

## CONTAINER DEPOSIT SCHEME

### *Motion*

**HON DR SALLY TALBOT (South West)** [11.28 am] — without notice: I move —

That the Legislative Council congratulates the government on its plans to introduce a container deposit scheme and other important initiatives to make Western Australia a sustainable low-waste community.

There is a nice segue between the previous motion that extended debate on our agricultural practices in this state and the final contribution by the Minister for Environment, Hon Stephen Dawson, about the provisions in the laws of this state and how we have an obligation to abide by them. The motion that I am moving today is about a very significant change in the law that will bring about a very significant change in not only our practices, but also our cultural attitudes towards waste in this state. It has been a very long time coming. It is unbelievable that we are nearing the end of the second decade of the twenty-first century and Western Australians are still lagging so far behind the rest of this country with their attitudes to waste and the way we generate and dispose of that waste. I would go further than that and say that one of the pressing challenges that we have had in front of us as a society for the last three or four decades is to do a radical rethink of the whole concept of waste and perhaps even abolish the concept of waste and come to a full realisation that nothing that is produced in the materialistic world in which we live today is without consequence. I am very proud to be part of a government that has taken that step. Governments are sometimes reluctant to engage in these programs to adopt legislation that has cultural change at its heart. The government of which I am part is brave enough and has sufficient commitment and a set of shared values that is robust enough for it to attempt that. I am equally proud to say that behind that move is a vast wave of community support—it has been there for a couple of decades—to radically rethink our concept of waste and to bring Western Australia into the twenty-first century when it comes to our attitude towards the way we get rid of the things that we have finished consuming.

I have framed this motion around the introduction of the container deposit scheme. We will see container deposit legislation debated in this chamber within the next couple of weeks. As I said, it has been a long time coming. They say that the ship of state is slow to turn around. In the last few years we have seen that the Liberal Party in this state is even slower to turn around. In eight and a half years, we saw no action on this front. Indeed, I go further than that and say that we went backwards during that eight and a half years. We were poised at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century to take very significant steps, which included not only a container deposit scheme and action on plastic bags, but also things like the fertiliser action plan. They all went for nothing once the Liberal–National government took office in late 2008. I am happy to say that momentum has now been restored. As I have noted, the ship of state is slow to turn around but it has taken Hon Stephen Dawson less than two years to do exactly that. Indeed, it took him only a matter of months to move on plastic bags, such was the momentum in the community.

Some members on the benches opposite were sceptical about the removal of single-use plastic bags from the environment. We have had hours of debate in this place during the 14 years that I have been here, with those on the opposite benches—the Liberal and National Parties—suggesting that if we were to remove single-use plastic bags from the environment, the sun would not rise and the sky would fall down. Guess what? They have not. Although some people were not fully converted—they remain that way—we have all learned and every day in every shop and supermarket in Western Australia, we see that people have worked out that life goes on without single-use plastic bags. Very shortly we will begin to see the environmental, social and economic benefits that come from making that kind of move. Incidentally, I will quickly share a couple of great stories connected with the ban on single-use plastic bags. I gather that anybody who wears a uniform that includes a hat was very happy. There were great stories of police officers filling their hats with their shopping when they called into the shops after work. My favourite story was about the person who carried a roll of gaffer tape with them. If they bought too many things at the shop and they did not have their reusable bags with them, on their way to their car they gaffer taped everything they bought to their body.

As I said, we will spend considerable time talking about the container deposit legislation over the next few weeks and months in this place as this new scheme becomes law. I will not spend much time on that today. I wish to say that the container deposit scheme is not the only thing that this government has done. I have considerable knowledge and experience in this field, having been shadow Minister for Environment for several years. The most important thing that the McGowan Labor government has done is put in place the “Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030”. At last we have a plan. We do not just have a plan when we print several thousand copies and use them as doorstops. We have a strategy that is supported by a business plan, a budget, task forces and working groups that have a commitment to action. It is not easy to translate values and principles into concrete action, but that is what this government is doing, and we see it

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unfolding on almost a daily basis at the moment. We have the strategy in place now that will take us through at least until 2030. Clearly, if members have taken the time to read that document—I urge members to do that if they have not done so already—they will know that it is not a heavily technical document; members will not have to lock themselves in a quiet room and use cold compresses to get rid of a headache every couple of hours. The document is only 30 or 40 pages long. It is clear and concise and tells us what the state will do to lead this change over the next decade or so.

