



Manly Council

**Inquiry into Municipal Waste Management in
NSW**

Prepared by Manly Council
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1. Introduction

Manly Council has long been an advocate of Container Deposit Legislation (CDL). Council has adopted this position with the expectation that CDL would serve as an educative tool and raise community awareness of waste avoidance and minimisation. It is also expected CDL would have a positive impact on littering behaviour in the community and reduce the amount of material disposed at landfill. Council also supports CDL as an opportunity for producers and consumers to take responsibility for the waste they produce and the associated costs to the community.

1.1 Zero Waste

Manly Council adopted a Towards Zero Waste Strategy in March 2005, with a key aim being to develop and promote a set of actions and tasks designed to guide the Manly community towards the goal of zero waste. The strategy included an action to continue to lobby State and Federal Governments for Container Deposit Legislation.

1.2 Manly Council Local Government Area

Manly Council local government area (LGA) is located 11km north east of the central business district of Sydney. The area forms part of the Middle Harbour and the Northern Beaches Catchments. The Manly LGA encompasses 16.26km² with a boundary of 39.4km, of which 29.9km is a water margin (State of the Environment Report 1999/2000). The water margin is partly formed by the Southern Pacific Ocean and partly by Sydney Harbour. Manly LGA has a population of 36,265 people (1996 ABS census).

Manly is a popular tourist destination, particularly the Ocean Beach. The Manly Visitor Information Centre estimates that up to 6 million people visit Manly LGA each year. This places significant pressure on the local environment and is the reason Council is particularly concerned with issues of waste management such as littering, public place waste collection and waste minimisation education. CDL is a waste management tool that can assist Council to implement ecologically sustainable development principles and also place responsibility on the producers of the containers.

2. The Current Situation

A deposit system has the potential to reduce waste across the waste stream through the high rate of return it would generate. The cost currently incurred by Council would be transferred to producers and consumers of these products.

In 1998 the Plastics and Chemical Industry Association (PACIA) reported that only 30% of PET was recycled. Waste Services NSW calculate that 15,000 to 20,000 tonnes of PET is recycled in NSW each year. This equates to a conservative estimate of 35,000 tonnes of PET contributing to landfill or entering our waterways each year, resulting in serious environmental and financial impacts. It is estimated that a deposit system could

achieve return rates of between 84 and 97%, equating to a conservative estimate of 40 250 tonnes of PET returned for reuse or recycling (Bring Back Returnables, 1992).

Council's Involvement with Disposable Containers	Council's Current Activities
Domestic Recycling	Provide fortnightly kerbside collection service
Commercial Recycling	Provide kerbside collection service
General Waste	Provide weekly garbage collection service
Public Place Waste	Provide public place waste collection service
Litter	Maintain a clean and safe environment, enforce anti-littering regulations
Gross Pollution Traps	Install and maintain gross pollutant trap's
Bushland /Parks & Reserves	Provide bush regeneration program including removal of litter
Beach Cleaning	Provide daily beach cleaning

Figure 1: Council Activities Effected by the CDL.

Figure 1 summarises the major areas where Council incurs the cost of disposing of food and beverage containers. It is recognised that CDL would not eliminate the necessity for these activities but producers and consumers would take partial responsibility for the economic and environmental costs. It is difficult to determine the cost to Council, but it is significant especially when multiplied throughout NSW. The Local Government and Shires Association in a CDL report prepared in May 1999 estimated, using Local Government Recycling Cooperative data, that councils lost \$1030 on every tonne of PET collected.

An audit of Manly's litter bins in 1997 found that glass, PET and aluminium accounted for 11% (by weight) of the total public waste stream (BIEC - Kinhill Waste Minimisation Strategy for Manly Council). Disposing of the container component of this waste results in significant cost to Council. If the cost of waste disposal were to increase, as proposed in 'long-hall' landfill site scenarios, the financial burden on councils would be even greater.

Analysis of waste removed from gross pollutant traps in the catchment show that up to 60% consists of plastic bottles and aluminium cans. On average packaging accounts for 27% of material collected in gross pollutant traps, booms etc.

Council's Waste and Cleansing team collects between one and seven tonnes of stormwater litter per week from Manly Harbour and Ocean beaches depending on weather conditions (State of the Environment Report 1998/99).

Beverage and food containers are also a large component of the material collected during clean up campaigns such as Clean Up Australia Day. It is envisaged that CDL would contribute to the prevention of the majority of this type of litter.

3. Container Deposit System as a Solution

The potential success of deposit systems is evidenced through Council's experience with the Manly Food and Wine Festival. In 1999 Council introduced the use of a mobile dishwashing service to five out of seventeen stallholders in the festival. The stallholders were provided with reusable plates that were collected and washed before being reused. The project significantly reduced the amount of disposable plates used. However, it was estimated that 45% of reusable plates were not returned. Patrons often left plates heaped on the ground with other rubbish or threw them away.

A plate deposit system was introduced in 2000. This was a \$2 deposit paid at the time of purchasing a meal. The deposit was refunded when the plates were returned to designated stalls. The dishwashing service was extended to ten out of eighteen stallholders at the festival.

Unfortunately on the second day of the festival the deposit system was removed due to shortage of coins for refunds. The event area was left in a much worse condition than the previous day. Despite this, only 10% of plates were lost over the period of the festival compared with 45% in the previous year. The deposit system not only encouraged people to return their plates but also to dispose of their rubbish. This has continued to be proven at subsequent Food and Wine Festivals where the deposit system has been maintained, and litter from plates and food has been minimal.

The deposit system also proved to be a positive waste education initiative as it generated significant interest about waste avoidance among patrons.

Manly Council's decision to support CDL is also influenced by the positive experience reported from South Australia. A report titled 'Report on the Review of the Economic and Environmental Impacts of the Beverage Provisions of the Environmental Protection Act 1993 (Container Deposit Legislation) in South Australia', prepared for the SAEPA in March 2000 suggests that the positive aspects of CDL for local government include the following:

- CDL reduces litter and diverts solid waste away from landfill, and thereby reduces cost of waste going to landfill.
- It complements kerbside recycling by providing an incentive for consumers not to commit deposit containers to general waste by returning containers to recycle depots.
- A substantial reduction of containers into the litter stream, reduced pollution to stormwater which results in a healthier and safer environment for residents and wildlife.

Council also recommends that CDL be extended to products other than containers. At present this exists on a few products such as tyres. However, there are many other items, such as batteries, paint tins and so on, that could be diverted from landfill if a deposit system was implemented.