



Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2023–24

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Ms Jo Clay MLA

Addressed to: Minister for City and Government Services

Reference: Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

Hearing: 14 February 2025

In relation to: Recycling and waste policy and Container Deposit Scheme

Question received: 19 February 2025

Answer Due: 26 February 2025

To ask the Minister for City and Government Services — The Annual Report says that in 2023-24 76 million containers were recycled through the Container Deposit Scheme.

- (1) How many tonnes of material was recycled through the Container Deposit Scheme?
- (2) What is this as a proportion of the total household waste and recycling stream for 2023-24?
- (3) What is this as a proportion of total waste generation for 2023-24?
- (4) Can future annual reports provide information in tonnes for all waste and recycling, in addition to providing per-item counts when Government thinks it's appropriate, so that data can be compared by reporting in a common unit?

Tara Cheyne MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

- (1) Tonnages are not usually reported for the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS), rather they are reported as containers counted.

To assist with addressing this question, Transport Canberra and City Services has made several assumptions to estimate approximate tonnages from container counts (see below).

The following table shows the total containers collected and recycled through the ACT CDS network only and does not include CDS eligible materials that are in the household yellow bin.

Container Deposit Scheme	2023-2024 Containers	2023-2024 Tonnes (estimated)
Aluminium	39,814,847	727
Glass	13,433,623	14,926
Plastics	21,686,587	5,861

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Steel	22,178	0.4
Total	74,957,235	21,514

Assumptions

An eligible container factor is determined by the ACT CDS Scheme Coordinator on a quarterly basis to determine the number of containers by type of material, from a tonne of recyclable waste. The container counts have been used to approximate tonnage estimates by container type, using an average eligible container factor for each container type, these are:

- Aluminium – 54.8 containers per kg
- Plastics – 3.7 containers per kg
- Glass 0.9 – containers per kg
- Steel does not have an eligible container factor, so aluminium has been used as a guide.

The tonnage calculations have been specifically calculated for the purpose of this question. It is not typically relied upon for management of the scheme and is not ordinarily published.

- (2) Transport Canberra and City Services Accountability Indicator 2.3i requires reporting of the: “Percentage of Material Recovered from the ACT Household Total Waste Stream”.

This indicator calculates the percentage of material recovered from the household waste stream (yellow and green bins) from the total stream (yellow, green and red bins). Calculation of results against this indicator excludes eligible containers that are redeemed through the ACT Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) network as these are reported in containers, not in tonnages.

To establish how much the CDS scheme increased recycling in the household waste stream the eligible container factors as explained in the answer to question number one, was used. The following shows the estimated impact of CDS containers redeemed through the ACT CDS network if they were included in resource recovery calculation:

Household Waste Stream	Unit of measure	2023-2024
(a) Household Waste	tonnes	80,461
(b) Commingled Recyclables (MRF)	tonnes	27,523
(c) Green Waste	tonnes	24,510
(d) FOGO	tonnes	1,224
Resource Recovery rate excluding CDS tonnage (b+c+d)/(a+b+c+d)	per cent	40%
Container Deposit Scheme	units	74,957,235
(e) Container Deposit Scheme	tonnes	21,514
Resource Recovery rate including estimated CDS tonnage (b+c+d+e)/(a+b+c+d+e)	per cent	48%

Therefore, based on the table above, the ACT CDS has increased recycling rates in the ACT. For 2023-24, the resource recovery rate would be estimated at 48% if CDS containers were included, compared to 40% if they are excluded. It should be noted the above CDS network

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container numbers would include CDS containers dropped off by commercial organisations such as restaurants and cafes and these cannot be separately identified.

- (3) The total CDS material would amount to approximately 1.75% of the total waste stream (21,514 tonnes CDS material over 1,231,609 tonnes total waste generated).

The resource recovery figure of 67% published in Strategic Indicator 1.5: Reduction in waste to landfill as proportion of the total waste stream includes all CDS material. ACT NoWaste gathers information from waste and resource recovery facilities to determine the resource recovery rate for Indicator 1.5, which includes the CDS tonnages.

- (4) Currently the tonnage information cannot be provided for the following reasons:

- CDS containers are collected from businesses and households through the network operator, which does not make it possible to breakdown CDS containers between the different source streams (Municipal Solid Waste and Commercial and Industrial Waste) required to allocate correct tonnages to household waste and recycling streams.
- CDS recycling rates are reported in containers by the Container Deposit Scheme Coordinator, and this is consistent with all other Australian jurisdictions. Any changes in reporting requirements would require contractual changes and this may impact on the current fee structure.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Environment, Planning, Transport and City Services

Signature:



By the Minister for City and Government Services, Tara Cheyne MLA

Date:

26/2/25