

**CONTAINERS FOR CHANGE — ECONOMIC REGULATION AUTHORITY REPORT**

*Statement by Minister for Environment*

**MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Environment)** [9.19 am]: The state's container deposit scheme, Containers for Change, commenced on 1 October 2020, fulfilling a McGowan government election commitment. The scheme has been embraced by the Western Australian community, with over one billion containers returned and \$3.7 million donated to charities and community groups so far. This is an excellent result.

When Containers for Change commenced, the government asked the Economic Regulation Authority to monitor the scheme's effect on drink prices. We did this to help ensure that the introduction of the scheme did not unfairly increase drink prices. The Treasurer has tabled the Economic Regulation Authority's report today. I am pleased to advise that, on average, the drink price increases over the first year of the scheme were less than, or very close to, the average scheme fee. The Economic Regulation Authority estimated that the retail price increase over the first year of the Containers for Change scheme in the metropolitan area was 13.2¢ a bottle or can for non-alcoholic drinks and 3.9¢ a bottle or can for alcoholic drinks. Regional retail prices increased by a similar amount. This compares with the average scheme fee of 12.82¢ per container. This means that, on average, the drink price increases over the first year of the scheme's operation are very close to the cost of running the scheme. Both the cost of running Containers for Change and the average drink price increases are very similar to those in other Australian states and territories that have container deposit schemes. It is heartening that the Economic Regulation Authority found no evidence to suggest that drink suppliers and retailers have exploited the introduction of the container deposit scheme to increase drink prices in excess of the additional costs incurred as a result of the scheme. That should give confidence to members in this place that the scheme is working just as it should—delivering a substantial positive outcome for the environment, with no additional costs to the consumer.

I encourage members to do what they can in their communities to encourage participation in Containers for Change. I have collection bins outside my electorate office and I encourage people to put their containers in those bins. We go through about four to six bins a month. The money is donated to local community and sporting organisations or P&Cs. I can tell members that this month, the donations will go to Baldivis Little Athletics. I add up the deposit income, and my electorate office matches it, so it is a good source of funding for local community groups. I look forward to the continuing success of Containers for Change and the benefits it brings to our environment and communities.