

Refund Point Infrastructure

Tasmania's Container Refund Scheme

Background document

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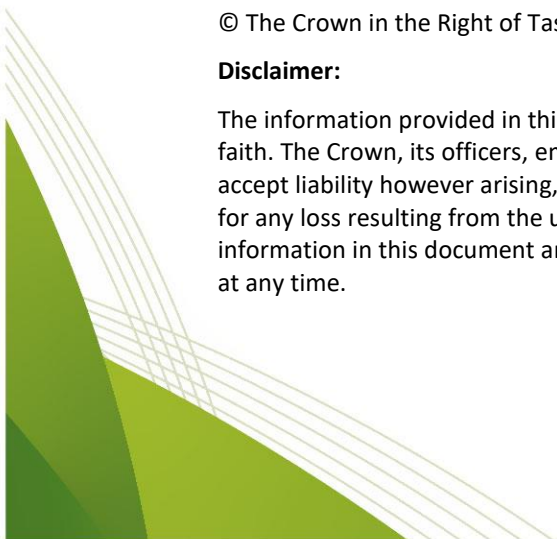


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Acronyms

CRS	Container Refund Scheme
MRF	Material Recovery Facility
NRE Tas	Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania
OTC	Over the Counter
CRM	(Automated) Container Refund Machine

Introduction

The Tasmanian Government has committed to introduce a Container Refund Scheme (CRS), where approved beverage containers can be exchanged for a 10-cent refund at various Refund Points throughout the state. This is to align with similar programs in other jurisdictions and aims to reduce littering and increase rates of recycling of beverage containers. The Scheme is due to start in 2023. The *Container Refund Scheme Act 2022*, which is the legislation to enable the CRS, was passed by Tasmania's Parliament in March 2022.

The CRS is a split-responsibility governance model with a Scheme Coordinator, responsible for the administration and financial management of the Scheme, and a Network Operator, responsible for managing the network of Refund Points to collect the eligible containers and provide the 10-cent refund, and for recycling of the collected containers from the network.

The government will run a competitive procurement process to procure the organisations for the roles of Scheme Coordinator and Network Operator. Once the Network Operator is appointed, they will begin to establish Refund Points throughout Tasmania and will be required to adhere to the requirements for land use and development in accordance with the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* and associated local government planning schemes administered by local councils.

Purpose

This background document describes the Refund Point infrastructure that could potentially be used in the network of Refund Points for the Tasmanian CRS and useful context for the current consultation for the proposed state planning provision amendment relating to the rollout of the CRS.

Disclaimer:

The information contained herein is provided to Tasmanian local councils to enable them to provide information pertaining to planning systems for the implementation of the Container Refund Scheme.

The provided information:

- *is not intended to be the final position of the Department in relation to any matter, and*
- *should not be interpreted to predict the outcomes of any decisions of the Tasmanian Parliament or the Tasmanian Government in relation to the proposed Container Refund Scheme.*

The mention of a business name in this document is necessary crediting in relation to a relevant image and is not, nor should it be interpreted to be, an endorsement of the business in any way.

The information in this document:

- *should not be relied upon when making decisions or considering risks, and*
- *is subject to the requirements set out in the issued tender documentation for the proposed procurement.*

Tasmania's Refund Point Network Design

A successful CRS is one that is convenient and accessible to all Tasmanians. The CRS project team at the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas) has developed a Community Access Standard (currently draft) that sets out the minimum standards in relation to the number and location of Refund Points, and opening hours. This is based on distances between Refund Points and population sizes. Under the draft Community Access Standard, there will be a minimum of 40 Refund Points in Tasmania. The Community Access Standard does not generally stipulate which type of Refund Points are required. It has not been made public, as at 19 August 2022.

These standards were partially informed by a public survey conducted in 2021 that found supermarket and shopping centre carparks are the most popular location for Refund Points, that Container Refund Machines (CRMs, also known as Reverse Vending Machines or RVMs in other jurisdictions) are popular, and that most urban residents do not want to travel more than 10 minutes to a Refund Point.

