

Community Demands

Action on Recycling!



Summary Report:
Community Attitudes on Recycling



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Community Attitudes on Recycling

This short report was prepared by the Boomerang Alliance and its Western Australian lead group the Conservation Council of Western Australia (CCWA) and was presented to Minister Garrett on Wednesday November 4th at the National Environment Groups roundtable in Canberra. Copies have been also delivered to all State and Territory Environment Ministers.

The timing is deliberate and on the eve of the historic November 5th EPHC Meeting seeks to remind all Environment Ministers of the importance the community places on recycling. At this meeting the fate of national recycling schemes for e-waste, beverage containers and tyres are to be debated and the Proposed National Waste Policy is to be established.

The most recent findings, based on a number of surveys conducted in September and October are consistent with previous research:

- That the community regards recycling as one of the most important environmental solutions – more important than addressing climate change;
- That the public expects governments to do more to support recycling;
- That simply recovering waste material and exporting it overseas is not good enough. More attention needs to be given to support efforts to reprocess recovered material in Australia;
- That the adoption of Producer Responsibility Schemes for problematic and profligate wastes like E-Waste and Packaging are a priority.

The research also reinforced the overwhelming support for the adoption of Container Deposit Schemes. There is no disputing that:

- Very few environmental initiatives enjoy the level of support the public has for container deposits. The latest polling of 97% is consistent with research findings for over 4 years; &
- The public understands that they will have to pay a deposit and may face some small price increases in handling fees and are happy to meet these costs

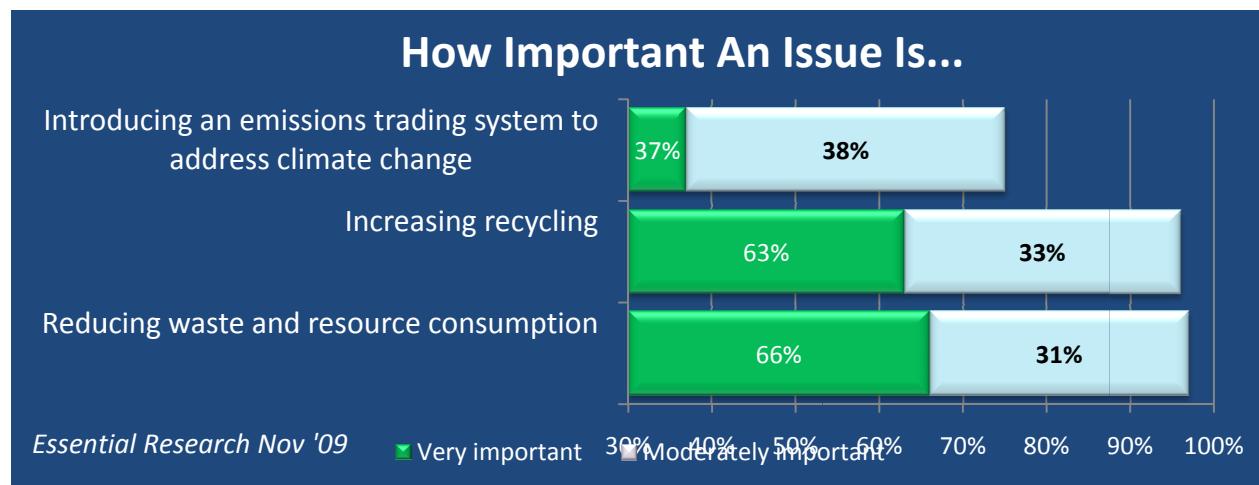
After 5 years of inaction and bureaucratic bungling On November 5th Environment Ministers need to show they are listening to the electorate by:

1. Adopting proposed national computer, TV and tyre recycling schemes;
2. Agreeing to prepare a Regulatory Impact Statement to assess the viability of a National Container Deposit System;
3. Delivering a credible National Waste Policy with firm timelines for actions and a regulatory assessment process that will allow the Commonwealth, States and Territories to do much more to support increased recycling in Australia.

How Important is Recycling to the Public?

