



Ray Williams MP

Member for Castle Hill

MEDIA RELEASE

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RETURN AND EARN SET TO EXPAND

Return and Earners in Castle Hill could be in for a massive update, with the NSW Government planning to expand the scheme so it includes containers like glass wine and spirits bottles and larger container.

Member for Castle Hill Ray Williams MP said this is an exciting opportunity to build on one of Australia's most successful recycling initiatives and improve recycling practices in households across NSW.

"More than 8 billion bottles have been returned and given a new life since the scheme started in 2017, a huge achievement and I thank every Castle Hill resident for embracing this new way of thinking about beverage containers," Mr Williams said.

"Together we have driven down drink container litter rates by an impressive 52 per cent, increased recycling rates and donated funds to charities.

"Return and Earn has achieved an enormous amount so far and now we're looking to take the next step as we strive towards our vision for a circular economy in NSW and Castle Hill."

Minister for Environment James Griffin said public consultation is now open on the planned expansion, which would see up to an additional 400 million eligible bottles recycled each year, including 233 million glass bottles.

"We already accept beer, cider and a range of other beverage containers through Return and Earn, and now we are looking to include glass wine and spirits bottles and larger drink containers," Mr Griffin said.

"Return and Earn began as a litter reduction tool, and since then, it's become incredibly popular with almost 80 per cent of adults in NSW having used the scheme, which has more than 620 return points across the State.

"Since Return and Earn began in 2017, more than eight billion containers have been returned, delivering \$800 million in refunds to the people of NSW, more than \$35 million in donations to community groups and charities, and helping us reduce drink container litter by a massive 52 per cent.

"This scheme expansion would see hundreds of millions fewer plastic and glass containers ending up in landfill because of contamination in kerbside collections, and supercharge our push towards a circular economy in NSW.



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“Expanding Return and Earn is a win for the environment, a win for communities and a win for businesses.”

Consultation is now open on the Scheme’s expansion, which would see almost all beverage containers between 150 ml and 3 litres accepted for refund.

For example, this would include:

- Wine and spirits in glass bottles
- Cordials and juice concentrate
- Larger containers up to 3 litres of beverages already in the scheme, such as flavoured milk, fruit and vegetable juice, cask wine and sachets.

Plain milk and health tonics would continue to be excluded from the scheme.

Currently, Return and Earn accepts drink containers [such as](#) cans, beer and mixer bottles, cartons, juice boxes and poppers.

The NSW Environment Protection Authority will be holding targeted stakeholder information sessions and webinars in the coming months around NSW so a transition can be as smooth as possible for new suppliers to the scheme.

The discussion paper Driving NSW’s circular economy is available at <https://yoursay.epa.nsw.gov.au/> and will be open for consultation until 5pm 2 December 2022.

For more information about Return and Earn visit www.returnandearn.org.au

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NSW Return and Earn Scheme achievements since 2017 commencement:

- More than 8 billion containers returned
- \$800 million in refunds delivered to the people of NSW
- \$35 million in donations delivered to community groups and charities
- 52 per cent reduction in beverage container litter
- More than 620 return points located across NSW, ranging from self-service machines which use the latest reverse vending technology to staffed automated depots for bulk returns
- 79 per cent of NSW adults have participated in Return and Earn