The CRS will consist of a network of Refund Points. There are a variety of Refund Point types used in mainland schemes. The most frequently used types are Over the Counter (OTC) Refund Points at local businesses, automated Container Refund Machines (CRMs), depots and bag drops. Mobile and pop-up Refund Points are also used for fundraising events, short term events (i.e. markets and festivals) and regular scheduled servicing in some areas. Processing facilities are also used in mainland schemes for collection and processing of the containers prior to delivery to the recyclers.

It will be a requirement for the Network Operator to develop the final network design for Tasmania, including the type and specific location of Refund Points guided by the information provided in the Community Access Standards. The details contained in this document are based on publicly available information about interstate networks and Refund Point infrastructure and provided as information only.

Charities and other community organisations may wish to run Donation Points (which accepts containers for fundraising purposes and does not give refunds to donors), but these will not be considered formal Refund Points because a 10-cent refund will not be given. Organisations can work with councils, as required, for planning approvals separate to the implementation of the CRS.

Snapshot of Interstate Refund Point Networks

The final network design will be the responsibility of the successful Network Operator. Schemes currently operate in every state and territory of Australia, with the exception of Victoria and Tasmania. Both Victoria and Tasmania are set to commence a scheme in 2023. This snapshot of the mainland Refund Point networks is provided for context as to how the schemes operate and the Refund Points they use. Any or all of the Refund Point infrastructure in this document could be used for the Tasmanian scheme, depending on decisions made by the successful Network Operator.

Interstate schemes use a combination of OTCs, RVMs, depots, bag drops, mobile and pop-up Refund Points to provide a convenient and accessible network for container returns and refunds. The NSW [Return and Earn Annual Report 2019-2020](#) lists Return Points indicating that RVMs, OTCs, and automated depots may be located at the following business types:

- Supermarket
- Bakery
- Convenience store
- Newsagent
- Cafe
- Takeaway
- Carwash
- Petrol station
- Rural and country supply stores
- Backpackers' accommodation
- Pubs and bottle shops
- Post office
- Hardware store
- General store
- Sports club
- Shopping centre
- Community group or charity
- Furniture store
- Gym
- Florist
- School
- Chemist
- Nutrition shop

The redemption rate for the first year in interstate schemes was generally 50-60%. The number of eligible containers in Tasmania is estimated to be 240 million so across the statewide Refund Point network one can anticipate approximately 120 to 144 million containers would be redeemed in the first year.

Operating Hours and Locations Interstate

The following information has been collated through the use of the [Refund Point locator](#) app on the NSW Return and Earn website. The network mainly consists of RVMs, OTCs and depots. RVMs are generally open until 10pm, and open as early as 7am, 7 days per week. OTCs generally follow the operating hours of the business and can start at 6am and be open as late as 10pm, both week and

weekend days, depending on the business. Some RVMs are 24 hours. One carwash OTC is 24 hours. Depots generally follow normal business hours, opening around 7am and closing by 4pm, with 5:30pm at latest, during the week and on weekends. Most Refund Points are open during the week and on Saturdays, many are open for shortened hours on Sunday as well.

The following information has been collated through the use of the Refund Point locator app on the Containers for Change websites for [QLD](#) and [WA](#). The networks rely on bag drops and depots and there are no OTCs. Many of the bag drops are 24 hours or operate in line with general business hours (i.e. 7am to 5pm, 7am to 7pm), including on weekends. Depots operate mainly during business hours, i.e., 7am to 4:30pm, including weekend days. Pop-ups are used for scheduled servicing of remote towns – i.e. every 2nd Tuesday between 10am and 12pm. RVMs are within general business hours and tend to close around 7pm.

Based on this publicly available information it appears that RVMs, OTCs and bag drops are generally located in areas where people live and shop, so they are convenient and easy to access, for example residential areas, business areas, shopping centres, and town centres. Depots are generally located in an area suitable for collection of high volumes of containers that is a convenient driving distance (i.e. within in 10 minutes) from population areas, for example in light industrial zones, mixed zones, and commercial areas.