The Latest Polling:

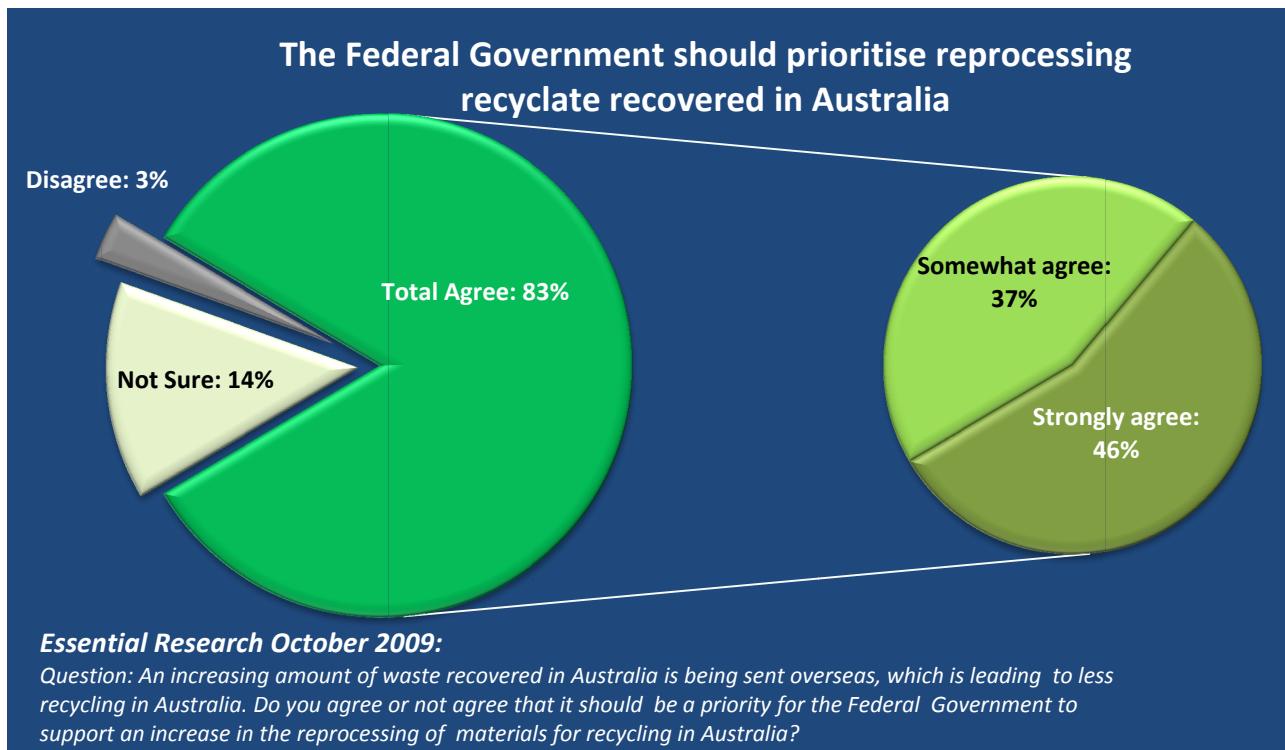
Polling undertaken by Essential Research in October 2009 has reaffirmed that the public continues to see recycling as a priority for government action. The public places both recycling and reducing waste significantly higher than the introduction of the Federal Government's major response to climate change – an Emissions Trading System.



When these results were explored further, Recycling is the third most common issue identified as the most important (after renewable energy and climate change).

The Australian Public's 10 Most Important Environmental Issues:		
Ranking	Most Important Environmental Issues	% identifying issue as most important
1st	Renewable energy production	28%
2nd	Climate change	17%
3rd	Recycling	12%
3rd	Pollution of rivers and waterways	12%
5th	Reducing air pollution	11%
6th	Urban sprawl	7%
7th	More environmental flows in our rivers	5%
8th	Protecting Australia's endangered species	4%
9th	Protecting native forests	3%
9th	Protecting Australia's marine life	3%

The public also recognized that recovering the material was only part of the job. When asked whether the Federal Government should prioritise supporting action to support recovered scrap that was exported for reprocessing 83% of agreed with just 3% disagreeing:



Findings are Consistent:

These findings are consistent with similar polling conducted by Essential Research for the Pew Environment Group in October last year, who undertook broad research into Australia's Environmental Values. People were asked to nominate priority areas for any increase in spending within the environment portfolio. 20% nominated recycling as one of their top 3 priorities, ranking as the 7th highest priority – renewable energy and climate change ranked as the 2 highest priorities.

