

# Media Release

**Steve Dimopoulos MP**

Minister for Environment

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

Minister for Outdoor Recreation



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## NEW AI TECHNOLOGY FOR CONTAINER DEPOSIT SCHEME

For the first time in the southern hemisphere, the Allan Labor Government is using game changing AI to reduce waste and boost recycling capacity in Victoria's popular container deposit scheme.

Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos last week announced a new cutting-edge AI powered recycling machine is now in operation at the CDS Vic Depot in Dandenong South, to process more containers more quickly.

CountAiner uses advanced AI machine learning to count, identify and process eligible returns in bulk at astounding speeds of up to 1,500 containers per minute.

Over the past 3 years, Return-It has work together with Canadian engineering company Machinex to develop and refine the CountAiner technology for use in Australia – with the CDS Vic depot Dandenong South being the only unit to deploy this high-speed counting equipment outside of North America.

Victoria's container deposit scheme has seen more than 1 billion containers returned in its first year alone, putting a staggering \$100 million back in the pockets of Victorians and reducing litter to landfill by half since CDS Vic was launched on 1 November 2023.

More than \$950,000 has been donated by Victorians through the scheme to over 4,200 charities, community groups and local sports clubs - supporting great cause across the state.

With over 650 refund collection points and growing, CDS Vic is the most convenient in Australia – making it easier than ever for Victorians to cash in their containers, recycle waste and divert more litter from landfill.

The container deposit scheme is part of the Labor Government's \$515 million investment to transform the state's waste and recycling systems, driving progress towards diverting 80 percent of waste from landfill by 2030.

### Quote attributable to Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos

*"This advanced AI technology brings incredible speed and precision that will transform how we recycle in Victoria - driving smarter, more efficient waste management across the state and country."*

### Quote attributable Member for Dandenong Gabrielle Williams

*"The Dandenong South manufacturing precinct is the heart of innovation in Victoria - it's wonderful to see AI technology like the CountAiner being deployed for both environment and economic benefit for all Victorians"*