Refund Point Types for Tasmania

*This document has been created to provide **general information** about the potential refund point types that might be part of the Tasmanian CRS network and useful context for the current state planning consultation. This information is based on interstate schemes.*

Once appointed, the Network Operator will determine the exact location, number and type of refund points that will be used in Tasmania and will be responsible for obtaining any required planning approvals.

General

The Refund Point network in Tasmania could include Over the Counter Refund Points (OTCs), Container Refund Machines (CRMs), depots, bag drops and possibly other types (pop-ups or mobile) depending on how the network is designed to best meet the Community Access Standard by the successful Network Operator.

Refunds Points will accept approved containers. In mainland schemes, Refund Points accept containers that are typically between 150ml and three litres, and are cans (e.g. soft drink and beer), bottles (both glass and PET), cartons (e.g. flavoured milk), juice boxes or poppers. Refund Points will have verification systems in place (either manual or automatic) to ensure all containers returned are compliant containers under the Scheme prior to being counted, sorted, and stored.

Refund Points may provide the refund as cash and/or a voucher redeemable for cash, Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), and/or a donation straight to charity. Other payment types may also be available.

Refund Points are likely to be operational during the week and for some time on weekends, to ensure accessibility, with opening hours likely to be similar to other local businesses. It is possible that some

RVM sites (e.g. in shopping centre car parks) and depots (e.g. in semi-industrial areas) may operate longer hours.

The Network Operator will be required to ensure access to Refund Points by all members of the community, including persons with disabilities. Limited exceptions to this standard may be allowed in certain circumstances.

Over the Counter – details and features

Over the Counter are Refund Points where an existing local business enters into an agreement with a Network Operator for collection of containers and issuing of the refund. They receive a handling fee for this service. Patrons return empty containers at the local business and get their refund.

Size: within the existing business footprint, no additional space required

Use: It is intended that OTCs will operate as part of an existing business and infrastructure, where the business provides an additional business service for returning containers for a refund. These Refund Points are staffed.

Scale: Small, within existing business footprint, ideally for returning up to 100 containers per customer, but not limited.

Infrastructure can be wheelie bins, cages, or small skip bins within a storeroom or at rear of business for storing collected containers, or a shipping container within the premises of the business. All returned containers will need to be stored securely as part of fraud control measures.

Proposed locations: population centres, in local businesses/shops- e.g. newsagent, post office, café, pubs

Opening hours: Usually as part of normal business opening hours, although some businesses may limit container return hours to hours outside of busy times. In certain areas, they may only operate certain months of year to accommodate busy tourism/summer seasons.

General expectations of how they will operate:

Customer brings used approved containers to the business to exchange for the refund.

The business visually inspects for the approved container marks, accepts the approved containers, and pays the refund. The containers are then stored within the business footprint until collected by the Network Operator (or their contractor). There may be some sorting at premises.

Once storage is full, they will be emptied by waste disposal-type truck operated/contracted to Network Operator for transportation to sorting facility prior to sending for recycling.

Factors that may require consideration when establishing OTCs: public health/food permits, noise, lighting, power.

OTC container refunds are not expected to significantly increase visitation to business and therefore existing parking, and pedestrian and vehicle access/movements should be sufficient.

Interstate experiences have highlighted some issues with OTCs and food permit and public health conditions (storing dirty, used containers at certain businesses or in certain locations within the business was perceived as a public health/food safety issue).

Stories on the web that describe some OTCs:

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/small-businesses-bracing-for-return-and-earn-container-deposit-scheme-20171130-gzvq0a.html>

<https://www.oberonreview.com.au/story/5181747/no-reverse-vending-machine-but-return-and-earn-is-here/>

Photo examples:



Figure 1: Storage of returned containers at rear of rural supply shop. Credit: <https://www.oberonreview.com.au/story/5181747/no-reverse-vending-machine-but-return-and-earn-is-here/>



Figure 2: Café that operates an OTC return point. Credit: <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/small-businesses-bracing-for-return-and-earn-container-deposit-scheme-20171130-gzvq0a.html>

Container Refund Machines - details and features

CRMs are automated machines where consumers individually insert approved containers, and receive their collated refund, generally a voucher that can be exchanged for cash or an EFT or charity donation. They can be large CRMs located in car parks, or smaller CRMs located within shopping centres.

