

Press Release

TOMRA Reluctant to Install Reverse Vending Machine

Since May 2019, the Merriwa District Progress Association (MDPA) and Upper Hunter Shire Council have been liaising with TOMRA Cleanaway in an attempt to have them agree to install a reverse vending machine (RVM) in Merriwa.

A RVM is a machine that you feed drink containers into to refund the 10 cents extra you pay when you buy the drink. At present, there are two RVMs in Muswellbrook and one in Scone, but none in Merriwa.

Two attempts have been made at operating an 'over-the-counter' return service in Merriwa by IGA and Home Hardware, but these operations have been unsuccessful due to the high demand on returning beverage containers.

TOMRA appears to have been avoiding the issue of installing a RVM in Merriwa by continually failing to return 'phone calls and stalling. They declared that a RVM in Merriwa "doesn't meet their network requirements". At one stage they said they were waiting for an acoustic survey to be carried out in Sydney, but later denied any knowledge of that study. They blamed delays on their business partners Cleanaway, who shied away from the extra 100 km trip when collecting containers in the Upper Hunter loop. However, Cleanaway is now keen to collect containers from an over-the-counter collection point.

A survey carried out by the MDPA revealed that approximately 1,300,000 beverage containers are sold in the Merriwa district per year. If the deposit on these containers could be redeemed in Merriwa, it would add \$130,000 to the local economy.

The MDPA is committed to pursuing this issue further as it has widespread community support and is deemed to be a vital addition to waste management in our district. Therefore, please look out for further action on this front, and add your support if requested.

Stephen Gowlland
President, MDPA
30 March 2022

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