We have the strategy in place. The strategy very cleverly and very smartly moves on from the old policy, which was framed around the Towards Zero slogan and did not quite make the distinctions clear enough between ideas like reframing the waste hierarchy and that kind of circular economy idea in which we abandon the notion of waste and just look at what we are now calling the embodied energy in waste, so that instead of seeing something as rubbish, we see it as a resource. It is one of the most powerful intellectual tools that we have come across in this area. When I say an “intellectual tool”, I mean a tool that can drive policy. If we read the strategy, we will see that this idea of a circular economy, of embedding or embodying value in what we used to call rubbish, will drive this new approach. We move from the old Towards Zero approach to an approach that is framed around avoid, recover and protect. Those three concepts summarise this idea that Labor governments are famous for. Only Labor governments get their heads around these ideas and turn them into practice. It is the idea that we do not have to sacrifice economic outcomes for environmental outcomes. When we talk about that old triple bottom line, the concept with which we are all familiar—that we must always consider not only the economic benefits, but also the social and environmental benefits—we can have all three balls in the air at the same time. That is why I think one of the highlights of the last two years of the McGowan Labor government was yesterday when the Premier released the “Our Priorities: Sharing Prosperity” program.

A great look of puzzlement has now taken over the faces of members on the benches opposite. Nobody on the other side of the chamber, nobody in the Liberal Party or the Nationals WA, has the faintest idea what we are talking about when we say that you can walk and chew gum. These guys are hopeless. That is why they spent eight and a half years falling over their feet, because every time they took a step, if they had gum in their mouths, they would fall flat on their faces. That happened for eight and a half years. Fortunately, we now have a government and an environment minister who can both walk and chew gum. What lies behind the “Our Priorities: Sharing Prosperity” program, against which this government will be measured? The platform on which this government will seek re-election in two years’ time is now there in black and white. Those members on the opposition benches who have learned to work the internet will be able to track it daily to see how the government is going. They will be able to get up day after day and ask questions about it so they can expand their understanding of how the government is going to integrate its economic priorities with environmental sustainability and social benefit. That is what this government is doing. That is the heart that this government wears on its sleeve. That is why I am proud to be a part of this Labor government, which is setting a constructive and creative path for reworking our waste strategy.

I want to say a number of other things and I will have a right of reply at the end of this debate, but I know that a number of my colleagues have a lot to talk about too. One thing about the container deposit scheme is that it has always had very wide support. In my initial remarks on this subject, I said that I wanted to do a second thing and that is to pay tribute where it is due. I have already mentioned Hon Stephen Dawson and the McGowan Labor government in general, but I want to also pay tribute to the community groups whose lead, in a sense, we are following. The town that I come from, Denmark, is renowned for being clean and green. The people of Denmark really have led the way in plastic reduction. There is a group in Denmark that has been meeting every two or three months at the community resource centre, or the environment resource centre, that has changed its name from Plastic Bag Reduction Denmark to Plastic Reduction Denmark. It is a great group of mainly women, although I notice in its latest Facebook post about a workshop that that group held about a week ago, one male was there. That is a great thing because it is something that everybody can get involved in. Hon Simon O’Brien is a beneficiary of that program. A couple of months ago, I noticed he was carrying around a very tatty old bag that contained all his committee paperwork, so I gifted him—I am sure he will disclose it on his declaration of interest—a bag made by that plastic reduction group in Denmark.

**Hon Simon O’Brien:** And I have toted it in public.

**Hon Dr SALLY TALBOT:** I am very proud to have helped Hon Simon O’Brien to go down that particular path.

I want to pay tribute to all those groups that are operating statewide. There were ban-the-bag community groups in almost every town in the south west and I am sure the same was true in the Agricultural Region, Mining and Pastoral Region, Kimberley and Pilbara. People feel very strongly about this matter and it is a great thing to see the government acting on those concerns.

We also have the support of local government and that is absolutely key to this issue. What local government wants above and beyond everything else is a constructive and productive industry built around the possibilities

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associated with recycling. That is what we are going to see. Local governments want clean waste streams. It is hard to recycle things like glass unless glass is separated from the waste stream. That is one of the most valuable things that a container deposit scheme will do. That will be in place by 2020 and we will begin to see the benefits of that before too long. There is lots of material to cover. I am sure that those who do not get a chance to speak today will take the opportunity when the bill is introduced into this place in a few weeks. I want to congratulate the McGowan government for making these moves.

