

Podcast 152 – Container Deposit Schemes in Australia

Learn English while learning about daily life in Australia, with Rob McCormack

Podcast Number 152 – Container Deposit Schemes in Australia

<https://traffic.libsyn.com/secure/slowenglish/podcast152.mp3>

(This podcast is 13 minutes and 29 seconds long.)

Hi,

Litter is a real problem in Australia, just as it is in other countries around the world. A big part of the litter problem comes from drink containers. We love to buy water, our soft drinks and our beer in cans, small glass bottles and single use plastic bottles. These are certainly very convenient for people, as they contain just the right amount of drink that you need and they are easy to carry and store. The problem comes when the drink is gone and you are left with an empty bottle or can. Often, these empty containers are thrown away and become litter along road sides and street verges all around Australia. Many of these will end up in streams and rivers and eventually in our oceans and lakes. Even if they are put in a rubbish bin, their final resting place will usually be in a landfill rubbish tip. To help reduce this problem, state governments have introduced container deposit schemes here in Australia. In this podcast, I would like to tell you a little about these schemes, which I think are a wonderful idea.



It is true that we have recycling of these types of containers in our household rubbish systems here in Australia (see

[Podcast 15](#)). Unfortunately, when many Australians are away from home, especially when they are out having fun, they seem comfortable with the idea of throwing containers away when empty. That is why container deposit schemes have now been implemented or planned in all states and territories of Australia. Tasmania will be the last state to join in, with their scheme starting in 2024.

These schemes are based on the idea that you get paid a small amount, 10 cents, for every empty container when you return it to one of the many collection points or depots for the scheme.

Ten cents may not seem a lot, but it can add up when you collect a lot of empty containers over time.

South Australia's scheme has been operating successfully since 1977. The other states and territories have started their schemes at different times since then. I am really pleased that it has finally come to my home state of Victoria, where it commenced on the 1st of November, 2023. In this podcast, I will talk about the Victorian scheme, although all of the state schemes are very similar. Note that I will only give a summary of the scheme here. For full information about the Victorian scheme, you should visit <https://cdsvic.org.au/>.

The Victorian State Government has set up the scheme and the benefits are substantial for the community. Every year in Victoria alone we use around 3 billion drink containers. It's hard to believe that around 6.5 million people could use so many drink containers. It's no wonder so many empty containers end up in our environment as litter. The benefits of the scheme, according to the state government website (<https://www.vic.gov.au/container-deposit-scheme>), are as follows.

1. More and better recycling.
2. Less waste, as old containers are recycled back into new ones.
3. Less litter, estimated to be cut by up to half.

4. Creation of hundreds of new jobs and economic opportunities across Victoria.
5. New opportunities to raise funds for charities, community groups, environmental organisations, sports and educational organisations.
6. Overall, a cleaner, greener state.

So how does the scheme work? There are 3 basic steps:

1. Collect eligible empty drink containers.
2. Take them to your nearest collection or refund point.
3. Collect and keep the 10c refund yourself, or donate it to your chosen charity or community organisation.

Eligible containers have the following message printed on the bottle or can –

“10c refund at collection depots/points in participating State/Territory of purchase”

**10c REFUND AT COLLECTION
DEPOTS/POINTS IN
PARTICIPATING
STATE/TERRITORY
OF PURCHASE**



Picture of the label on a bottle which is eligible for the Container Deposit Scheme in Australia.

Not all containers are eligible for the scheme, especially those which are more likely to be used at home, such as milk containers. These will continue to be recycled through the household recycling system which we have in Victoria (see Podcast 15). In summary, if they have the 10c refund message printed on their labels, then they are eligible containers for the scheme. Also, the lids can be left on, as they too are recycled.



For this scheme to be convenient for Victorians, there needs to be plenty of collection and refund points near to where they live. At the time of writing this podcast (December 2023), there are already around 400 hundred collection points operating across Victoria, with the aim of having around 600 operating by August of 2024. I live in metropolitan Melbourne, so I have a number of collection points operating nearby. My

closest is around 4.4km away – about 7 minutes by car.

There are 3 basic types of collection points. The first is a special machine called a Reverse Vending Machine (RVM). Each RVM is large and has a hole through which you feed your containers.



The machine reads the bar code on the can or bottle and checks that it is eligible, then transfers it to different large bins

inside the machine. When you have finished feeding in all your containers, the machine prints out a voucher with a bar code, which you can then take to your local participating store. They scan it and give you the cash. In my area, my local supermarket is where I take my voucher. Alternatively, after you have fed all your containers into the machine, you can decide to donate your refund to your preferred charity or community organisation. You select a charity or community organisation and the refund is then donated electronically to that organisation.

