Northern Territory container deposit scheme expansion

Frequently asked questions

The *Environment Protection (Beverage Containers and Plastic Bags) Act 2011 (the Act)* establishes the Northern Territory container deposit scheme (the CDS). The objectives of the scheme are to increase recycling and reuse of beverage container waste and provide Territorians with access to facilities where they exchange their eligible containers for 10 cent refunds.

What has changed? When?

From 1 July 2026, the CDS expanded to include any beverage container of 3 litres or less in volume. This means containers such as wine, spirits and plain milk containers are regulated containers.

What beverage containers are included in the expanded CDS?

All beverage containers up to 3L or less are included in the expanded CDS as regulated containers.

This means any beverage type in a container (aluminium or steel can, glass or plastic bottle, drink carton, casks etc.) holding 3L or less is included in the scheme from 1 July 2026, including but not limited to the following beverages:

- Soft drink
- Fruit / vegetable juice* drink
- Pure fruit / vegetable juice*
- Flavoured milk**
- Plain milk**
- Water – including plain, still, carbonated or mineral water
- Beer / ales / stout /cider
- Spirit-based beverages
- Wine – including de-alcoholised / non-alcoholic
- Spirits – including de-alcoholised / non-alcoholic

* Juice includes products like coconut water, aloe vera and other plant-based juices

** Milk includes UHT milk, plant- and nut- based milk substitutes such as oat milk, soy milk, almond milk etc., and all container types (e.g. bottles and cartons).

Beverage containers of less than 150mL *are included* in the scheme.

Are there exclusions?

Two container types are excluded under the *Environment Protection (Beverage Containers and Plastic Bags) Regulations 2011*:

1. **Cordial, or concentrated fruit / vegetable juice containers:** these products are manufactured and sold with the intention that they be diluted before consumption. Cordials and concentrates are distinct from beverages that can be consumed as is even though some people may choose to dilute before consuming.
2. **health tonic containers.** A health tonic is a liquid:
    - included in the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods under the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989 (Cth)*; and
    - supplied with a label or other accompanying document stating:
        - the liquid is for medicinal purposes; and
        - a recommended maximum dosage.

Can I get my refund if new containers do not have a refund marking?

Any beverage container of up to 3L sold in the NT is eligible for a refund, making it easier for the public, depot operators and other scheme participants to identify eligible containers. Containers like wine and spirit bottles, plain milk, and larger juice or flavoured milk cartons and bottles may not yet be labelled with the refund marking. You can still take these containers to a collection depot, even if the refund marking is not displayed on the container.

Manufacturers, distributors, retailers

Do I need to register for the expanded scheme?

Registered suppliers:

If you are already registered, you do not have to re-register. Contact your CDS coordinator to provide a list of the containers you supply in the NT and check with your coordinator to ensure the containers are covered under your existing supplier arrangement.

New suppliers:

If you are a new supplier, see CDS supplier registration for information on who needs to register as a CDS supplier and how to register.

I sell containers to customers online. Do I need to register?

Yes. If you supply or retail regulated containers direct to customers in the NT, you must register as a CDS supplier. The supply of regulated containers into the NT for retail sale is prohibited, unless the containers are supplied by a registered CDS supplier. A CDS supplier may be a manufacturer, distributor or retailer.

See CDS supplier registration for more on how to register.

I manufacture containers that are supplied to NT via a distributor / retailer. Do I need to register?

Generally, the person supplying regulated containers directly into the NT, whether they are the manufacturer or the distributor, should register as a CDS supplier and report the container sales to their NT CDS coordinator. You should check with the distributor / retailer to confirm that they are registered with respect to your containers, to ensure that the containers satisfy the requirements for sale in the NT. If

the distributor or retailer is not registered as a CDS supplier with respect to the containers, you must register as a CDS supplier for the containers.

See CDS supplier registration for more on who needs to register as a CDS supplier and how to register.

What container details / sales reports do I need to provide? How?

All registered suppliers (existing and new), must as a condition of supplier registration, provide their CDS coordinator with information about the regulated containers they supply in the NT as outlined below.

Container details:

You must provide details of each regulated container that you supply in the NT to your coordinator, so the coordinator has a comprehensive list of current container details (brand, container material type and/or container barcode – if displayed on the container):

- when you form a new supplier arrangement with the coordinator; and
- whenever the list of regulated containers you supply in the NT changes. This includes identifying any containers you supply that became regulated containers from 1 July 2026.

Contact your CDS coordinator for more information on submitting container details.

Sales reporting:

As a condition of registration, suppliers must report their NT container sales to their CDS coordinator, including for products purchased from a manufacturer and imported from another jurisdiction.

For more on reporting requirements see CDS supplier registration.

Contact your CDS coordinator for information on how you should report the container sales to the coordinator.

For more on registration conditions, see Section 41D of the Act.

Beverage container requirements

What are the container labelling requirements?

Beverage containers supplied or sold in NT must bear an approved refund marking, which may include:

- 10c refund at collection depots/points in participating State/Territory of purchase
- 10c refund at collection depots when sold in NT
- 10c refund at SA/NT collection depots in State/Territory of purchase.

The refund marking must be legible, and it should be applied in a way that does not render the container unsuitable for recycling. For example, it should not be placed on a part of the container that will be separated from the container when the contents are consumed.

When do the new containers need to include the refund marking?

There are transitional arrangements to allow time for beverage suppliers to update labelling on containers that became regulated from 1 July 2026. The timeframes to include an approved refund marking on these containers are:

- Two years for wine and spirits containers – effective until 1 July 2028
- One year for all other new containers – effective until 1 July 2027.

Do the transitional timeframes apply to stock in trade or on the shelf?

The new containers must bear an approved refund marking by the end of the transitional period to satisfy the requirements for retail sale in the NT.

This means manufacturers (including fillers) of the new containers should ensure containers retailed in the NT bear the approved refund marking when the transitional period ends.

Do the labelling requirements apply to containers sold in multi-packs / cartons?

Each regulated container whether sold individually or in multipacks or cartons must display the refund marking.

Do all regulated containers have to have a barcode?

No. Labelling requirements for regulated containers are outlined above.

Other container requirements

Supply of regulated containers in the NT is prohibited unless the containers are supplied by a CDS supplier, and the containers satisfy requirements under section 10 of the Act. In addition to labelling requirements outlined above, this includes:

- The container must be covered by a supplier arrangement between the supplier and an approved CDS coordinator.
- The container (including the label) must be suitable for recycling or reuse.

What does suitable for recycling mean?

CDS coordinators have an obligation to ensure that empty beverage containers accepted through the scheme are recycled or reused. This includes sourcing end-markets for recovered materials. Accordingly, coordinators are best placed to assist with questions about whether a particular container or the packaging materials are recyclable, and whether the container can be supported under a supplier arrangement.

Generally, for a container to be considered suitable for recycling, there should be suitable infrastructure to enable the given container to be collected, sorted, reprocessed and the materials recovered, and a viable end market for the recovered materials[1]. Some containers or container materials are marketed as reusable or recyclable even though they may not be in practice. Contributing factors include inadequate or

[1] https://www.buyecogreen.com.au/recycled-vs-recyclable/

inaccessible collection or reuse systems, or a lack of suitable reprocessing infrastructure or viable end markets for container material.

Coordinators are not obliged to include a container under a supplier arrangement if the container is deemed to be unsuitable for recycling or reuse. This may include if the container has been deemed unsuitable for a CDS in another Australian jurisdiction. It is an offence to supply a beverage in an unsuitable container.