Size: The large CRMS consist of 2 x 20-foot shipping containers with additional space at the front for the customer interface ('the vending machine'). These are outside CRMs, generally in car parks. Used for returning up to 500 containers per person.

Smaller CRMs that are currently being used hold 900 or 1100 containers or modular units that hold up to 36,360 containers. They range in size from 84.8 cm (L) x 60 cm (W) x 183.6 cm (H) to 137 cm (L) x 254 cm (W) x 209.5 cm (H). These CRMs are likely to be inside a building (i.e. shopping centre) as a standalone small CRM or set up as a recycling centre with numerous CRMs installed along a wall. They are for single or smaller container returns, up to 100 containers.

Use: It is intended that the CRMs will appear and operate as a normal component of a shopping centre, that provides an additional service for customers to return containers for a cash or electronic refund. They are self-service Refund Points that are not staffed.

Scale: The large CRMs generally have 2 customer interfaces at the front of 2 x 20-foot containers and occupy 3-5 car parking spaces or a minimum of 42 square metres.

The smaller CRMs occupy from 0.5 up to 3.5 square metres of floor space. The smallest CRMs appear to be suited to returning a single container for a single refund. For example, a customer has just finished a drink that was bought in a shopping centre and wishes to return it for refund.

Proposed locations: high population density areas, in shopping centre carparks or other high visitation, easy access sites. Smaller CRMs may be located inside shopping centres.

Opening hours: generally align with shopping centre opening hours and are not 24-hour operations. Interstate some CRMs operate within the hours of 7am to 10pm.

General expectations of how they will operate:

For the large CRMs, customers park nearby, retrieve bags/boxes of containers to return for the refund amount, line up to use the machine and individually deposit containers to receive the total refund once all containers are deposited. The machine approves or rejects the container based on scanning of approved markings, counts, sorts, and stores approved containers within the CRM infrastructure. Glass is separated from other containers. Once full they will be emptied by waste disposal-type truck operated by or contracted to the Network Operator for transportation to sorting facility prior to sending for recycling. The infrastructure requires space for parking, may increase vehicle and pedestrian traffic, and requires access for trucks to rear of CRM for removal of collected and stored containers.

The smaller CRMs require space for customers to line up and deposit individual containers. Glass is separated from other containers. Stored containers are emptied as required.

For the large and small CRMs, containers that scan as not approved, are rejected by the machine, and returned to the customer for alternate means of disposal. Refund Points will accept container lids, so it is hoped lids will not be littered at the site.

Factors that may require consideration when establishing CRMs: litter, noise, vandalism, lighting, power

CRM locations require lighting, power and most likely internet for processing EFT and data collection/reporting back to Network Operator.

Experience interstate indicates that alternate means of disposal (general recycling bins and rubbish bins) need to be provided, at least initially, for disposal of rejected containers and to prevent littering.

Larger CRMs occupy approximately 42 square metres of space in existing car parks which may reduce the number of existing car parking spaces available to customers of the shopping centre.

Photo examples:



Figure 3: Large RVM (front user interface with 2 x 20-foot shipping containers behind). Credit: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-08-07/victorians-recycling-in-nsw-to-return-scheme-breaking-the-law/11384050>



Figure 4: Large RVM in carpark Credit: https://australia247.info/explore/queensland/city_of_gold_coast/burleigh_heads/tomra-reverse-vending-machine-burleigh-1300-118-888.html



Figure 5: Small RVMs installed along wall, forming a mini recycling centre Credit: <https://www.perthnow.com.au/community-news/stirling-times/was-containers-for-change-deposit-scheme-officially-up-and-running-c-1351180>



Figure 6: Small RVM Credit: <https://www.smh.com.au/business/small-business/narelle-was-paid-6-a-week-to-go-to-school-now-she-owns-a-20-million-business-20190725-p52at1.html>



Figure 7: Small RVM Credit: <https://www.cdu.edu.au/enews/versions/050911/Stories/cdurewardsrecycling.html>



Figure 8: Example of rear of RVM and truck collecting returned containers. (Credit- YouTube, tsc RECYCLE e-scapper, 'inside a Reverse Vending machine- Tomra return and earn')

Depots – details and features

Depots are buildings with either a drive-thru or walk-in setup, with automatic or manual container sorting facilities. Refunds can be provided as cash, electronic transfer, or donation.