**HON STEPHEN DAWSON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Environment)** [11.44 am]: Thank you very much.

Several members interjected.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I know all members want to make a contribution to this motion and I look forward to their contributions later. To clarify, do I get 15 minutes as the minister replying?

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Dr Steve Thomas):** Not in this debate. Not in private members' business. You do in non-government members' business.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** That is a shame. Members will have to listen to me for nine and a half minutes and not 14 and a half minutes—lucky them!

At the outset, I thank Hon Dr Sally Talbot for bringing this motion before the house. Being a typical male, I am not sure that I can do two things at once, so on the assertion that I can chew gum and walk, I will have to practise before definitely saying that I can do that. It is a pleasure to be the Minister for Environment. I know when Hon Donna Faragher had the portfolio, she recognised that it was a pleasure to be in that role. I have really enjoyed the role and I continue to enjoy the role. It has been very exciting and I do get excited about waste issues, which probably makes me odd. We can effect positive change and I think that we are on the road to do that.

Hon Dr Sally Talbot pointed out that when the ban on plastic bags was introduced, some people said, "Woe is me! The sky is going to fall in", but it has not. The last figures that I saw showed that around 600 million fewer single-use plastic bags were given out this financial year than in the previous year. That is significant. I think the yearly figure previously was that about seven million bags ended up in our waterways and as litter. Many of those bags are now not being littered and much of our wildlife is not ingesting single-use plastic or bits of plastic as a result of these bags not being in the waste or litter stream anymore.

When the government came to office in 2017, it had a range of commitments, but one was in relation to the container deposit scheme. I do note that just before the election, the previous government made a commitment that it would bring in a scheme if it was re-elected. What I have done as minister over the past year and a bit in particular is to go about the task of bringing a scheme into Western Australia and working out what it will look like. I established very early on a reference group that had representatives from industry, environment groups and local government. Together we embarked on a journey to arrive at where we are today. Hopefully, later in the day, the container deposit scheme legislation may be read into this chamber, provided the other place does its work today. However, we can never be assured of the people down the other end and how they operate. We can never understand how they operate, so we live in hope! However, I hope we get an opportunity to read that in this afternoon and have the debate in the coming weeks.

We designed the scheme. It is important to note that this state historically has produced more waste per capita than any other Australian state or territory. I am not sure what the reason for that is, but that is a fact. I have to say also that our rates of recycling have been amongst the lowest in the nation too. Is that to do with the tyranny of distance? Is that to do with the fact that we are far away from other states and do not get to collaborate with other states? I am not sure, but I am pleased to say that our waste and recycling performance is moving in the right direction. However, there is definitely room for improvement and, hopefully, we will work on these things collectively as we move forward.

Certainly, the feedback from stakeholders in the community is that they want more in this space. They are outside. They want us to do more; in fact, they have been demanding that we do more. It has been great to have the support of organisations such as what was Plastic Free July and is now Plastic Free Foundation. They are out there as advocates, helping us—not using a big-stick approach, but talking to the community about how, together, we might reduce the amount of single-use plastic that we use. They are not castigating people, but are committed to working in collaboration with people, giving them ideas and the how-to, so that together we can make a change and reduce our footprint. The stakeholder feedback confirms that as the reason I desire to do more and improve our waste management. In the main, Western Australians want to do the right thing. I think they are activated more than ever now to make a positive change. I have to give credit to programs like the ABC's *War on Waste*, which has frightened us in many respects, or reminded us about the amount of waste we create. As a Catholic, guilt has played a big part in my life and I think it may well have guilted us into acting to do the right thing for the environment. For whatever reason, it has shone a spotlight on the issue and made us more aware that we do waste too much and that much of it goes to landfill, so we are doing the right thing.

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Our commitment to better managing waste is reinforced by the Premier's announcement yesterday of the "Our Priorities: Sharing Prosperity" program, including the fact that recycling and the re-use of waste is one of the targets we need to focus on and will do for the next few years as a government. It does not have to be a choice between environmental sustainability and economic growth. We can have both. The facts show there are three times more jobs associated with recycling than there are with landfill, based on 10 000 tonnes of waste generated. It is significant for the whole state.

As I have said before in debates in this place, I am very focused on ensuring that wherever we live in Western Australia, be it Ballidu, Bidadanga, Broome, Busselton or Baldivis, we can all play a part. The container deposit scheme is being designed to allow regional and remote communities to participate. I think I might have mentioned previously in this place that Marra Worra Worra, an Aboriginal organisation that operates in Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberley, has been able to implement a container deposit scheme of a sort in that community—a recycling scheme—and that 30 of 34 commercial enterprises in town use the scheme to recycle their material. It is collected by Marra Worra Worra and is sold like other cans and bottles would be in the metropolitan area. If it can be done in Fitzroy Crossing, of all places, without losing money and where it is creating jobs, it can be done in the goldfields, the wheatbelt or wherever else. There is a great opportunity. Waste has been traditionally recognised as a problem and a cost, but circular-economy thinking can help shift the debate towards recognising the benefits of reducing and recovering waste.

The decision by China to stop taking certain types of waste, or waste that does not meet a certain threshold, has been a wake-up call for industry not only in Western Australia but also across the country and, indeed, the world. Previously, there was a market; our waste could be sold and a tidy profit was made. At least we knew it was being recycled. China's decision—obviously within its right—has meant that we had to have a conversation. As a result of that decision by China, I established a waste task force in Western Australia to look at what we could do in particular to ensure that there was a market for the waste that was previously going to China. That waste task force had representatives from the waste industry, state and local governments and community organisations. Late last year, it provided me with some feedback about what we needed to do, and that included having a conversation with the community about what can and cannot be recycled and to look at how we might create the opportunity for industry in Western Australia to recycle here rather than send it overseas and interstate. We are still working on that.

I could speak on this for days; the 42 seconds I have will not do it justice. As Hon Dr Sally Talbot mentioned earlier, a few weeks ago we released our waste strategy, a document covering from now until 2030. It outlines some ambitious targets. It refers to three bins, with food, organic and garden waste being in separate bins. I am a big believer that we can do more as a community. This waste strategy is a blueprint for the Western Australian community to help us do more and do the right thing. As I said, at the same time, it does not have to cost us economically but can benefit the economy too. With that, I congratulate Hon Dr Sally Talbot on her motion.

**HON COLIN HOLT (South West)** [11.54 am]: This feels like a bit of a dry run for a potential debate that might come up in the future. It is a shame that I did not get the call before the response by the minister, because he might have been able to address some of the issues I am going to raise today and we will have to revisit them yet again down the track.

**Hon Stephen Dawson:** There will be plenty of time down the track.

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** I probably will focus on the container deposit scheme. I am a supporter of the scheme and I welcome the introduction of it by the government. It probably should have been done a long time ago. However, I will probably fall short of congratulations at this point simply because implementation is what will really matter. The success of the implementation of the program across this very large state of ours is what will matter and will be what we can or cannot congratulate the government on.

**Hon Stephen Dawson:** Typical opposition. It pains you to say anything positive.

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** Did I not congratulate the minister for introducing it and said it should have been done a long time ago?

**Hon Stephen Dawson:** Maybe I was reading something. Thanks for clarifying.

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** The minister must have been.

Other plans by the government have not gone so well when they were introduced, but that has been well documented in this place.

A number of questions still need to be raised. In my mind, one of the biggest is: given that the current recycling methodology is to put all the containers, which will in future attract 10¢ each, into the trash stream, what will happen to the trash stream when that changes? At the moment, about 44 per cent by volume —

**Hon Darren West:** Do you save up your containers for when the scheme comes in?

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**Hon COLIN HOLT:** Has the member not read the notes? We are not allowed to save them up, and that leads to another interesting question. I wonder how that can be policed. If we cannot save them now —

**Hon Darren West** interjected.

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** Ask the minister.

There will be a logo on the containers, so we cannot save them up now. If the member had been listening or getting a briefing from his own side about it, he would know that they cannot be saved right now. That was a question I was going to raise.

The volume of containers that potentially can be recycled through the new scheme is 44 per cent. I would have thought the value of that 44 per cent would be much greater. Although we will be taking out 44 per cent in volume, we will probably be taking a much greater percentage—maybe 60 to 70 per cent—of the value out of our current recycling trash stream. If we take that value out of the current yellow bin, what will happen to the rest of the recyclables—paper, cardboard, other plastics, and wine bottles are also included—in the yellow bin? How economical will it be then to have a yellow bin collected from the roadside? There are more questions about that.

