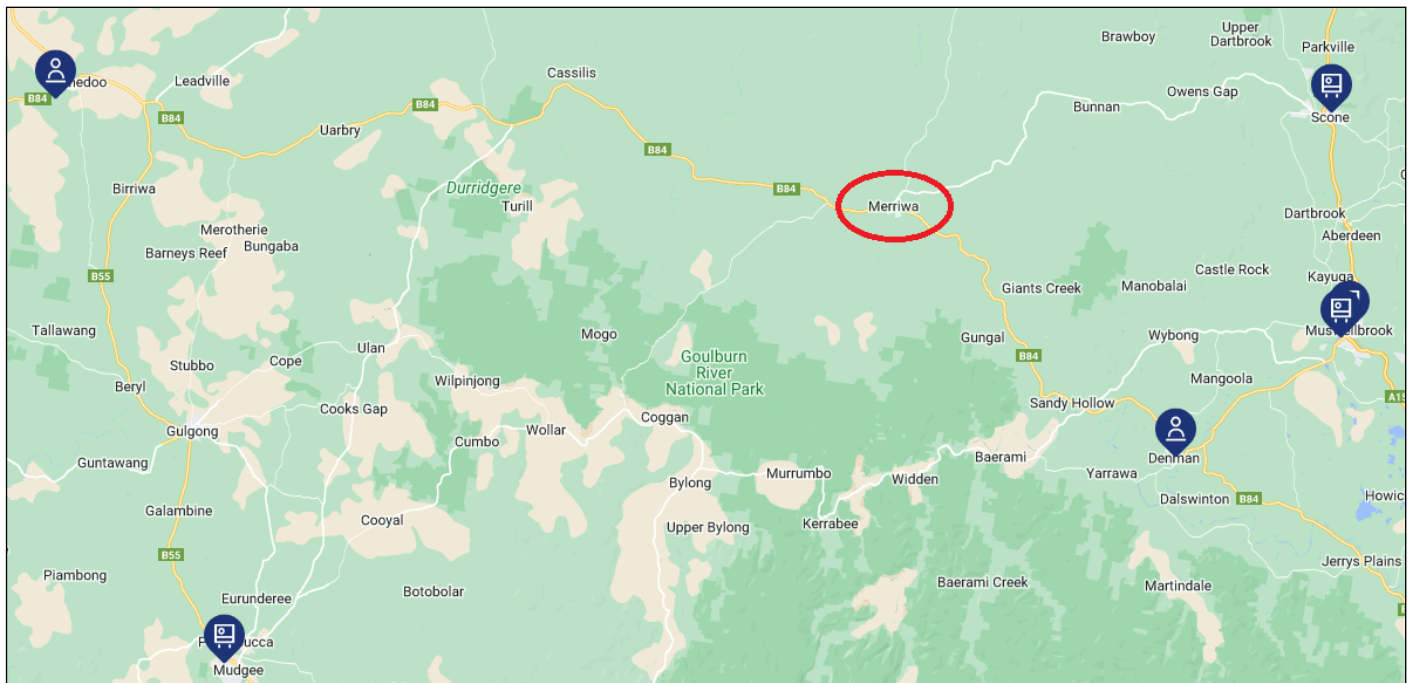


# MERRIWA DISTRICT PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

## MERRIWA NEEDS A REVERSE VENDING MACHINE

### THESE ARE THE REASONS:

1. A petition of the Merriwa district returned 872 signatures, definitively supporting the installation of a Reverse Vending Machine (RVM) in Merriwa. This is approximately 50% of the 1761 population (2016 Census).
2. The installation of a RVM in Merriwa has overwhelming support of local community groups (such as the Merriwa District Progress Association) and the Upper Hunter Shire Council, which has been lobbying stakeholders since 2018.
3. For eight months in 2018, an over-the-counter (OTC) collection point operated at the Home Hardware store in Merriwa, processing approximately 20,000 drink containers, for which they received only \$700, amounting to an average of \$3.00 per day. As the demand for this service expanded beyond control, the staff were spending excessive periods of time receiving drink containers to the detriment of the core hardware business, so the return point was relinquished.
4. A survey of retail outlets in Merriwa in 2020 revealed that approximately 1,300,000 drink containers were sold in the Merriwa district per annum. By early 2022, the figure increased by 20% to 1,500,000 per annum. This does not account for drink containers brought into town from other townships.
5. The residents of the Merriwa district would like to actively participate in the New South Wales Government's initiative to 'reduce the volume of litter in NSW by 40%'.  
*reduce the volume of litter in NSW by 40%'*
6. As Merriwa is essentially a hub of roads leading to Newcastle, Muswellbrook, Scone, Willow Tree, Dunedoo, Dubbo, Rylstone and Mudgee, it is experiencing higher levels of tourist traffic and heavy vehicle movements along the Golden Highway and other roads. Increased visitation results in higher levels of drink purchases and disappointingly, increased littering.



7. Although there are RVMs in Scone, Muswellbrook (2) and Mudgee, residents are reluctant to drive to these locations as it is between 1½ to 3 hour's return travel by car. Those who make the effort often find those RVMs full or not working. Denman's over-the-counter return point does not have the capacity to handle the quantities of drink containers from Merriwa.
8. Because there is not a suitable return point in Merriwa, consumers are unable to redeem the \$0.10 deposit they paid on drink containers. This amounts to approximately \$150,000 per annum, or \$3,000 per week that is lost to the rural community instead of being spent in Merriwa to support local businesses.