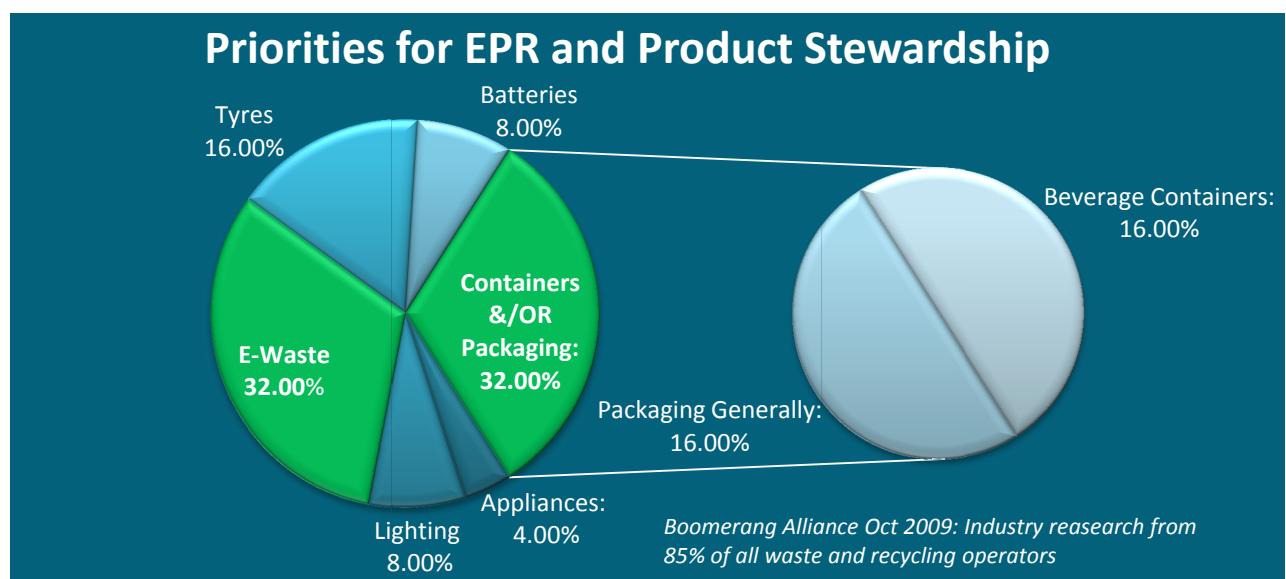
Dissatisfaction:

Online Polling completed in October 2009 by the Conservation Council of Western Australia also highlighted the growing public dissatisfaction with government on waste and recycling. 90% of all respondents stated that they did not think the State Government was doing enough to promote and support recycling in Western Australia.

