Minister for Lands, Planning and the Environment, Peter Chandler, said today the chances for the container recycling scheme to be back in operation with compulsory involvement from the beverage industry have improved.

“We are optimistic and we want to thank all jurisdictions and the Commonwealth Government for their support. They have taken the necessary steps to move the Territory forward in its bid to gain permanent exemption under Commonwealth law. An exemption will force any beverage supplier wanting to sell drinks in the Territory to comply with the law that covers the Container Deposit Scheme.”

Mr Chandler said all jurisdictions had now completed their gazettals – a request published in each government’s gazette for the new regulation to be made under the Commonwealth Mutual Recognition Act 1992.

“This endorsement was required before the regulation could go to the Executive Council to be finalised. We expect it to go before the council on August 8.

“If the exemption succeeds it will be a great relief. The Territory Government has been funding the 10 cent refunds for containers and handling charges at the depots since the major beverage companies pulled out in March.

“We cannot continue to fund a scheme costing up to a million dollars a month given the black hole of billions of dollars of debt left by the former Labor government.

“Sadly, this costly shambles could have been avoided if the former Labor Government had listened to our warnings that the recycling scheme would be overruled by the Commonwealth law.

“Worse, the former Labor government was given a year’s temporary exemption from the Commonwealth law, then failed to use the time wisely to get an application for a permanent exemption off the ground.”

Mr Chandler said the latest figures showed the recycling scheme was still popular with Territorians.

There was an increasing rate of return with a 67% recovery rate on the 27 million containers sold in the Territory for the first quarter of this year, he said.

The latest quarterly report is available on the NT Environment Protection Authority website at: http://www.ntepa.nt.gov.au/container-deposits/quarterly-reports

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