I note the minister's commentary when he talked about Fitzroy Crossing and how Marra Worra Worra has been able to develop a recycling scheme. When a greater percentage of value is taken out of that trash stream through the container deposit scheme, what will happen to the recycling model in Fitzroy Crossing with all the other low-value products in the yellow bin?

**Hon Stephen Dawson:** They are simply recycling the cans and bottles that will be part of the scheme, but they are not getting 10¢. They now get a lot less than that.

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** I know, and I will come to that. I am asking: Once that is taken out of the current stream, what will happen to the rest of the recycling? What will happen to the high-volume, low-value paper, cardboard and all the rest of it? Those questions have to be answered, especially in regional Western Australia where potential transport costs blow the whole thing up when it comes to recycling all those other materials. That question needs to be discussed.

I was interested in some commentary that came out in an article on ABC news about a conflict between “bin chickens” and the yellow bin collectors. Bin chickens are rifling through the yellow bins to get the high-value trash or containers they can get 10¢ for, in conflict with the people who see it as a really valuable resource in the trash stream. They are trying to grapple with that conflict that has people going onto private property to rummage through bins to get the bottles that will provide them with a 10¢ refund. There is some conflict around that —

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** Trash terrorism!

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** Trash terrorism! Do not distract me. I might be taken out of context for such a thing as trash terrorism. People will say that we are trying to raise the profile of terrorism for some sort of political gain! It was not me who raised that.

That sort of conflict will also arise and the debate in this place about how we manage it will be interesting. I have some real issues around how we ensure that everyone in this state participates in the scheme, including people in regional Western Australia, which has a unique geographic spread compared with other states. We have large distances between small communities. How we enable all those communities to participate in a container deposit scheme is one of the challenges for this government. I note that the conservative government in New South Wales recently took the step to introduce a container deposit scheme. I am sure its members were pretty proud of themselves and congratulated themselves on the fact that they introduced it, but they have admitted that there are teething problems with how they have gone about implementing the scheme. Even the New South Wales Premier Gladys Berejiklian said that this program had major teething problems. The Deputy Premier, John Barilaro, was reported as having said —

... the scheme had been made logistically difficult, particularly in regional areas which lack Sydney's density.

“We've got to find sites. We've got the tyranny of distance. It is difficult for an operator to find a way through the regions,” ...

That is what is happening in New South Wales where he is comparing their regional area with Sydney. This state is much bigger than New South Wales with a smaller population in towns that are more spread out. The implementation of this scheme will be a real challenge for the government. Let us just hold off on the congratulations until the scheme is up and running. I am also not yet clear on what extra costs will be passed on to the consumer. In the “frequently asked questions” section on the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's website, I noticed one question that asks —

Will I have to pay more for drinks which are eligible under the scheme?

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The answer states —

The cost of cans and bottles may increase to reflect the refund and scheme costs.

I would have thought that it would “definitely increase”, not just “may increase”. I am absolutely certain that this scheme will increase the cost and it will be by much more than the 10¢ that consumers get back for their bottle. If we think about how the system is going to work, that 10¢ has to go around and around. The person who buys the bottle then gives it to the recycler to get back their 10¢. That recycler then has to do something with it. In the past, that can or bottle in the trash stream was worth way less than 10¢, as the minister pointed out in an interjection a little while ago. Perhaps we will put its value at 1¢. A recycler will get 1¢ back for that raw glass. They actually have to pay 10¢ but get back only 1¢, so they are losing 9¢. How will they be compensated? They then have to transport the bottles from Kununurra, for example, and maybe they will find a way to get them to Darwin. Perhaps they are in Meekatharra and they have to find a way to get them to Perth. They have already lost 9¢ and then suddenly they have to pay for all this transport. Surely the value of the container will be going up by more than 10¢. I would have thought it would go up by at least 20¢, maybe even more.

**Hon Stephen Dawson:** That has not been the case in other states.

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** It has not been? How did they make —

**Hon Stephen Dawson:** We will talk about this later. Sorry, the member has only a few seconds left.

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** Yes, okay. A large number of questions need answers before we offer our congratulations. It is a good thing that we have had the opportunity to debate the legislation. Hopefully in the future we will move closer to a solution. I recognise that the community is definitely asking for a container deposit scheme. It provides some opportunities for the community and community groups, but it has also created some discussion and debate and we will have more questions when the legislation arrives in this place.