These are important Refund Points for the network that provide opportunities for bulk returns of over 500 containers.

Size: small to large shed.

Use: The depot sites will be separate 'stand alone' sites set up to manage bulk container returns, sorting and storage and may include 'drive-through' capacity for customers returning containers. These Refund Points are staffed.

Scale: large, bulk container returns (i.e. ute or trailer load), generally over 500 containers

Proposed locations: higher density areas, could be associated with existing waste management sites or industrial areas, but must be in accessible locations for the public

Opening hours: standard business weekday and weekend hours to suit demand

General expectations of how they will operate:

A large industrial shed, either approachable by vehicles with parking provided for a walk-in service, or the shed provides a drive-through service, for customers to unload their bulk container returns and receive their refund. The containers are then either automatically sorted by machinery or hand sorted and stored for collection. Trucks would visit frequently to transport the sorted materials to the next processing stage.

Photo examples:



Figure 9: Credit: https://www.reddit.com/r/brisbane/comments/9tqkss/my_540_container_for_change_haul/



Figure 10: Credit: <https://content.api.news/v3/images/bin/d1d3800ffb0834a2a14b7f2145391f1> from Courier Mail



Figure 11: Credit: <https://communityrecyclingwa.org.au/>



Figure 12: Credit: <https://communityrecyclingwa.org.au/>



Figure 13: Sorting machinery inside depot. Credit: <https://www.macarthuradvertiser.com.au/story/5244949/dont-wait-in-line-to-return-and-earn/>



Figure 14: Example of a drive through depot in Queensland (credit- <https://www.returnit.com.au/wa/news/return-it-ql-d-burleigh-depot-adds-a-drive-thru-facility/>)



Figure 15: Example of hand sorting in a drive through depot in Queensland (credit: 7 news video on <https://www.returnit.com.au/wa/news/return-it-ql-d-burleigh-depot-adds-a-drive-thru-facility/>)



Figure 16: Example automated depot. (Credit- <https://envirobank.com.au/who-we-are/what-we-do/>)

Bag Drops – details and features

Bag drops are self-service Refund Points, where basic infrastructure is provided to allow customers to drop off a bag of containers, with appropriate personal identification, to allow for processing of their refund at a later date.

Size: skip bins, cages, or shipping container size. They can be indoor or outdoor. Some may have kiosks associated with them for EFTPOS and barcode printing services for labelling of bags for container returns.

Use: It is intended that they will appear and operate as a normal part of the existing business where they are located, or they will be provided on a mobile trailer, and they are not staffed.

Scale: generally for a small number of bags of containers

Proposed locations: easily accessible outdoor or indoor settings, where vehicle and pedestrian access is available to access infrastructure and truck access is available for collection of returned containers by the Network Operator. This can be car parks, council open space, parks and reserves, near town centres, community centres, car parks – anywhere a skip bin (or similar) can be safely and securely situated and that can provide safe parking and access. All returned containers will need to be stored securely as part of fraud control measures.

In QLD and WA, some bag drops are located at depots.

Opening hours: can be 24 hours, though they generally align with standard business hours or slightly extended hours, similar to CRMs.

General expectations of how they will operate: Self-service, quick drop option.

Bag, tag, drop and go. Customers put approved containers in a bag, they tag bag with name and payment details (generally customers need to have an account with Network Operator, i.e. Scheme ID or similar, to receive refund payment) and they are deposited in the provided infrastructure. Some indoor setups provide a kiosk for entering customer details and printing of a barcode to attach to bag of containers prior to placing it in the collection bin.

The Network Operator collects on a set schedule, processes the containers, and provides electronic payments according to details on the bag tag.

The Network Operator may be responsible for monitoring the cleanliness of the site and container storage levels.

