



NEW SOUTH WALES

ATTORNEY GENERAL
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NSW CALLS FOR TOUGH PACKAGING WASTE TARGETS

NSW Environment Minister Bob Debus will push for tough targets for reducing packaging waste when the nation's environment ministers meet in Darwin tomorrow.

Mr Debus has joined Victorian Environment Minister, John Thwaites in pushing the packaging industry to meet strong waste reduction targets as part of negotiations for a new voluntary National Packaging Covenant (NPC).

"The community is calling for industry to play a much more active and responsible role in cutting waste to landfill – it's not good enough to expect mums and dads to do all the work through kerbside recycling," Mr Debus said.

"Industry reaps the profits from selling its packaged products. It must take responsibility when that packaging becomes waste."

Mr Debus said NSW and Victoria are calling on parties negotiating the NPC to work towards an overall recycling rate of 65 per cent by 2010 – up from the current rate of 48 per cent.

He also called for separate targets to be developed for paper/ cardboard, glass, aluminium, plastic and steel.

"Some sectors, such as paper and cardboard, are performing much better than others, such as plastics.

"Separate targets for different material types will ensure that the poorer performing sectors can't hide behind the good efforts of other materials under one overall target."

Mr Debus said he would also push for a priority funding plan to be developed to support the Covenant.

"We must also urgently tackle the growing problem of "Away from Home" packaging waste.

"This is a priority area for waste reduction targeting commercial office buildings and workplaces, food premises, shopping centres, entertainment and sporting venues.

"Packaging waste – such as food and beverage containers, cardboard boxes and plastic wrapping – is a major source of rubbish, with around one million tonnes generated each year in NSW.

"If industry fails under the covenant, then they face regulation and mandatory schemes under State and Federal environmental laws.

"In NSW we have tough Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) laws that identify priority wastes of concern.

"Using EPR, we are already moving to develop a mandatory recovery scheme for the computer industry and will use these powers to deal with the problems of packaging waste if needed."

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