**HON PIERRE YANG (South Metropolitan)** [12.04 pm]: Like the Minister for Environment, I, too, would like to congratulate Hon Dr Sally Talbot for bringing this motion to the house. I like to give credit where credit is due. It is important that we look at what the government is doing to save and protect our environment. Not long ago, we introduced the plastic bag ban, which is very important to our environment. We use billions of bags each year, but banning the bags will make our environment safer and better. Today we have heard in this motion that the government will introduce a container deposit scheme, which will come into effect in 2020. That is another great initiative that will save our environment and make it a better one in which to live, and we owe this to our children. We create all this waste as we go about our daily business. Who will suffer the consequences? If we do not do anything, our children will suffer the consequences of our actions today. I am sure that members will all agree with me that we live in a very lucky country. We have clean air, clean water and a pristine environment and we should protect that for our children and their future generations. Plastic is a great invention of the human species and has certainly helped our life in many ways, but plastic is overused. We have seen that plastic bags end up in oceans. Large and small marine animals mistake plastic bags for jellyfish. They eat them and then many of them suffer a gruesome death. We have also seen that marine animals such as turtles get caught in the six-pack rings. As they grow and are restricted by these rings, they become deformed and their lives suffer. I watched a YouTube video in which a large turtle had a plastic straw stuck up its nose. Obviously, no-one wants to have a plastic bag or straw up their nose, so why should animals suffer from that? I have noticed that parliamentary Catering Services have moved on from using plastic straws, which is a great thing and the service should be commended for taking the initiative.

Plastic is great. I am not saying that we should get rid of it altogether. I had a quick read the other day and found an article that said we can live without plastic but it would be very difficult. One example of the difficulty it provided was: how would we create a toothbrush? There would be terrible consequences if we did not have a toothbrush to use in everyday life, and many other plastics products for that matter. However, we should be looking at ways to reduce and recycle the plastic we use. The container deposit scheme is a great way to recycle our plastic containers. I note that the scheme will also cover other forms of containers such as those made of glass and cardboard, which would also help to reduce waste. Certainly plastic containers are a big part of this scheme.

I was listening to the radio yesterday and heard about the waste we create in Australia. There are three main streams of waste. The first stream comes from industrial and commercial activities, the second comes from demolition and construction—as we demolish old houses and build new ones, a lot of waste is created through that process—and the third comes from everyday activities and is collected through council collections and disposed of. The major way in which we deal with our waste is, of course, landfill, which has a lot of issues. As landfill sites become full, we need to find other sites to dispose of our waste.

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Another way of dealing with waste is through waste to energy stations. I note that the first waste to energy facility is being built in Western Australia as we speak. As members know, I was a member of the Gosnells city council. For a brief period I was nominated by the Gosnells city council to sit on the Rivers Regional Council, which consists of eight local councils, if I remember correctly. That collective was looking at ways to dispose of waste from member councils. At the time, the proposal was to have an incinerator facility—to collect all the waste, burn it and get the energy out, so that those councils could reduce the costs associated with landfill. After my departure from the local council and on coming to this place, I am very pleased to see that the process has continued for that proposal. As we know, the construction of that facility started in October last year.

Another way of dealing with waste is through recycling. As a nation, we could learn a lot from the Japanese. The Japanese have fine-tuned their recycling process. Knowing that the islands of Japan do not have the same abundance of natural resources as we do in Australia, it is always at the forefront of their minds to recycle and make the best use of existing resources. We can certainly learn a lot from the Japanese when it comes to recycling. The government's initiative of having this container deposit scheme will certainly help our environment and our recycling process. Let us not forget that we have only one earth. The more we can protect it and the more we can leave it in a better shape for our children, the better it will be for the future of the human species. I will conclude my remarks so that other members can utilise the remaining time. I congratulate Hon Dr Sally Talbot for bringing this motion to the house. I also congratulate the McGowan government for this initiative.

**HON ROBIN CHAPPLE (Mining and Pastoral)** [12.13 pm]: It is with great delight that I rise to deliver my response to the motion by Hon Dr Sally Talbot. I speak on behalf of my Greens colleagues when I say well done to the government for progressing towards implementing a container deposit scheme in Western Australia. It is a scheme that the majority of Western Australians have wanted for quite some time. I am reminded of debates that Hon Dr Sally Talbot and I had in this chamber back in the 2000s. But let us not get ahead of ourselves just yet with the congratulations, because there still seems to be a lot of important decisions to be made.