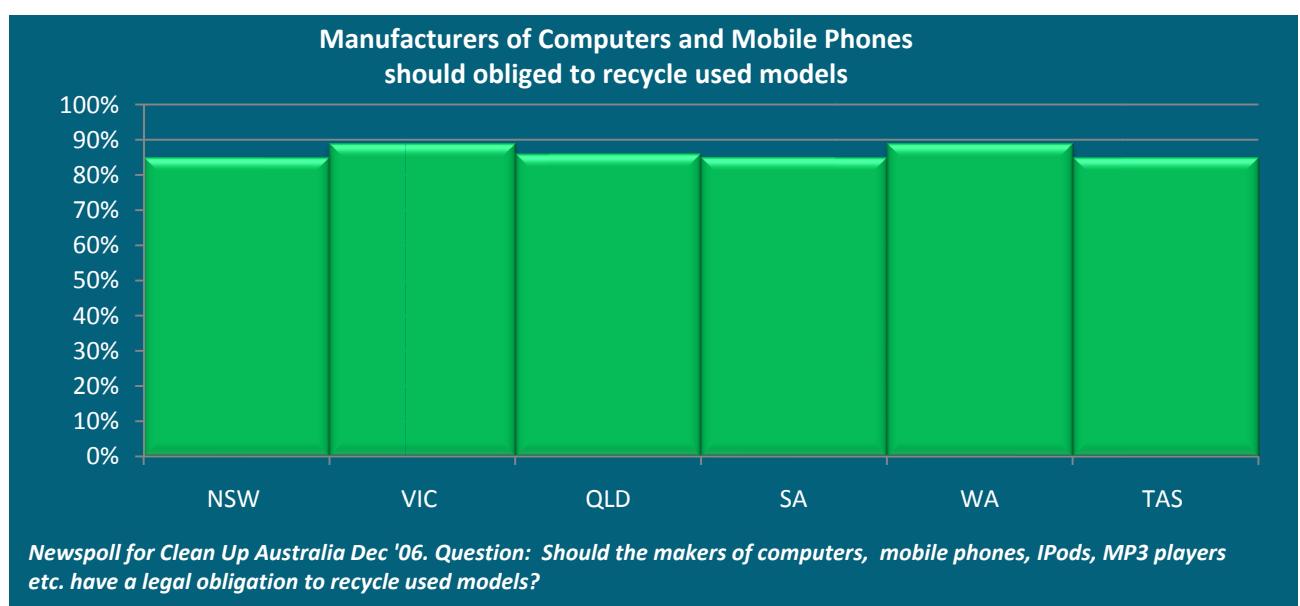
Extended Producer Responsibility:

The public and recycling industry both place a high priority of recycling schemes to address Australia's most profligate and problematic waste. With 94.3% of respondents to CCWA's October online survey indicating that they thought government should adopt Producer Responsibility Schemes for e-waste, containers etc.

This sentiment was also reflected by the waste and recycling industry, Boomerang Alliance completed a survey in September 2009 covering nearly 90% of the players waste and recycling marketplace that found that 63.4% saw the adoption of extended producer responsibility schemes as a priority for governments to support waste and recycling. The industries priorities for EPR were seen as:



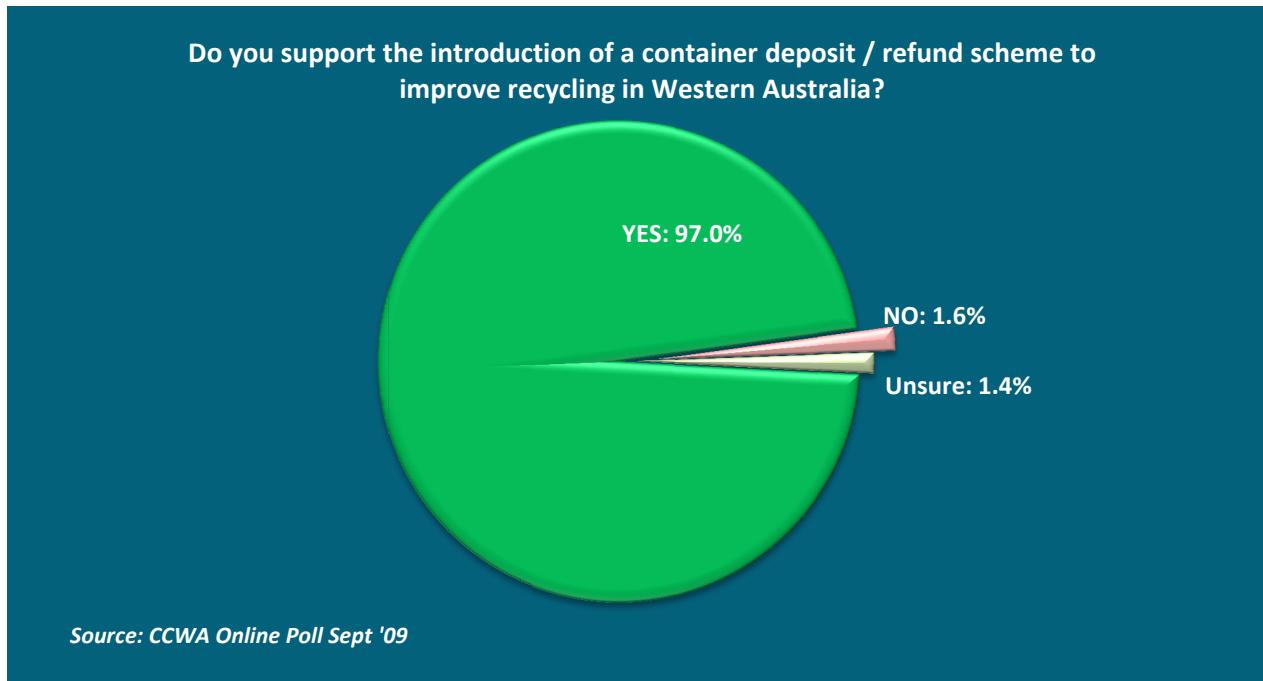
The public has seen action on electronic waste and packaging as priority areas for some time. A Newspoll completed in December 2006 by Boomerang Alliance member Clean Up Australia highlighted that 86% of the public believed manufacturers of computers and mobile phones etc. should have a legal obligation to recycle used models. A breakdown