Factors that may require consideration when establishing bag drops: litter, noise, vandalism, secure storage, customer safety.

Lighting may be required depending on location and operating hours. Power is only required for indoor set ups with kiosks.

Photo examples:



Figure 17: Outdoor collection bin. Credit: <https://envirobank.com.au/bottle-and-can-recycling-queensland/>



Figure 18: Shipping container for outdoor bag drop. Credit: <https://www.facebook.com/cashforcontainers/posts/all-ready-to-go-to-its-new-home-cash-for-containers-rockingham-will-also-be-offe/177887753946865/>



Figure 19: Indoor bag drop with electronic kiosk and barcode printer, and cage for collection of bags of containers. Credit: <https://warrri.com.au/refund-points/>

Mobiles and Pop-ups – details and features

Mobile and pop-up Refund Points are temporary Refund Points, generally designed to suit short term demand, for example at a festival or outdoor concert, for fundraising purposes, or to accommodate busy tourist seasons. Interstate, pop-ups are also used on a set schedule (e.g. weekly, monthly, fortnightly) to service areas where permanent Refund Point infrastructure may not be available. It is assumed they would be mobile (e.g. a vehicle trailer) or temporary infrastructure to suit the site and demand.

Size: Various- from a small set up similar to an OTC, to a large towed trailer with a setup similar to an CRM.

Use: It is intended these will be temporary set ups for containers to be returned for a cash or electronic refund. They can be self-service or staffed.

Scale: For a small number of containers, typically less than 100 per person but not limited. Containers are assessed for eligibility, sorted, and stored onsite until collected by the Network Operator or their contractor.

Potential locations: events, markets, parks, public areas, remote areas, busy tourism/summer locations

Opening hours: similar to local businesses, in line with event/market hours, or as per scheduled hours for servicing of remote sites (which would be within standard business hours and may include weekends).

How they operate in other jurisdictions: temporary infrastructure from one day events, markets, fundraising campaigns, to longer term temporary set ups for high visitation tourist sites

Factors that may require consideration when establishing mobiles or pop-ups: litter, noise, vandalism, lighting, power

The infrastructure may require power/internet/lighting if it is an CRM setup or at a long day/night event.

Photo examples:



Figure 20: Pop-up small RVM. Credit: <https://southwestvoice.com.au/9523-2/>



Figure 21: Mobile trailer Refund Point setup. Credit: https://australia247.info/explore/queensland/cassowary_coast_regional/tully/containers-for-change-tully-13-42-42.html



Figure 22: Pop-up staffed, hand sorted Refund Point. Credit: <https://www.redlandcitybulletin.com.au/story/5836156/pop-ups-collect-drinks-bottles-for-container-refund-scheme/>



Figure 23: Example of pop-up Refund Point that may be used for remote servicing. (credit: <https://www.containersforchange.com.au/wa/where-to-return>)



Figure 24: A pop-up Refund Point, most likely at an event. (Credit: <https://envirobank.com.au/where-to-recycle/pop-up-collections-nsw/>)

Processing Facility – details and features

Processing facilities are large, waste management and recycling infrastructure with no public interaction. They are used as an aggregation point and main processing base for the Network Operator. They are generally large sheds where trucks deliver collected container materials for further sorting, processing, and storage prior to selling the material for recycling either within Australia or overseas.

Automated sorting machinery is used for processing and packaging the material into large bales (or similar) for delivery to the next processor or recycler.

Photo examples:

Note: the below photos are from QLD and NSW processing facilities. The Tasmanian CRS is likely to be significantly smaller.

