

CONTAINER DEPOSIT SCHEME

69. Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY to the Premier:

Before I ask my question I would like to acknowledge the year 12 politics and law students and their teacher from Melville Senior High School who are here in the gallery today.

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to protecting our environment and improving recycling rates across Western Australia through the implementation of the state's first container deposit scheme. Can the Premier update the house on how this government's landmark containers for change scheme will provide new opportunities for WA businesses and help create new local jobs?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for Bicton for her question and for her interest in this important subject matter. We are strongly supportive of a container deposit scheme. A container deposit scheme will commence, for the first time in history in Western Australia, on 2 June this year. It will provide a 10¢ refund for those returning eligible drink containers to approved refund points. Costs will be borne by suppliers and industry.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warren–Blackwood!

Mr M. McGOWAN: Is the National Party opposed?

Mr D.T. Redman: No.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Okay. So it is in favour but it wants to criticise it, which is kind of normal practice for the National Party. In New South Wales and Queensland, just so people are aware, the average price increase per container was less than the 10¢ that customers would get from a refund, with a 7.7¢ increase and an 8.6¢ increase respectively. In other words, the system worked well, competitive pressure kicked in, and some of the very, very tiny costs involved were absorbed. People got more back than the cost increase on a container when they returned the containers. The chair of the Liquor Stores Association of Western Australia is in favour, and the Economic Regulation Authority will be monitoring prices before and after the scheme to ensure that we keep pressure down on the costs.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warren–Blackwood, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Under the scheme we expect to see 6.6 billion containers recycled over the next couple of decades. That will divert six billion containers from landfill and hundreds of millions more from litter. It helps to clean up our environment, but what is more is that it does another important thing: it creates jobs. This scheme will create 500 jobs across the state. In particular, we are focused on charities and disability sector organisations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations and sporting and community groups. Earlier this year I visited the Ability Centre, which runs Goodwill Engineering in Malaga. Many people there perform important work and have a disability. The Ability Centre will run some of the collection points and it expects to create jobs for people with disabilities as a consequence. People with disabilities, the long-term unemployed and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be able to get a large number of those 500 jobs created. There will be 172 refund points, growing to 229 refund points—the highest ratio of refund points anywhere in Australia, and every region across the state will be covered. This is a great environmental initiative and a great waste-avoidance initiative, and it will create jobs, especially for people who may have a disability or are long-term unemployed. It is a great initiative and a great Labor achievement.