

The international trend towards Container Return Schemes: Is New Zealand being left behind?

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TOMRA Collection



World's largest advanced collection and sorting systems solutions provider to the recycling industry

Founded in Norway in 1972 with the invention of the world's very first Reverse Vending Machine



\$2.44

billion NZD
in revenue



~87,000
machines in
operation



Represented in more than
100 countries

Installations per regions

EMEA

66
200+

Americas

13 800+

APAC

5 000+



Collecting

52+ billion

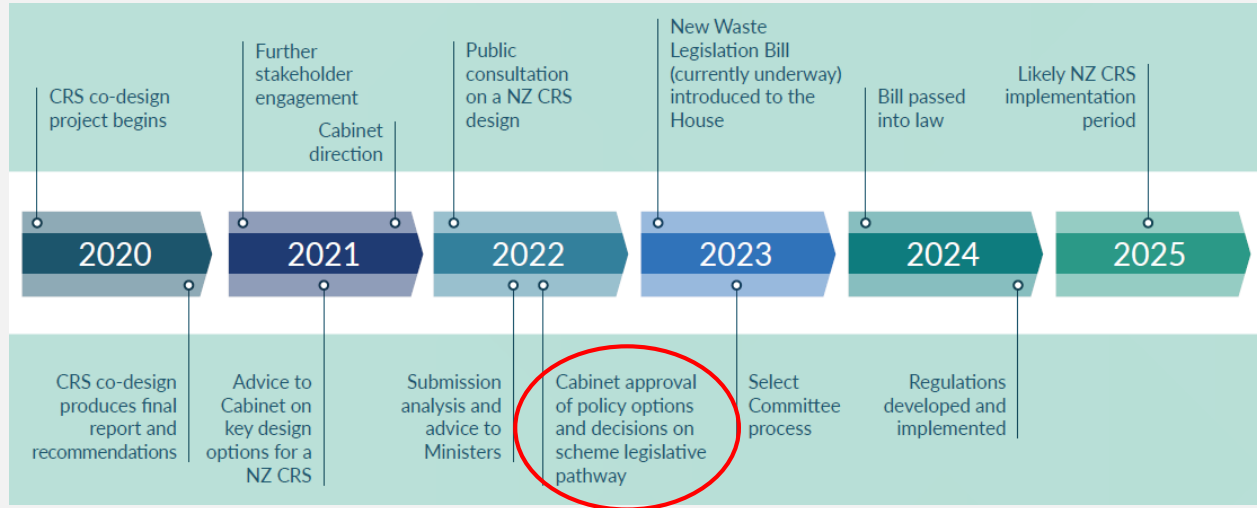
containers annually



What is a Container Return Scheme (CRS)



New Zealand CRS – Recent History



- CRS was expected to be established by **2025**
- **Policy deferred** prior to the 2023 election
- New timeline for a New Zealand CRS unknown
- Designed to improve New Zealand's low beverage container recovery rate of **45-50%**

The global trend towards CRS

60 schemes established globally

12 new schemes established since **2022**



Slovakia (2022)



Malta (2022)



Latvia (2022)



Romania (2023)



Victoria (2023)



Hungary (2024)



Ireland (2024)



Austria (2025)



Poland (2025)



Tasmania (2025)



Portugal (2026)



Singapore (2026)



The global trend towards CRS

11 new schemes to established in the **next 2 years**



Spain (2026)



Türkiye (2026)



Goa (2026)



England (2027)



Scotland (2027)



Northern Ireland (2027)



Wales (2027)



Greece (2027)



Cyprus (2027)



Moldova (2027)



Uruguay (2027)



European Union Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR)



Entered into force on February 12, 2025 and applying from **August 12, 2026**

European Union member states **must implement a CRS** for single-use beverage containers up to 3 liters by 1 January 2029.

Mandated **90% separate collection target** for CRS in-scope beverage containers





Case Study - Slovakia

- Established in 2022
- Legislated retailer participation for retailers over 300sqm
- Deposit = €0.15 (\$0.30 NZD)
- Container return rate of **71% in first year**
 - well above the original 60% target for early rollout
- **Achieving a 95% return rate after only 3 years**
- **75% reduction in plastic bottle and aluminium can litter**
- National sorting centre for returned containers established as part of the system rollout.
 - This facility is designed specifically to handle high-purity PET bottles and aluminium cans coming from the deposit system.
 - It can process the country's entire annual volume of returned beverage containers.



Case Study - Latvia

- Established in 2022
- Legislated retailer participation over 300sqm in urban areas and over 60sqm in rural areas.
- Deposit = €0.10 (\$0.20 NZD)
- Eligible container return rate of **84% after two years**
 - Up from only **only 45% prior to CRS establishment**
- **61% reduction in plastic containers** in litter along the Baltic Sea coastline and a **49% reduction among all CRS containers**
- National deposit logistics centre established as a result of CRS
 - designed to handle and sort all beverage bottles and cans returned through the CRS
 - a milestone project that the local press dubbed “nationally significant”



Case Study - Ireland

- Established in 2024
- Legislated retailer participation for retailers over 250sqm
 - Stores under 250sqm retail floor space can apply for a take-back exemption
- Deposit = €0.15 (\$0.30 NZD) or €0.25 (\$0.50 NZD) depending on size
- **Achieving a 90% return rate after only 2 years**
- 2.5 billion containers collected since scheme launch
- Coastwatch's latest marine litter survey showed Ireland's shorelines and beaches have experienced the **lowest amount of litter in the form of bottles and cans in the past 25 years**
- The CRS is now creating enough consistent, high-grade PET supply to **justify domestic recycling infrastructure investment**, such as the **nation's first bottle-to-bottle recycling facility**: currently proposed to be built in the regional town of Portlaoise and operational from 2027



Case Study - Austria

- Established in 2025
- Retailers selling beverages are required to act as return points:
 - large supermarkets are always included
 - small convenience stores can apply for exemption if space is insufficient or if another return point is nearby
- Deposit = €0.25 (\$0.50 NZD)
- Container return rate of **81% in first year**
 - Target of **90%** by 2027 (year 2)
- **13,000+ collection points** established throughout Austria, including 6000+ Reverse Vending Machines



CRS Benefits and Support

According to the Government's 2019 and 2022 Cost Benefit Analyses, **cost savings to local government** over 30 years would equate to:

- **\$130–\$160 million** in avoided litter clean-up costs
- **\$200–\$300 million** in reduced costs to council recycling systems
- **\$50–\$100 million** in avoided landfill costs

\$1–1.5 billion net economic benefit to New Zealand
- equating to **\$30–\$50 million net benefit per year**

Beverage container recovery expected to rise from roughly **45–50% to 85–90%**



As reported by RNZ in October 2025, Ipsos polling research showed that **76% of New Zealanders want a CRS** with **only 6%** of New Zealanders opposed.



Collective Call for a New Zealand Container Return Scheme

"We are a coalition of organisations from across New Zealand, including the beverage industry, waste and recycling sector, NGOs, community organisations, local councils, and trade groups. Together, we share a commitment to advancing initiatives to address New Zealand's waste issues, particularly for single-use beverage containers. This letter is to convey our support for the implementation of a Container Return Scheme (CRS) and encourage the Government to prioritise its adoption." (24 February 2025)





TOMRA

Questions

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