



9(2)(a)

9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 25 May 2021 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

I am very keen to find out whether here in NZ there are any projects underway, by private manufacturers or the government, to:

- a) encourage the packaging of goods in reusable glass jars and bottles*
- b) enable empty glass bottles and jars to be returned by consumers for reuse*
- c) enable bulk sterilisation of returned glass bottles and jars.*

The Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) understands that there are many projects underway by private manufacturers. Some of these include:

- Refill NZ. This is a water bottle refilling initiative that helps to prevent plastic bottle pollution at its source by making it easier to refill your reusable water bottle on the go. The app locates public water fountains for you to refill your bottle. Refill NZ received funding through the Ministry's Waste Minimisation Fund (WMF) in 2020. You can find out more at their website: <https://refillnz.org.nz/>
- Refill Initiatives for milk in glass bottles include Oaklands Milk and Lewis Road Creamery and Village Milk. There are also other initiatives which include Ecostore, Littlefoot, Kahuku Natural, and Will and Able. You can read more about these initiatives at: <https://www.oaklandsfarm.co.nz/>, <https://lewisroadcreamery.co.nz/pages/milk-refillery>, <https://www.villagemilk.co.nz/>.
- Initiatives which encourage consumers to return their empty jars for sterilisation and refill. These include Forward in Whangarei (<https://www.forwardwhangarei.co.nz/>) and to return glass bottles and jars for reuse includes Hopper in Wellington (<https://www.hopper.nz/>).
- Initiatives which encourage consumers to use reusable and returnable packaging include Terracycle's loop model. You can read more about it here: <https://loopstore.com/>.

The Government is investigating a container return scheme (CRS) as one way of addressing New Zealand's low resource recovery rates and high litter associated with beverage

containers. A CRS is a recycling scheme and form of product stewardship that incentivises consumers and businesses to return beverage containers for recycling or refilling in exchange for a refundable deposit.

One of the key co-design project outcomes was to change the way New Zealand values beverage containers that will see increased recycling and new opportunities for refilling. While most container return schemes are designed for single-use beverages, some countries combine the recovery of single-use beverage containers with refillable beverage containers including a deposit at the point of purchase, which is refunded when the empty bottles or crate is returned and replaced.

The Minister for the Environment and Cabinet will consider advice from officials in the second half of 2021. If a decision to proceed with a scheme is made, public consultation would likely take place later in 2021. For more information please refer to the Ministry's website at: <https://environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/areas-of-work/waste/container-return-scheme-reducing-waste-landfill>.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my decision to withhold information relating to this request, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on their website at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Please note that due to the public interest in our work the Ministry for the Environment publishes responses to requests for official information on our [OIA responses page](#) shortly after the response has been sent. If you have any queries about this, please feel free to contact our Ministerial Services team: ministerials@mfe.govt.nz.

Nāku noa, nā



Shaun Lewis
Director - Systems Change and Investment