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## Packaging Industry Called to Account Ministers act to introduce high recycling targets

Community groups around Australia have applauded a call from NSW and Victorian Environment Ministers to introduce high minimum recycling standards for bottles, cans and cardboard.

The Boomerang Alliance – a coalition of over 250 environment groups and 200 local councils – has been urging ministers to revise the National Packaging Covenant to significantly raise the bar for recycling and make a real impact on the amount of litter and waste polluting our public spaces and waterways. Meeting in Darwin today, Ministers Thwaites and Debus led a call for a minimum recycling rate for all packaging products of 65% by 2010.

Alliance spokesperson Dave West said the Ministers' proposed targets, coupled with strict performance requirements for poor recyclers in the glass and plastics sectors, were a huge step in the right direction.

"These targets will ensure that beverage manufacturers, retailers and consumers now have to take steps to drastically reduce the amount of glass and plastic packaging waste that blights the landscape and kills off marine life," West said.

"The beverage industry has been trying to avoid responsibility for its waste for over a decade and the community has had enough. Industry front groups posing as environment organisations, such as the Beverage Industry Environment Council, have spent millions trying to influence the political process and discredit moves to resolve the problem. It's clear that like the community, Ministers are sick of the excuses."

Clean Up Australia chairman Ian Kiernan said the proposed targets were wonderful news for the environment.

"A recent survey commissioned by the Boomerang Alliance revealed a staggering 91 per cent of respondents thought packaging manufacturers and retailers need to take more responsibility for their waste," Kiernan said.

"State governments have responded to the public's concern, and now need to ensure that systems are set in place to fund and implement the new targets, without dumping more costs on rate payers."

The Alliance cautioned Ministers of the need to ensure that the costs to recycle through the voluntary National Packaging Covenant were not in excess of those seen in traditional approaches like container deposits.

"We are deeply skeptical that industries' proposed plans look much more expensive than a container deposit approach, and little more than a very expensive smoke screen aimed at ensuring the costs of recycling are borne by the community rather than industry," West said.

NSW Local Government Association President Cr Genia McCaffery said: "It's time for industry to take on its fair share of the nearly \$300 million cost burden to run kerbside recycling. This has been an unacceptable burden that should now start to lift as we transfer responsibility away from rate payers to consumers and producers of packaging."

**Contact:** Dave West, Boomerang Alliance, 0404 093 718  
Ian Kiernan, Clean Up Australia, 02 9552 6177

### The Boomerang Alliance:

