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CONTAINER REFUND COME TO VICTORIA - FINALLY - BUT CHALLENGES AHEAD

The announcement today of the Coordinator and Network Operators (NOs) for Victoria's Container Refund Scheme, marks the end of a very long effort spanning several decades, by community groups who had to battle big drink companies opposed to the introduction of modern drink bottle and can recycling. There are however, challenges ahead that will require close attention by the government, the Boomerang Alliance said.

"The next 6 – 9 months is quite a short time and we may find that not all the refund points will be in place by 1 November. This caused problems in NSW which also had a short rollout period. The situation could be exacerbated by the multiple Network Operators and their varying capacities to deliver the 600 efficient and convenient refund points and depots for consumers and households and multiple aggregation sites," said Jeff Angel, Director of the Alliance of 55 NGOs.

"We are very supportive of the government's split responsibility model as it is the best approach to maximise the focus on recovery and recycling which will be the only goal of the Network Operators. Victoria is also fortunate to have experienced companies undertaking this task – they will have to get to work fast. It's also pleasing Coke, Lion and the other big drink companies are on board."

"A CDS is the circular economy in action supporting bottle to bottle plants and affordable as the evidence in other states is that those who get the refund are not charged any extra for drinks."

"It remains to be seen whether having multiple NOs will lead to competition and a better infrastructure rollout as the government wants or the lowest common denominator for least cost. This is important as we want people to have maximum convenience to get their refunds and return all their drink containers."

"With only Tasmania left to announce its scheme start date – we are on the cusp of Australia being the only continent to be fully covered by drink container refund schemes. It's a great tribute to the work of so many local, state and national community groups," Mr Angel said.