

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to submit the following comments to the Senate Enquiry into Drink Bottle Deposit Program as this is an important moment in Australia's commitment to recycling and cleaning up the environment. For too long Australia has remained uncommitted and overly complacent in its approach to environmental concerns leaving it to individual states, like South Australia, to take action on such matters.

On my return from Germany only days ago, I observed the stark contrast between Victoria and the German regional and rural contexts. In Australia there are bottles and bags and wraps along all the major highways where people have carelessly discarded them to blow and deteriorate, polluting the environment and posing dangers to wildlife. In Germany the roadsides are free of litter and plastic bottles are taken to a machine at supermarkets and counted in one at a time, producing a credit slip for the owner to use in further purchases. Why is it that Australia continues to be so far behind in such matters of environmental concern, when there are long-established approaches to handling plastic bottles and other such waste?

With the deposit system working for many years in South Australia, it is evident that this approach works well. It assists in maintaining more positive attitudes towards management of plastic and other refuse, and has the effect of markedly lessening the litter thrown into the environment.

I would urge that, as a nation, we use this opportunity to alter our careless approach to bottles as a first step to addressing the appalling littering of roads and bushlands that must stop if we are to provide basic care for our environment.

Dr Jennifer Lehmann