Claim your refund



Voucher Refund

- 1 Insert all eligible containers
- 2 Select 'Receipt' on the screen
- 3 Take your voucher
- 4 Use your voucher for a cash refund at participating stores



Donate Refund

- 1 Insert all eligible containers
- 2 Select 'Donation' on the screen
- 3 Take your receipt



Use our App

- 1 Scan the QR code and download the CDS Vic North app
- 2 Receive an electronic refund or select a donation partner



Digital Refund

- 1 Log in to the CDS Vic North app
- 2 Select your payment method
- 3 Scan your Zone ID barcode
- 4 Insert all eligible containers

Eligible Drink Containers

All containers should be empty, uncrushed and unbroken, with the original label attached. If a container is not eligible for a refund, it may still be accepted in your kerbside recycling bin. Check for a '10c' refund mark, most drink containers (between 150mL and 3L) made from aluminium, glass, plastic, steel and liquid paperboard are eligible. Still unsure? For more information about the service and what is eligible visit: www.cdsvic.org.au

Scan
barcode

CDS



Glass. Pla



For those who like using smart phones, you can download an app. Once you register in the app, it will give you a unique user bar code, which you scan at the RVM before you put in your containers. Once you have finished putting in your containers, the system sends an electronic voucher direct to your phone. You then take your phone to the participating store, where the bar code on the electronic voucher is scanned and you get the cash, or you can use it to pay for things.

The second type of collection point is called a depot. It is designed to handle large numbers of empty container returns. A depot can have a drive-through facility, where they count your containers and give you the refund, just like the RVM can.

The third type of collection point is called Over-the-Counter. This is usually a small business or smaller organisation who can take and count your empty containers and give you a voucher for a refund, or indeed actual cash. It's just like a depot, but only smaller, designed to take smaller numbers of containers. A local café where I go with my motorcycling friends has become an Over-the-Counter collection point. They give me a cash refund on the spot. The owner tells me that their customers are bringing empty cans and bottles every day for a refund. It seems to be a great success.

I am so glad that my state has started this scheme. It makes a lot of sense to recycle our existing containers to make new containers. That's what recycling is all about. Our environment is the real winner.

If you have a question or comment to make, please leave it in the comments box at the bottom of this page. Or, you can send me an email at rob@slowenglish.info. I would love to hear from you. Tell me where you live, a little bit about yourself and what you think of my Slow English podcast. I will write back to you, in English of course. If you would like to take

a short quiz to see if you have understood this podcast, you will also find it on my website. Goodbye until next time.

Rob

Podcast 152 Quiz - Did you understand the podcast?

You can take the quiz as many times as you like.

Start quiz

Vocabulary

- Play alternatively = another way or another view
- Play bar code = a special drawing with lines, which computers can read
- Play benefits = the good things, the advantages
- Play billion = one thousand million, i.e. 1,000,000,000
- Play cash = actual money (coins or notes)
- Play charities = organisations which help people in need
- Play collection = when things are collected together
- Play comfortable = (here) happy with, agree with
- Play contain = hold
- Play containers = bottles or cups which hold things or which hold liquids (such as water)
- Play convenient = when something is easy to do

- Play creation = when something new is made for the first time
- Play depot = a place where certain things are stored in large numbers
- Play donate = to give money to help other people
- Play drive-through facility = a place where you can drive your car or truck through to unload particular things
- Play economic = to do with money and making money
- Play electronically = sent down a wire or over the internet
- Play eligible = is allowed
- Play environment = the natural world, or a part of it, in which we live
- Play estimated = guessed
- Play eventually = finally, after a time
- Play existing = it's already there
- Play feed = (here) to put things inside a machine
- Play implemented = introduced, started
- Play introduced = started, commenced
- Play labels = writing on a bottle or package which says what is in the package
- Play landfill rubbish tip = a place where rubbish is collected and buried
- Play lids = the top of a bottle which keeps the contents inside (usually screws on)
- Play litter = rubbish which is thrown on the ground

- Play no wonder = not unexpected, not surprising
- Play operating = going, running, working
- Play participating store = shops which are part of the scheme or system
- Play plenty = a lot, many
- Play preferred = the one you like or prefer
- Play recycling = to re-use something
- Play refund = to get back some money after you have bought something
- Play register = to give your name and other details, showing that you want to take part in something
- Play scan = when a computer reads a bar code picture
- Play scheme = an arrangement, a way of doing things, a process
- Play similar = the same as, or nearly the same as
- Play single use = to be used only once
- Play soft drinks = drinks with no alcohol
- Play store = (here) to put something away for a long time. Can also mean a shop
- Play substantial = large
- Play unique = there are no others like this
- Play verges = (here) the space next to the road or street, between the road and the houses
- Play voucher = a piece of paper which says you are entitled to a discount or which can be exchanged for a product

