

ACT / NSW ACT container deposit schemes – Industry Consultation Phase One

Summary of what we heard (April-June 2026)

Thank you for participating in the industry consultation program to inform implementation of the ACT and NSW container deposit schemes by Exchange for Change as the scheme coordinator.

This document summarises what we heard in the first phase of industry consultation conducted in April and June 2026.

1. What we did

Representatives of industry bodies from across the beer and cider, spirits, wine, and other beverages sectors were invited to participate in a series of roundtable discussions. Follow up meetings and sessions were also held to provide an opportunity for participants to share any further feedback from their organisations and members.

Participants provided the Exchange for Change team with valuable insights, data on their sector profile and trends, to help inform work being undertaken by Exchange for Change on scheme pricing. Pricing applicable to the expanded container deposit schemes will be announced on 1 October 2026, prior to the commencement of expanded scope from mid-2027.

We acknowledge and appreciate the contributions of all those who have participated in the consultation program so far, and welcome your continued input as we progress the Phase Two consultation later this year.

2. What we heard

Feedback commonly heard across all sectors included:

- The importance of harmonising container deposit schemes across jurisdictions, wherever possible, to support participation
- A desire for a national portal for scheme reporting and invoicing
- The importance of simplifying processes for suppliers, wherever possible
- A desire for all scheme-related communications to be easily accessible, practical, and to use terminology that is relevant for each specific sector
- All sectors are experiencing significant challenges in the context of changes to container deposit schemes in other parts of Australia, as well as increased operating costs for businesses and reduced consumer spending

In terms of scheme pricing, we heard that:

- A desire exists for further clarity about how scheme pricing / forecasting will be undertaken, and how the scheme expansion will affect suppliers from a cost perspective
- In particular, suppliers who use glass bottling expressed a strong interest in the relationship between scheme pricing for glass and the reduced environmental impacts of glass

In feedback on proposed scheme improvements we heard there is:

- Strong support for payment terms of 28 days or more
- A desire for further information in relation to hardship allowances and any penalties for late payments that will apply under the expanded scheme
- A desire to simplify processes to reduce administrative burden for scheme participants wherever possible, particularly for smaller producers and those who will be the first supplier in multiple jurisdictions (such as those within the wine industry)
- A desire for consistency in definitions and language that will apply under the expanded scheme; for instance, definitions of small and micro suppliers, use of terms 'containers' and 'units'
- General support for the small supplier program
 - with support for quarterly reporting and invoicing, and a clearly communicated 'opt out / in' approach
 - noting that most spirits suppliers / distillers in NSW are micro or larger, not small
- General support for the micro supplier program
 - with a flexible approach to invoicing (i.e. annual, quarterly or monthly to assist suppliers manage their cashflow), and a clearly communicated 'opt out / in' approach
 - noting a desire for micro suppliers to be exempt from scheme registration and participation (from the wine industry)

We also heard about the importance of:

- A shared evidence base to underpin ongoing scheme decision-making and related arrangements for participants
- Data to support measurement and reporting on the impact of the scheme, including data on container type and sector
- Proactive consumer-facing communications to clearly articulate the rationale and scope of scheme changes, and to help suppliers highlight the positive environmental, social and economic impact of the scheme they fund
- Further clarity around EPA policy/requirements including labelling requirements that apply to contract bottling across businesses/suppliers (the latter raised by spirits and distillers)
- Further details about processes for engaging Exchange for Change board members
- Stakeholder communications and engagement to effectively reach industry where they are and to support onboarding and ongoing participation in the expanded scheme.

3. Response to feedback

What we heard	What we're doing	Rationale
Reduce administration	From 1 July 2027: • Micro supplier (<100K containers) • Small supplier (100K-300K containers)	Annual and quarterly reporting and invoicing will reduce administrative burden – opt out model

What we heard	What we're doing	Rationale
	In place by 1 February 2027: Single portal for onboarding, container registration and reporting	Scheme participants will only need to visit one place to sign up with Scheme Coordinator and register containers
	Simplifying Supply Arrangement (contract with Scheme Coordinator)	Supply Arrangement will be easier for suppliers to understand
	Making improvements to Scheme Coordinator portal (e.g. link to ASIC to pre-populate information, register for NSW and ACT simultaneously)	Improvements will reduce administration for suppliers when they sign up
Address 7-day payment terms which are problematic	In place from 1 July 2027 for NSW: Financial modelling to determine how long payment terms can be extended	Scheme financial liquidity cannot support 90-day payment terms / would require higher price to be charged to suppliers to build cash reserves Annual and quarterly invoicing will create longer payment terms for micro/small suppliers
Work towards harmonisation/national portal	Cooperating with NSW and ACT governments to introduce a harmonised supplier portal	Harmonisation is being led by Government
	Exploring transition to arrears invoicing in ACT	Arrears invoicing will align with other jurisdictions
Ensure scheme-related communications are easy to access, practical and use terminology relevant for each specific sector	Conducting Round 2 consultations focusing on communication needs	Industry is best placed to advise on communication channels, terminology, etc
	Establishing Industry Reference Group (IRG)	Industry Reference Group will establish a direct channel for industry to provide advice to the EfC Board regarding issues such as suitability of communications
Provide further clarity about how scheme pricing/forecasting will be undertaken and the related cost impact on suppliers	EfC offering briefings to industry groups and or members, focused on how scheme pricing is set Briefings will be offered and communications provided when pricing is announced on 1 October 2026 (i.e. for pricing period 1 February 2027 to 31 January 2028)	Briefings / communications will support industry understanding of the cost-recovery model and provide transparency about how pricing is set

What we heard	What we're doing	Rationale
	Establishing IRG	EfC will provide IRG with information about how scheme pricing is set
Develop an understanding of whether the expanded scheme will capture more glass and lead to better environmental outcomes	Developing options for consideration by government	Government is responsible for decision-making about how to best provide this information
Further clarify EPA policy for labelling, registration, contract bottling	Working with EPA to develop communications	Government is responsible for decision-making about these matters – EfC and EPA communications to suppliers will be 'joined-up'
Support understanding by the EfC Board of new suppliers when making scheme decisions within its remit (i.e. relating to pricing, sign-up processes, communications, etc)	Establishing IRG to provide advice on both container expansion and ongoing operation of the NSW and ACT schemes	Feedback from IRG will be provided directly to EfC Directors IRG will not be bound by ASIC Director responsibilities therefore members can represent the interests of their industries IRG will allow for a wider representation of industry sectors

4. What's next? Phase Two

Your feedback is being considered by Exchange for Change as we prepare for introduction of the expanded schemes in the ACT and NSW from mid-2027.

The next phase of consultation will be undertaken through the newly established Industry Working Group. The first meeting will be held in August 2026 and will further explore opportunities for Exchange for Change to facilitate onboarding to the scheme among the expansion sectors.

We encourage you to contact the Exchange for Change team with any further feedback or questions.

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