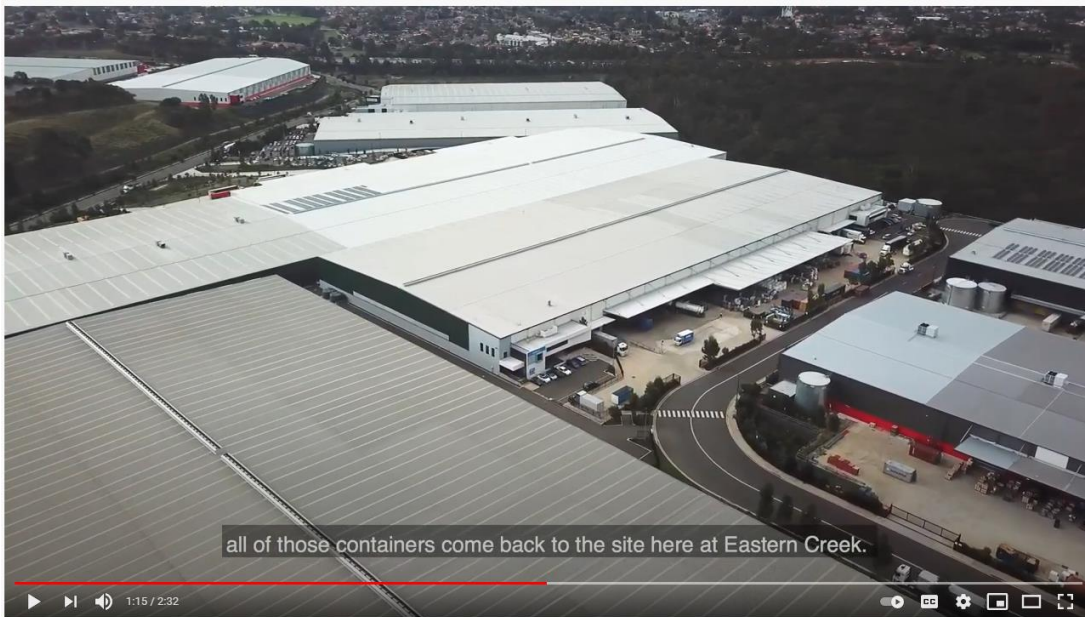


Figure 25: Example of processing facility – in QLD. (Credit- <https://containerexchange.com.au/>)



Cleanaway's Container Sorting Facility

Figure 26: Example of sorting and storing at a processing facility in NSW (credit- YouTube, Cleanaway, 'Cleanaway's Container Sorting Facility')



Cleanaway's Container Sorting Facility

Figure 27: Eastern Creek processing facility infrastructure in NSW (credit- YouTube, Cleanaway, 'Cleanaway's Container Sorting Facility')

Conclusion

The Tasmanian CRS is expected to commence in the first half of 2023, with installation of the required Refund Point infrastructure likely to commence late 2022. Installation of Refund Point infrastructure will require consultation with local councils for the relevant approvals for land use and development under the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* and associated local government planning schemes administered by the local councils.

The overall goal of the network of Refund Points is to be convenient and easily accessible to all Tasmanians. The final design of the network and Refund Point types will be determined by the successful Network Operator at the conclusion of a competitive procurement process. The Refund Point types and details contained in this document are based on Refund Points used in mainland schemes and provided as information only, to assist in the consultation on relevant planning provisions, and do not make any guarantees as to the final network of Refund Points for Tasmania.

Additional Information

Additional information on the CRS and the potential infrastructure can be found:

Tasmanian CRS:

[Container Refund Scheme | Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania \(nre.tas.gov.au\)](https://nre.tas.gov.au)

Interstate schemes:

NSW Container Refund Scheme website- Return and Earn: <https://returnandearn.org.au/>

ACT Container Refund Scheme website: <https://actcnds.com.au/>

NSW and ACT annual reports and other reports: <https://www.exchangeforchange.com.au/who-we-are/publications-and-reports.html>

WA Scheme reports including report on Refund Points and Opening Hours for Oct 2020: <https://warrri.com.au/reporting-agreements/>

WA Refund points site plans and design best practice <https://warrri.com.au/refund-points/>

WA Container Refund Scheme website: <https://www.containersforchange.com.au/wa/>

QLD Container Refund Scheme website: <https://www.containersforchange.com.au/qld/>

QLD Scheme information and reports: <https://containerexchange.com.au/>

Refund Point Infrastructure:

<https://www.mytomra.com.au/reverse-vending-machines-rvms/>

<https://envirobank.com.au/who-we-are/what-we-do/rvms/>

<https://envirobank.com.au/>

<https://www.returnit.com.au/>



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