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NEWS RELEASE

90% New Zealanders believe its businesses' role to promote recycling

At its Annual General Meeting in Auckland today, the Glass Packaging Forum (the Forum) released the latest research conducted by ShapeNZ in July about attitudes to recycling glass packaging and other materials.

The poll of over 2300 people was conducted in conjunction with the New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development to follow up similar research conducted in July 2009 which has been used to inform the Forum's product stewardship strategy.

In May the Forum's voluntary glass packaging product stewardship scheme received accreditation from the Minister for the Environment under the Waste Minimisation Act (2008) and is the only packaging material to have Government recognition of its programme .

At a dinner to celebrate this major achievement Nicky Wagner MP congratulated the Forum and its members on behalf of the Government for the leadership they have shown in achieving voluntary product stewardship accreditation under the Waste Minimisation Act:-

"I led the National Party's role in the Select Committee refinement of this legislation two years ago, and it is a great pleasure to see the voluntary accreditation provisions bearing fruit. At this stage the Minister is keen to give industry the chance to step up to the challenge, and develop effective, industry-led voluntary product stewardship schemes.

"The Glass Forum has the opportunity to validate this approach and demonstrate to the wider waste and packaging sector that voluntary product stewardship can achieve real success without the need for unnecessary regulation. Without any regulation, you have managed to get excellent coverage of your sector."

She told guests that along with the Select Committee she had visited South Australia to see their Container Deposit Legislation in operation and saw similarities in the Forum's support for and monitoring of voluntary glass bottle reuse initiatives.

The poll shows that 90% New Zealanders believe it is industry's role to promote recycling and two thirds believe Government should also be doing more to promote recycling. However there is little demand for the Government to regulate.

74% are either neutral or oppose the introduction of a regulated system such as Container Deposit Legislation. The majority like kerb-side household collections but would like to see more public recycling bins.

John Webber, General Manager of the Forum, said that polling is important to understand how to continually improve glass recovery and to determine where the Forum's funding is best allocated.

"At 66% New Zealand's glass recycling is ahead of the European average of 65% and Australia's recovery rate of 62% and reflects a 32% increase since the Forum was established under the Packaging Accord in 2005. However as we have been reminded tonight by Government – that still means 34% is not being recycled.

"Around 70% of glass is consumed at home with the remaining 30% away from home at bars, restaurants or in public places. As households become much better at recycling glass, we are now focusing our efforts on public places and are keen to build on the opportunities which will arise through New Zealand's hosting of the Rugby World Cup in 2011."

"We are working with local and central government to see how we might increase recycling facilities and improve people's awareness of recycling. We are talking to the tourist industry and others about how we might introduce bottle banks in camp sites, camper van parks and student campuses to increase the recovery of glass containers of a quality to be recycled into new glass bottles. We will also continue our support for promoting glass recycling at the More FM summer winery concerts."

"We are delighted that so many people from local and central government; the waste and recycling sectors and the entertainment industry have joined us this evening. To succeed we have to work in partnership with people that provide services and with people that can promote the message. One thing we share is a frustration that the glass sector alone is funding end of life recovery systems and increasingly expected to provide facilities for cans and plastic containers as well. For public place recycling to work other packaging sectors need to come to the party. "

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For information

The Glass Packaging Forum's scheme currently covers over 80% of the glass on the market in New Zealand primarily for food and beverages and includes the major manufacturer of glass containers, brand owners and retailers.

Details of survey results available on request.