

CONTAINER DEPOSIT SCHEME

81. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the minister representing the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the failure of the Barnett government to support a container deposit scheme in Western Australia, despite the fact that empty drink bottles and cans top the list of rubbish strewn around our beaches, streets, bushland and schools.

- (1) Can the minister explain why he said in a radio interview on 8 February that he personally favoured the South Australian scheme because “I don’t want taxpayers’ funds to run a scheme that industry could run”?
- (2) Can the minister provide details about why he thinks that an industry-run scheme is better than a scheme run by the Waste Authority as proposed in Labor’s bill?

Hon HELEN MORTON replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1)–(2) The Western Australian government is supporting investigation through the Council of Australian Governments’ Standing Council on Environment and Water into a national approach to container deposit systems and other options for managing packaging waste. The validity of any state legislation establishing a container deposit scheme and imposing a fee collected by a state government, which could be characterised as a duty of excise, may be susceptible to challenge under the commonwealth Constitution. An industry-run scheme may not be susceptible to the same challenge. The minister anticipates that these matters should be addressed by the national investigation.