This is an important time for Western Australia in terms of how we deal with our waste, and we should not squander it. My fear is that the government will get it wrong and will just follow what other states have done, instead of being creative and looking for better ways. My view and the view of my colleagues, the community and key stakeholders with whom I have discussed the container deposit scheme is that it will work if it is incentivised, has excellent customer service standards, is open to expansion, and, importantly, diminishes the chance of waste to energy ever happening in Western Australia. To ensure its success, the scheme must take an infrastructure approach and not be market driven. This cannot happen if we allow consortiums like Exchange for Change, which is in fact Coca-Cola Amatil, Asahi, Carlton and United Breweries, and Coopers and Lion, to operate the scheme here in Western Australia as it does in the east. There must be incentives for not only consumers to return their containers for a refund, but also the scheme coordinator to ensure that the scheme works well. I do not see an incentivised scheme occurring in WA if the beverage industry is the preferred scheme coordinator. In Queensland, the scheme is run solely by the beverage industry, which provides the lowest cost network. In New South Wales and South Australia, the scheme coordinator and network operator are separate, but have competing interests. The network operator, TOMRA, battles to provide an incentivised scheme against a scheme coordinated by the beverage industry consortium, Exchange for Change, whose aim is to obstruct the amount of refunds. In essence, the beverage industry increases the price of drinks and hopes that consumers do not return their containers for a refund. This increases their profit margin and is a huge loss to the consumer and, especially, the environment.

In WA, not-for-profit organisations are already doing great work in this space. These organisations work with Aboriginal corporations, the disability sector and, indeed, mining companies to reduce our waste in WA. These organisations have WA's best interests at heart. Organisations like these should deliver the scheme. I question whether a company like Coca-Cola Amatil puts people before profits. I think we all know the answer to that. In fact, it was Coca-Cola Amatil, Schweppes Australia and Lion that put in a challenge to the Federal Court in March 2013 to stop the container deposit scheme in the Northern Territory. It heartens me that the minister stated in his media release "Tenders invited for Cash for Cans co-ordinator" that the successful applicant will be a not-for-profit company appointed by him, and I hope he stays true to his word. But we know that large companies like those in the beverage industry are very clever at setting up not-for-profit organisations as a front; they stack the board with their members, and the directors guide the decisions that suit the beverage industry.

I also really hope that in rolling out the scheme, the minister, as a fellow member for the Mining and Pastoral Region, provides accessible and convenient services to rural, regional and remote communities throughout WA. In providing top-range customer service standards and determining refund points, I hope the government has considered not just the population of an area, but also beverage consumption within an area. This relates, in some regards, to the bottled water that is supplied to many remote Aboriginal communities. The co-location of refund points, such as being able to drop off cans when filling up at petrol stations, would be a huge incentive for people

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who, like me, live in regional areas. I add that if the government uses this opportunity to deliver just the container deposit scheme, it will continue to fail to address the need to reduce waste in WA. The implementation of a container deposit scheme is an opportunity to expand the scheme beyond containers to batteries, e-waste and much, much more.

I am concerned that this scheme already has its limitations, and we are still in the planning phase. In the scheme that the government is considering, there are limits to the types of containers. All containers are of equal value, but those made of glass should be worth more and potentially some communities in some local government areas will not get an allocated refund point. I do not want to see another situation in which we tell the government, “I told you so.” That occurred during the plastic bag ban when the government again put limitations on what should have been a complete ban on all plastic bags. Instead, now we go to the regional dump and we see the heavier plastic bags meant for re-use just littering the area.

**Hon Stephen Dawson:** Not in Port Hedland, member.

**Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE:** I am very pleased to hear that, but I can tell the minister that it is happening in Broome and Derby and places that I have visited. We have someone just down the road here dumping plastic bags behind a house and getting rid of general waste.

If the container deposit scheme is successful in WA, we will see a reduction in valuable material going to landfill and therefore a reduction in the need for the waste to be incinerated. This should be the endgame in WA—no demand, desire or commitment for waste-to-energy plants in WA.

In conclusion, it is fundamental that the scheme is designed to maximise convenience at a sensible cost. The most expensive scheme for the community is one that the people cannot get their refund. The government should use this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to put in place a structure that enables material beyond just containers to be recovered in regional Western Australia for recycling. We need a scheme that drives CDS value deep into the community, rather than capturing it in big business. It is an opportunity to establish a local reprocessing industry that makes WA less prone to shocks from global recycling markets. On that point, I commend a former Liberal government. Back in 1986, we started recycling paper in Port Hedland and we got all the mining companies to return to the local environment group Local Environment Affinity Force their wastepaper and the then government enabled us to backload that paper to Austissue, which was a company doing recycling in Perth at the time, for free. That generated enough funds for the organisation to keep doing that. We sent literally tonnes of paper back to Perth each week.

