



## Lobbying for or against CDL without recycling industry on board - a fatal error: Musgrove

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Jacqueline Ong

**Australian Council of Recycling CEO Grant Musgrove told BEN that while the association does not have a position on a national Container Deposit Legislation, proposing a whole system change is less palatable than targeting problematic materials where recycling rates are low.**



According to Musgrove, most of ACOR's members are opposed to a container deposit scheme (CDS) because of the way it has been presented, taking on an approach that will require a complete system change.

He said incremental changes and tackling specific challenges in recycling problematic waste streams would deliver more success than a national CDS.



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Under the scheme, consumers would be given a 10-cent refund when they return a bottle or can to a depot. Only South Australian and the Northern Territory have a CDS in place, although it has run into some trouble in the latter after two depots closed their doors to collected containers last month (see Related Stories).

A national CDS is currently being considered by Environment Ministers through the National Council on Environment and Water (SKEW) and a decision was expected in July. There has been no word since on a final decision date.

"It really comes down to what happens in NSW and Victoria. But it's likely that each state will wander off and do what they want," Musgrove said.

But what really gets his goat are "extreme claims" made by both supporters and opponents of CDL that are not based on feedback from the recycling industry.

"I'm frustrated with clients and environmental groups that claim they have [viable] models and are advising the government when they don't have any industry background or knowledge," he said, "of course none of the protagonists actually speak for the recycling industry, but do get paid to have an endless and extremist debate. Proposing such a radical change without getting the recycling industry on board has in my view been a fatal error for the supporters- time will tell."

It was revealed today that environmental group Keep Australia Beautiful is lobbying governments to oppose the CDS and adopt an alternative proposal.

What was troubling however, is the fact that Coca-Cola, which stands to be financially hit under a national CDS, is funding Keep Australia Beautiful. The beverage company was in fact, one of the companies that fought the NT scheme in federal court and won (see Related Stories).

Chief executive of Keep Australia Beautiful Peter McLean told The Age that he had indeed sent letters to Victorian Environment Minister Ryan Smith arguing against establishing a CDS in the state but told the Sydney Morning Herald that his organisation was "definitely not" a mouthpiece for Coca-Cola.

"A lot of people say Coke has a lot of influence on Keep Australia Beautiful but... we also have a lot of influence on Coke," he said.

But here are the numbers - Coca Cola donated \$441,000 to the organisation this year, more than a quarter of its total revenue. In 2011-12, Keep Australia Beautiful received \$498,278, more than half its revenue for the year.

Total Environment Centre executive director Jeff Angel, a vocal proponent of the CDS, said the partnership raised questions of the credibility of Keep Australia Beautiful and it could not be regarded as an independent voice on tackling bottle and can litter if it was funded by the beverage industry.

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**Aspermont Limited**  
**Street Address** 613-619 Wellington Street, Perth WA Australia 6000  
**Postal Address** PO Box 78, Leederville, WA Australia 6902  
**Head Office Tel** +61 8 6263 9100 **Head Office Fax** +61 8 6263 9148  
**e-mail** [contact@aspermont.com](mailto:contact@aspermont.com) **website** [www.aspermont.com](http://www.aspermont.com) **ABN** 66 000 375 048