# MERRIWA DISTRICT PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

9. If all drink containers sold in the Merriwa district are returned to the Merriwa RVM, and if TOMRA Cleanaway receives \$0.035 per returned container (as is paid to operators of over-the-counter return points), they would potentially earn \$52,500 per annum (\$144/day) from a RVM in Merriwa. We understand that TOMRA Cleanaway's ideal is to collect 5,000 containers per day, which would return them \$63,875 per annum. So, for the sake of \$11,375 reduced profits per annum (\$31.16/day), TOMRA Cleanaway would see the Merriwa district sacrifice \$150,000 per annum in lost opportunity.

10. Collection of deposited drink containers can easily be carried out by Cleanaway when they empty the Muswellbrook and Scone RVMs, proceeding to Merriwa adding only 100 km (approx) to the current 576 km overall return trip from Eastern Creek. Alternatively, if a dedicated trip is made to Merriwa, the return trip to Eastern Creek is only 644 km.

11. Assuming the average volume of each drink container is 0.845 litres, that all 1,500,000 drink containers are returned, and the capacity of each truck is 20 m<sup>3</sup>, all containers could be collected from Merriwa with 63 truck movements per annum.

12. The Merriwa IGA supermarket is open to discussions with TOMRA about becoming a 'redemption partner', as the IGA software is understood to be compatible with the Return and Earn system.

13. On 24 February 2022, Environment Minister James Griffin released a statement that seven billion drink containers had been returned in NSW since the Return and Earn program began. The \$700 million dollars returned to NSW residents represents 2 in 3 drink containers sold. Therefore, the NSW Government has collected approximately \$350 million from the sale of drink containers that have not been redeemed.

14. We understand it costs around \$50,000 to set up each RVM. Therefore, the \$350 million could potentially be used to set up another 7,000 RVMs in NSW, or subsidise the scheme to improve its effectiveness.

15. In the Merriwa district, on average 4120 drink containers are sold per day, or 1,500,000 per annum. By applying these statistics to the on-line Return and Earn Impact Calculator, the following savings to our environment could be achieved by recycling those drink containers through a RVM in Merriwa.

	<b>Water Savings</b>	<b>Energy Savings</b>	<b>Landfill Savings</b>	<b>Carbon Emissions Avoided</b>
4120 containers <b>PER DAY</b>	24,201 litres	5,372 Megajoules	180 Kilograms	496 Kilograms of CO <sup>2</sup>
1,500,000 containers <b>PER YEAR</b>	8,833,365 litres	1,960,780 Megajoules	65,565 Kilograms	181,007 Kilograms of CO <sup>2</sup>