**Hon Simon O’Brien:** Was that 1986 or 1996?

**Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE:** It was from 1986 through to the 1990s. It was a really good opportunity and the government should avail itself of that in the future. We have a lot of trucks heading north and a lot of material on them and they all come back empty. We have an opportunity in that space with many of the organisations and corporations within the government.

**HON DONNA FARAGHER (East Metropolitan)** [12.23 pm]: I will not take up too much time because we have only five minutes, so I will see whether I can wrap it up fairly quickly so that Hon Martin Pritchard can also say something.

The opposition supports the introduction of a container deposit scheme. However, I strongly disagree, as members will not be surprised to learn, with some of the comments that were made by Hon Dr Sally Talbot on the achievements of the former government in the environment portfolio. Perhaps that is a debate for another day but I want to put that on the record.

Time and again, we have heard in this place from Hon Dr Sally Talbot about environment and waste, albeit she said precious little today on the container deposit scheme to which this motion refers. I will say, because I am on my feet and I have the opportunity to do this, members who were around in around 2008–09 will remember that Hon Dr Sally Talbot stood in this place—I think she sat over there—for over 10 hours talking on the waste levy and changes to the hypothecation —

**Hon Dr Sally Talbot** interjected.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** We moved over there because we were still going. I make the point that in two years I have not seen this government change the hypothecation. I am interested to see what happens if that legislation comes forward and I am quite sure that Hon Robin Chapple is as well.

The opposition certainly supports the introduction of a container deposit scheme. Indeed, it follows from a decision that the former government made in 2016 to introduce such a scheme. I recall that at that time we had indicated that we were keen to see the introduction of that scheme by mid-2018. I agree, and I have said in this place before, that such a scheme has strong community support and strong community benefits will flow from it. The challenge, however, for any government—I am quite sure the minister would agree with me on this matter—in introducing such a scheme is that we need to ensure that it is workable and that the cost to the consumers and others can be



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managed. Various options have been put forward for a container deposit scheme. Dating back even to the Gallop Labor government, I note that it considered eight or nine different schemes and could not definitively say which one it thought would work best in this state. Certainly, when I was a minister, it was being looked at at a national level and we were agreeable to looking at it from a national approach. That stopped, and that is when states and territories decided to look individually at their potential to introduce schemes to reflect their state and territory. Hence, the former government announced the decision back in 2016.

There is, of course, a cost to such a scheme, and that was noted by Hon Colin Holt in his contribution. I am thinking back here, but I recall from one report that was done by the former government that such a scheme in this state would cost around \$38 million. No doubt that has probably increased over time. As the minister said, we need to look at that cost in the context of a cost-benefit analysis and the broader community aspect. Certainly, this scheme, as members have said, has very strong community support. I think that is a very important element of ensuring a successful waste reduction scheme.

I very briefly mentioned this matter to the minister and I know he is alive to it. One issue is how it will work effectively in regional and, most particularly, remote communities. We will be able to flesh that out more when the actual legislation comes before the house. I think that is a fair issue that we need to tease out and I see the minister nodding in agreement. I think that is one of the challenges that we face perhaps more particularly in Western Australia than in some other states and territories. Yes, it is a very good idea, but we need to make sure that it works effectively, particularly in remote communities where there might be challenges.

With that, I have less than a minute to go. I indicate that we support the introduction of the scheme. We look forward to the legislation coming to the upper house and we can probably tease out some more of these issues. This initiative has been a long time in the making. It received support from the former government and I know the minister acknowledges that, albeit Hon Dr Sally Talbot will not. We look forward to addressing it when the bill comes before the house.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT:** Hon Martin Pritchard.

**Hon Donna Faragher:** Sorry, Hon Martin Pritchard!

**HON MARTIN PRITCHARD (North Metropolitan)** [12.28 pm]: No, I am perfectly relaxed. Thank you for giving me the call. I am very enthusiastic about this debate, but I note that there will be an opportunity in a short time to flesh this out in more detail.

Motion lapsed, pursuant to standing orders.