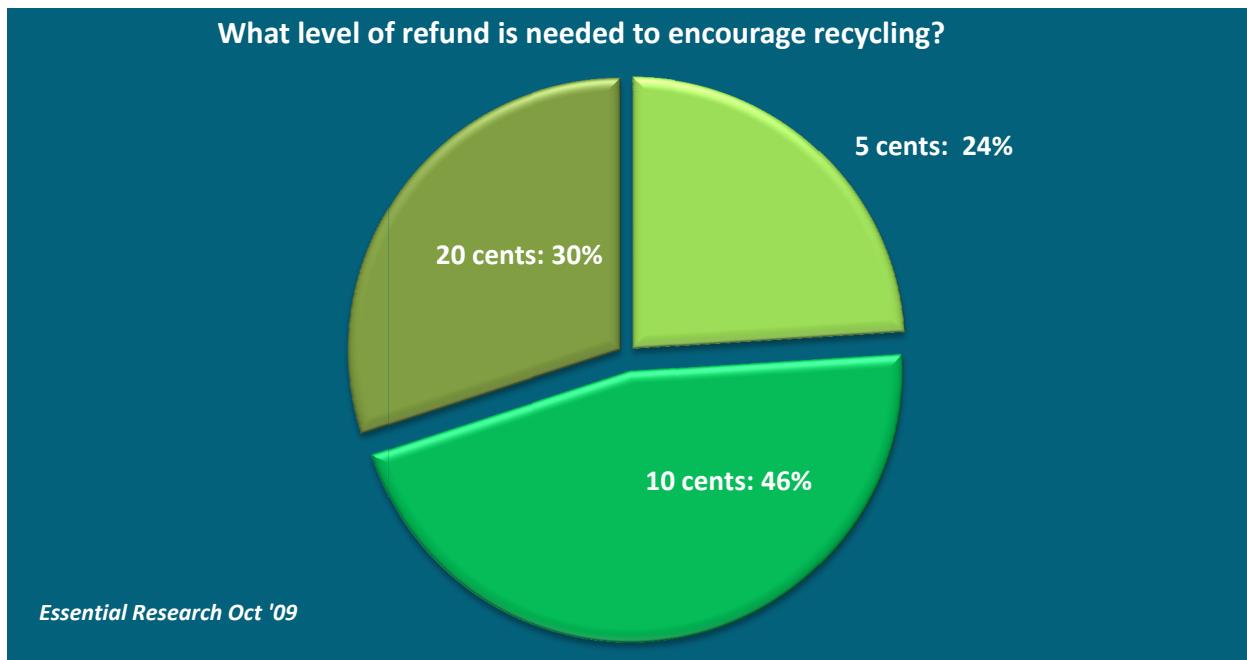
across jurisdictions follows:

