Alliance (www.boomerangalliance.org):



Bottle and can facts

7 CUBIC METRES

Recycling a tonne of PET (clear plastic) bottles saves that much space in landfill.

ONE EXTRA LARGE T-SHIRT

That's what you can make by recycling 14 600ml PET bottles.

DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES, THE FOOTY SHOW, THE SIMPSONS & NEIGHBOURS

You could watch all of them back-to-back with the energy saved from recycling one aluminium can.

OVER 40%

Drink containers make up this much of the litter picked up on Clean Up Australia Day **around the country.**

ONLY 9.6%

Drink containers make up this much of the litter picked up on Clean Up Australia Day in **South Australia.**

90 DAYS

That's how long it takes a recycled aluminium can to make it back on the shelf as something useful.

80-100 YEARS

That's the lifespan of an aluminium can that gets tossed into a landfill instead of a recycling bin.

700 YEARS

Throw a plastic bottle in the rubbish and that's about how long it will sit in a landfill taking up space and refusing to degrade.

1 MILLION YEARS

Put a glass bottle in a landfill and that's how long it'll sit there doing nothing. Recycle it and it can live forever.