Container Deposit Systems:

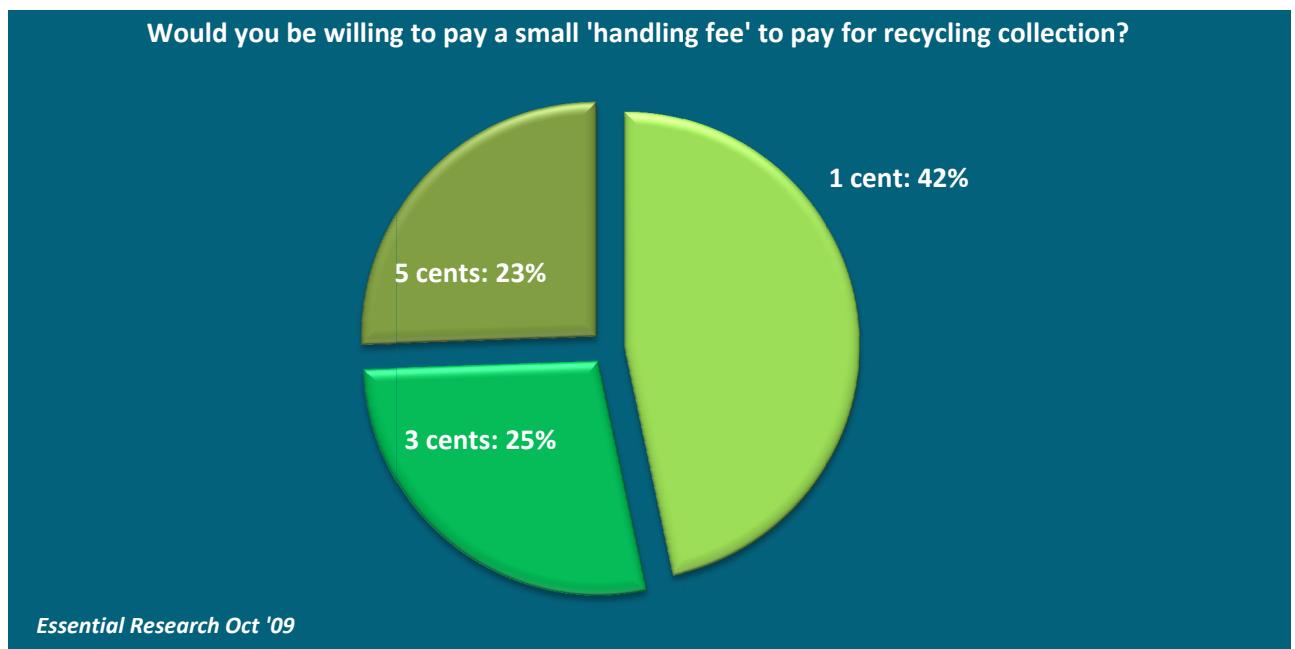
Recent online research by CCWA reinforces the strong public support for container deposits that has been evident for a number of years:



Further national research conducted by Boomerang Alliance in October 2009 highlighted that most people thought a 10 cent deposit was needed to encourage people to recycle bottles and cans:



The public also indicated that they understood and were willing to pay reasonable costs (other than the deposit. In the CCWA online polling 95.8% of all respondents were happy to pay the 0.5¢ cost per container identified in the most recent EPHC cost benefit analysis. Complimenting these findings Boomerang Alliance commissioned Essential Research to establish the public's willingness to pay small handling fees, if necessary (BA previous



modeling indicates that these are not necessary for a well designed Australia CD system) to establish a National Container Deposit System.

Findings are Consistent:

Once again these finding are consistent over a period of time. Boomerang Alliance surveys completed in May 2006 and February 2007 by Newspoll shows both the public's opinion of where deposit levels need to be set to encourage recycling and the level of refundable deposit they are willing to bear: