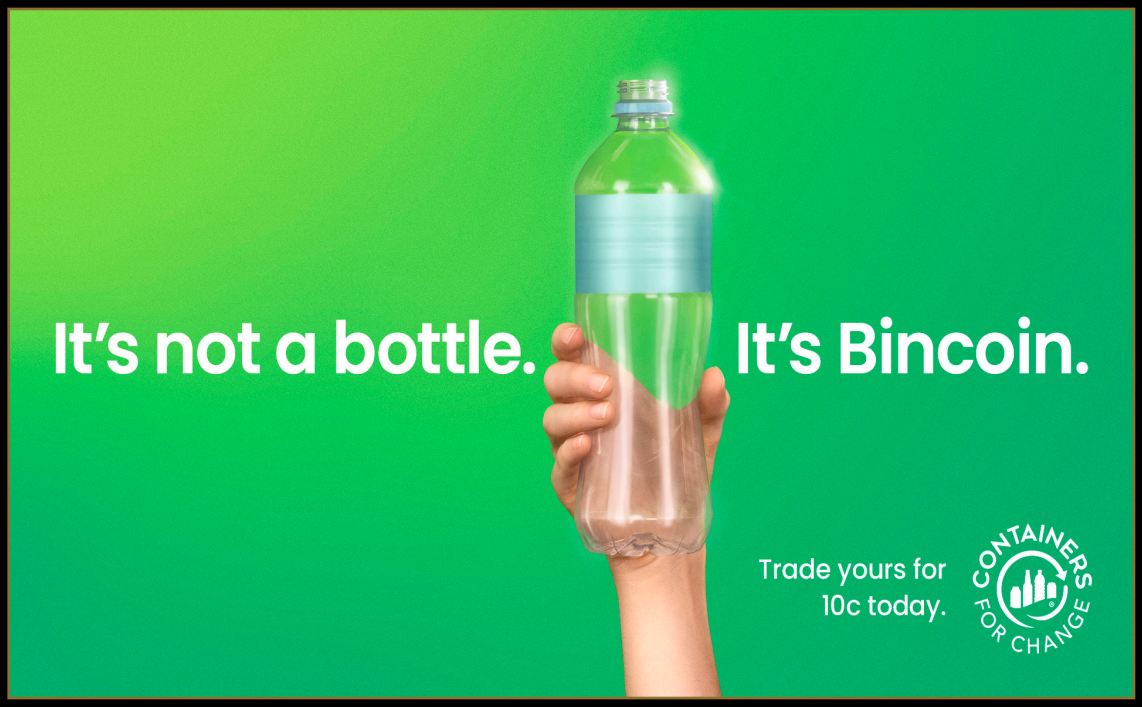
effie Awards Australia

2026
Case Study



Entry ID Number
1465

Agencies
Container Exchange (COEX)

Client
Containers for Change Qld / Container Exchange (COEX)

Title
Bincoin

Category
A10. Not-For-Profit Organisations

Author
Richard Brosnan
General Manager
Brand & Marketing
Container Exchange (COEX)

Advertising Council Australia | Marketing Association of Australia | Google

© This case study is the property of Advertising Council Australia (ACA) and protected by copyright and intellectual property laws throughout the world. The case study can be used for personal reasons only and should not be reproduced, distributed, sold or published without the express approval of ACA. Any educational facility interested in using the case history for educational purposes should contact effies@adcouncil.org.au

Q1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & WHY DOES THIS CASE DESERVE AN AWARD?

Containers for Change is one of Queensland's most recognised sustainability programs. Since launching in 2018, it has achieved near-universal prompted awareness of 97%. Yet despite this success, performance had reached a behavioural ceiling. Twenty one percent of Queenslanders remained disengaged, and an estimated 32% of eligible containers were still entering general waste – equal to 1 billion containers and $100 million in unclaimed refunds each year.

This was not an awareness problem. It was a effort problem.

Queenslanders supported recycling in principle but defaulted to low-effort disposal in practice. When bins were full and time was short, convenience beat intention. The strategic challenge was therefore not to motivate people to "care more," but to fundamentally reframe the value exchange so that ***not participating*** **felt irrational**.

The breakthrough came from recognising a contradiction at the centre of the cost-of-living crisis: while households were scrutinising every dollar, they were also throwing money away. The insight was simple but powerful – people do not ignore value; they ignore value they cannot see.

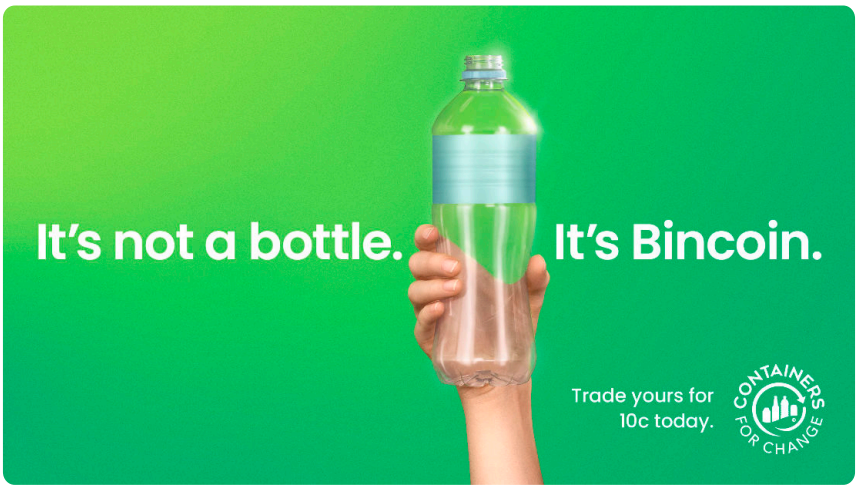
Bincoin transformed that invisible loss into something tangible. By reframing **every eligible container as something of value**, the campaign repositioned participation from an act of environmental effort into an act of obvious self-interest. Containers were no longer recyclables; they were currency in circulation. Binning them became synonymous with discarding cash.

Rather than relying on messaging alone, the campaign **intercepted behaviour at the precise moments habits were formed and broken** – before purchase, during consumption and the point of disposal – ensuring Bincoin appeared when it mattered most. Media operationalised rather than just amplifying the idea.

The results were the strongest in the scheme's seven-year history, exceeding the performance of all previous major campaigns. Between October 2025 and March 2026, container return volumes increased by 12.3% versus the pre-campaign baseline, **delivering a +5% year-on-year uplift in volume in SE QLD**. Compared with prior benchmark activity, Bincoin delivered an additional **average of 18.9 million containers returned per month,** alongside materially higher transaction frequency, member acquisition, and 90-day active participation.

These results occurred without any change to refund value, scheme accessibility or competitive conditions. Growth was driven by a structural shift in how Queenslanders valued an everyday behaviour.

Bincoin demonstrates how reframing value – not increasing spend, awareness or incentives – can unlock meaningful, measurable behaviour change in a mature category.



© 2026 Advertising Council Australia

Q2. WHAT WAS THE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGE?

Containers for Change operates in a unique competitive context. As Queensland's container deposit scheme, it does not compete against other brands, but against something more entrenched: everyday disposal habits. Since its launch in 2018, the scheme had achieved exceptional success in awareness, reaching 97% prompted recognition (1) across the state. However, this success masked a growing performance challenge – **awareness was no longer translating into behaviour change**.

Despite high recognition and a six-year operating history, participation had plateaued. While 79% of Queenslanders were already engaged with the scheme, the remaining 21% were consistently disengaged. Critically, an estimated 32% of eligible containers consumed at home were still being discarded into general waste. With no direct competitors to displace and no awareness deficit to overcome, growth was constrained by deeply embedded behavioural defaults.

The real competition was habitual convenience at the moment of disposal.

For many households, the **perceived cost of participation – time, effort, storage, and mental load – outweighed the perceived value of the 10-cent refund** (2) (3). Containers were treated as rubbish, not assets. When faced with a decision at the bin, people defaulted to the lowest-effort option, even if it contradicted their environmental values or financial self-interest. This created a structurally difficult challenge: people supported the scheme in principle but habitually opted out in practice.

Compounding this difficulty, the scheme had limited levers available. There were no planned changes to refund value, no major return-point expansion and no significant operational or policy shifts during the campaign period. Traditional awareness-led messaging had already reached saturation and delivered diminishing returns.

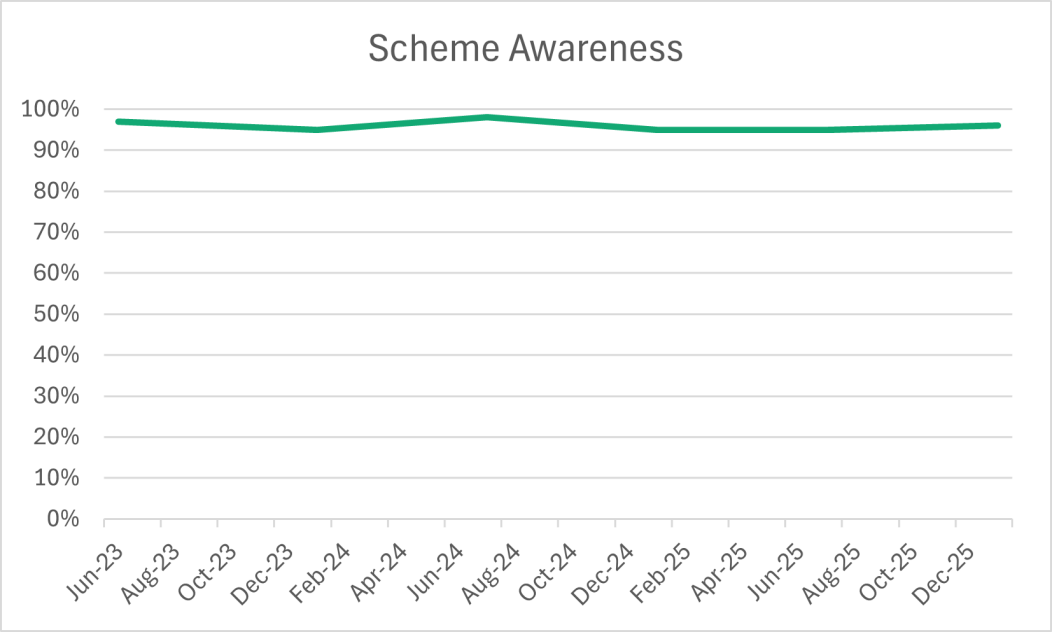
The strategic communications challenge, therefore, was not to tell Queenslanders what to do, or why recycling mattered. It was **to disrupt an automatic behaviour in a mature category and re-establish participation as the obvious, default choice** – without relying on increased incentives, expanded infrastructure or heightened awareness.

To succeed, marketing and communications needed to do more than persuade. They needed to fundamentally change how Queenslanders valued an everyday action at the exact moment a habit was being executed.

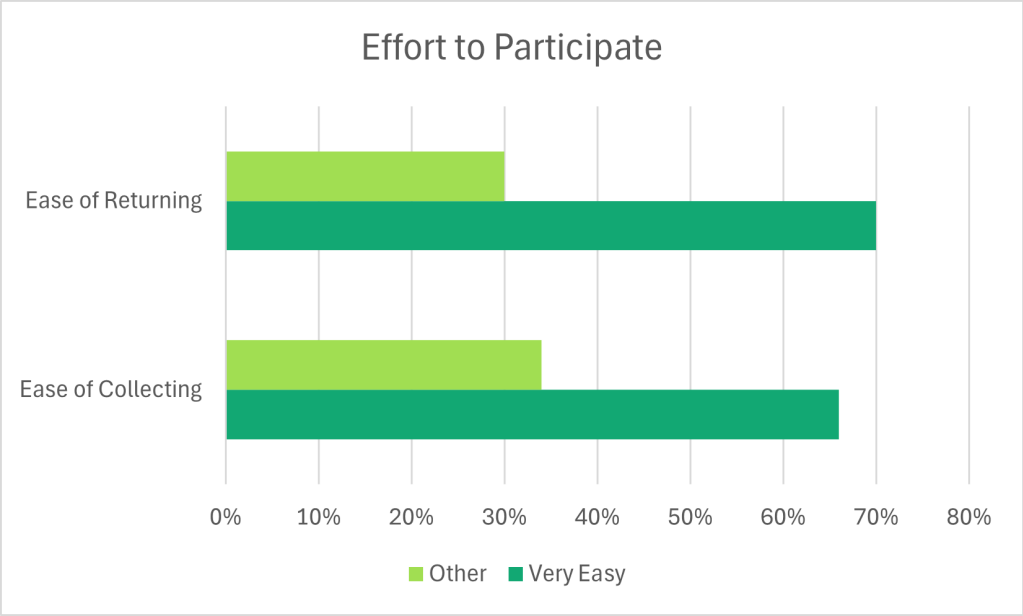
(1): Scheme Awareness_Survey Results

(2): Effort to Participate_Survey Results

(3): Time to Collect_Survey Results



© 2026 Advertising Council Australia





© 2026 Advertising Council Australia

Q3. WHAT WERE YOUR OBJECTIVES? State specific goals.

The overarching objective of this campaign was to drive measurable behaviour change in a mature category where awareness was already saturated and previous campaigns had delivered diminishing incremental returns.

Business objective

Increase the total volume of eligible containers returned through the Containers for Change scheme, accelerating progress toward Queensland's waste-reduction and circular-economy targets.

- **Primary Business KPI:**
  Achieve a **+5% year-on-year increase** in container return volume in SE QLD during the campaign period.
- **Benchmark:**
  Performance during the previous major campaigns (*Cheers* and *Change It Up*), which had established a stable pre-Bincoin volume of **1.035 billion containers returned** in SE QLD.

This objective was deliberately ambitious given the scheme's maturity, near-universal awareness (97%), and lack of structural changes to incentives or infrastructure.

Marketing objectives

Use communications to re-establish participation as the default, high-value choice, rather than a discretionary behaviour.

Increase participation frequency

- **KPI:** Lift average monthly transaction volume by 5%
- **Target:** Exceed historic benchmarks established by prior campaigns
- **Benchmark:** Pre-Bincoin average of 554,792 transactions per month

Grow the participating user base

- **KPI:** Increase average monthly new member sign-ups by 10%
- **Benchmark:** Pre-Bincoin average of 7,797 sign-ups per month

These objectives recognised that volume growth could not be achieved through existing participants alone, and required broader, more frequent engagement.

Behavioural objectives

Drive sustained behaviour change rather than short-term campaign response.

Increase sustained participation

- **KPI:** Increase 90-day active members by 10%
- **Benchmark:** Pre-Bincoin average of 125,732 active members

This metric was selected specifically to distinguish habit formation from one-off participation increases, ensuring success represented durable change rather than temporary attention spikes.

Why these objectives?

Because they required:

- Breaking ingrained low-effort disposal habits
- Delivering growth without changes to refund value or scheme accessibility
- Outperforming established benchmark campaigns in a flat, fully penetrated category

Success would therefore signal a structural shift in behaviour, not cyclical or seasonal uplift.

© 2026 Advertising Council Australia

Q4. WHAT WAS YOUR STRATEGY AND HOW DID YOU GET THERE?

Target audience

The primary audience was the **21% of Queenslanders disengaged from Containers for Change** (1), including lapsed and inconsistent participants within existing participants with a particular focus on SE QLD. This group was not opposed to recycling and did not lack awareness of the scheme. Instead, they were habitual defaulters – people who supported recycling in principle but consistently chose the lowest-effort option in practice.

This audience was strategically critical because they represented the largest untapped opportunity for growth in a mature category. With 97% awareness already achieved, incremental gains could not come from education or persuasion of existing participants. Growth would only come from converting habitual non-behaviour into consistent participation.

Importantly, this audience was also acutely affected by cost-of-living pressures, scrutinising household spending and everyday financial decisions – a mindset that would later prove central to unlocking behaviour change.

Key insight

Previous campaigns had focused on increasing motivation to recycle, assuming that stronger environmental intent would translate into action. Behavioural evidence showed the opposite: people were already motivated, but motivation as a behavioural driver was overridden by convenience. (2) (3)

The pivotal insight was that Queenslanders were unknowingly throwing away something they already valued: money.

Each year, $100 million in unclaimed refunds are being discarded into general waste, not because people rejected the value, but because that value was invisible at the moment of decision. Containers, once emptied, instantly lost their perceived worth and reverted to “rubbish” in the household mental model.

The insight reframed the problem entirely: people do not ignore value - they ignore value they cannot see.

Strategic approach

Rather than attempting to increase concern, guilt, or motivation; the strategy focused on restructuring the value equation that governed disposal behaviour.

If containers could be reframed from waste requiring effort into currency being discarded, the decision logic would flip and become a value exchange. Recycling would no longer compete with convenience; not recycling would feel economically irrational.

Applying a behavioural economics principle – **loss aversion** – making the cost of non-participation immediate, visible and personal; the strategy did not ask people to do more; it made people feel they were already losing something by doing nothing.

The strategic idea

The strategic idea was to revalue every eligible container as currency in circulation, transforming participation from a dutiful environmental act into an obvious financial behaviour.

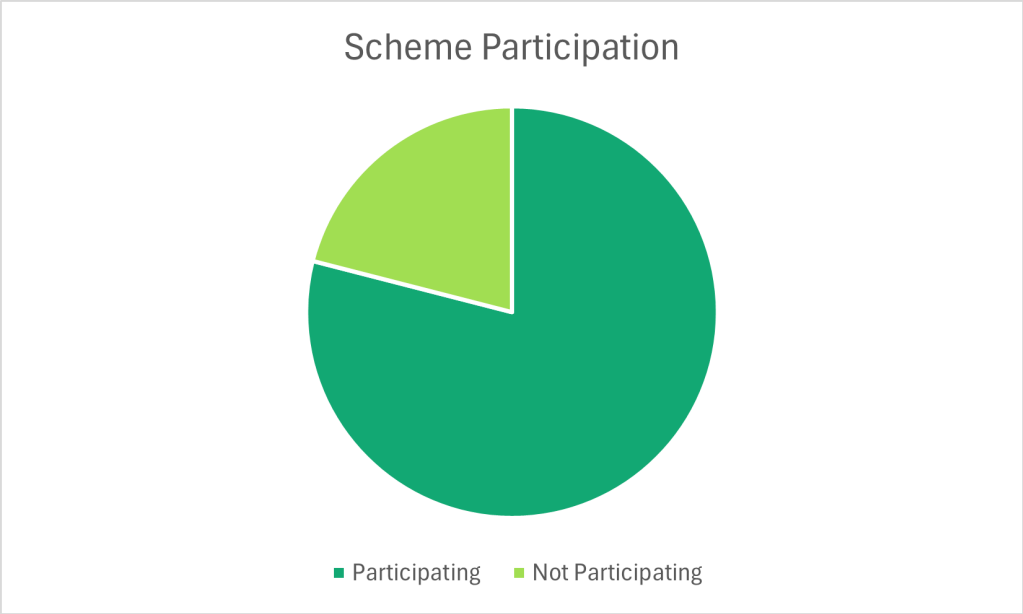
This reframing became the organising principle for all communications. Rather than promoting the scheme, communications needed to operate at the moments when value was assigned or lost – before disposal habits could automatically take over.

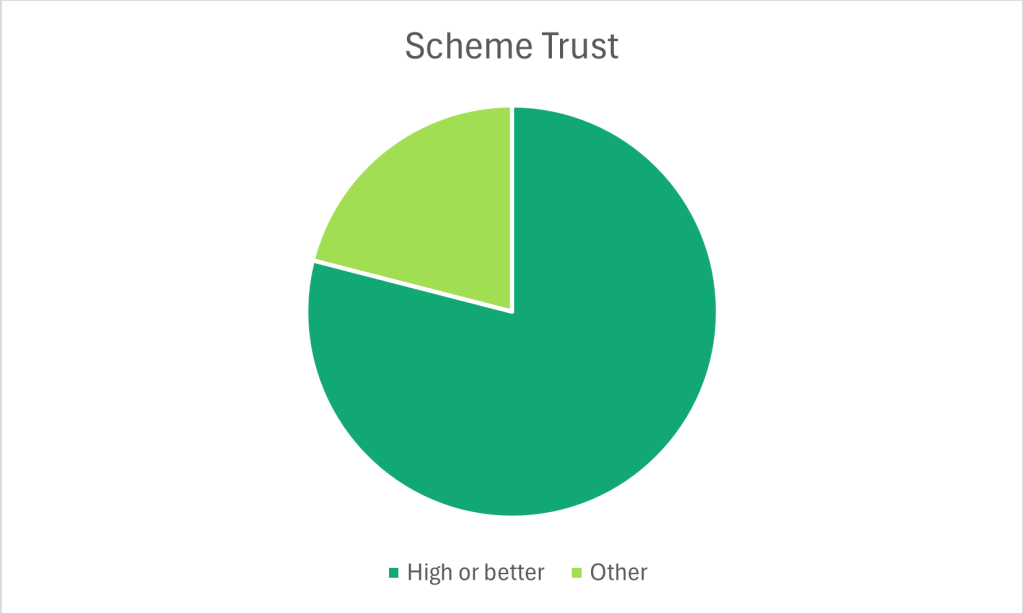
In doing so, the role of communications shifted from messaging to **behavioural architecture**, changing not what people knew, but how they interpreted an everyday action.

This strategy created the conditions for sustained behaviour change in a mature system – without increasing incentives, expanding infrastructure, or relying on awareness growth.

(1): Scheme Participation_Survey Results
(2): Scheme Trust_Survey Results
(3): Scheme Satisfaction_Survey Results

© 2026 Advertising Council Australia







© 2026 Advertising Council Australia

Q5. HOW WAS YOUR STRATEGY BROUGHT TO LIFE?

To bring the strategic idea to life, the creative platform 'Bincoin' was developed - reframing containers not as waste, but as a form of currency that made collection feel instantly more rewarding. By positioning containers as Bincoin, the line "It's not rubbish, it's Bincoin" transformed discarded items into something with tangible value. This shift increased the perceived reward relative to effort, reducing behavioural friction and making the decision to collect feel obvious, smart and worthwhile.

Paired with the direct call to action, "Trade yours for 10c today," the campaign cut through with a simple and compelling message: collect, return and get paid.

To maximise the effectiveness of the idea, the media strategy was designed as a series of '**Bincoin behavioural interventions**'. Rather than treating media channels as passive distribution tools, each channel was assigned a specific behavioural role aligned to the moments when container habits were formed, reinforced or disrupted - the exact points at which value was either recognised or lost. This ensured the Bincoin idea didn't simply rely on brand recall, but actively influenced decision-making in real time.

The Bincoin 'behavioural intervention strategy' targeted four critical moments in the life of a container:

1. Point of culture: Normalising containers as value
To shift entrenched perceptions, Bincoin first needed cultural legitimacy. High-reach cultural placements and talent partnerships were used to normalise the idea that containers were money, not waste.

By placing the idea within mainstream entertainment and popular culture, the campaign reframed participation as something ordinary and socially accepted – reducing the psychological friction associated with behaviour change. This ensured the Bincoin concept felt intuitive rather than instructional.

2. Point of purchase: Intercepting habits
Behavioural and retail data identified container purchase moments as critical intervention points. Communications at supermarkets, bottle shops, and retail environments reminded Queenslanders to "bank" their containers before consumption even began.

Live activations supported this reframing by reducing practical barriers to participation, distributing home-collection solutions and directing people to nearby return points. At this stage, communications worked to remove friction and pre-empt default disposal behaviour.

3. Point of consumption: Reinforcing value and relevance
Digital integrations were designed to insert the Bincoin idea directly into moments of use, before containers psychologically reverted to "rubbish."

By appearing within everyday consumption experiences – including food delivery and gaming environments – the campaign reinforced the idea that value did not disappear once the drink was finished. This sustained the reframe at the moment it was most likely to lapse.

4. Point of disposal: Disrupting the default
Finally, communications were deployed to intercept the precise moment of disposal when low-effort habits typically dominated.

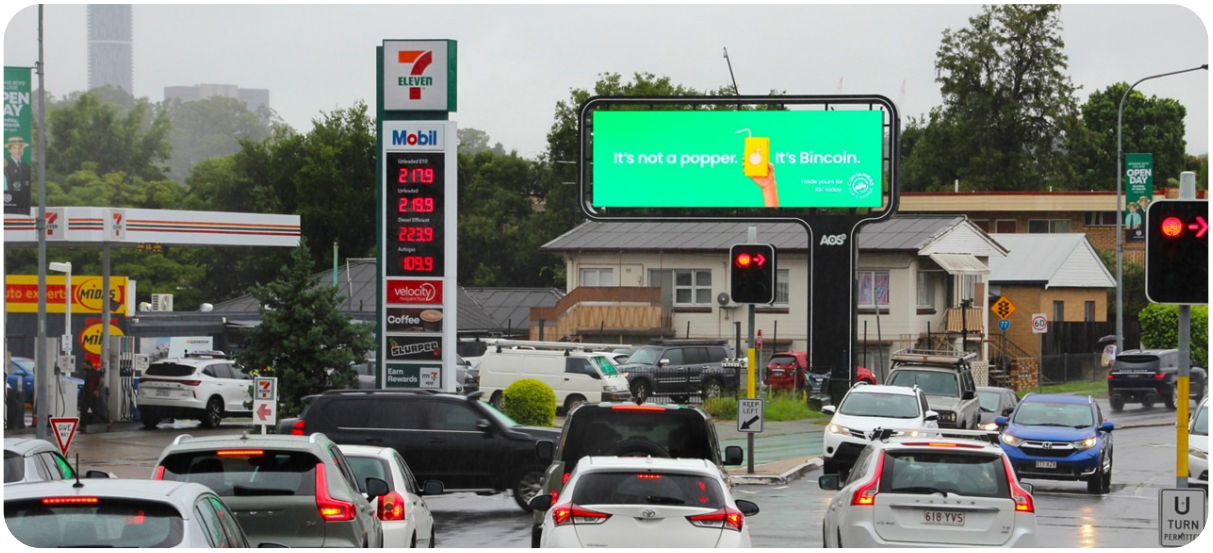
Using location and behavioural signals, messaging targeted lapsed and inconsistent participants at the point they were approaching a general waste bin. Here, the Bincoin idea functioned as a behavioural "speed-bump," interrupting autopilot behaviour and reinstating the perceived loss of binning money.

Creative and media integration
Across all touchpoints, creative and media were inseparable. The same simple framing – "It's not a can. It's Bincoin." – operated consistently, while channel selection determined when and how the message was encountered.

This ensured the campaign did not feel episodic or burst-led, but continuous and contextually relevant – a system designed to change behaviour over time, rather than prompt one-off action.

In doing so, Bincoin transformed communications from persuasion into participation, embedding value thinking into everyday disposal decisions.

© 2026 Advertising Council Australia









© 2026 Advertising Council Australia











© 2026 Advertising Council Australia











© 2026 Advertising Council Australia

Q6. HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT YOUR CAMPAIGN WAS SUCCESSFUL?

The campaign's success was evaluated against the clearly defined business, marketing and behavioural objectives outlined in Q3, using historical campaign performance as the primary benchmark.

In a mature system with near-universal awareness and no changes to incentives or infrastructure, success required not just improvement but outperformance versus prior benchmark campaigns under comparable conditions.

Primary business outcome: Containers returned

Bincoin delivered the strongest performance in the scheme's seven-year history.

- Average monthly containers returned
- Pre-Bincoin (Cheers + Change It Up): 153.8 million
- Bincoin: 172.7 million (5)
- Increase: +18.9 million containers per month (+12.3%)

Between October 2025 and March 2026, this **translated into a +5% year-on-year volume uplift** (1) in the target area of SE QLD. This level of growth significantly exceeded the incremental gains achieved by previous campaigns and demonstrated a clear break from the prior performance plateau.

Participation depth: Transactions

Growth in container volume was matched by growth in participation frequency, confirming that results were not driven by isolated high-volume returns.

- Average monthly transactions: **+11.9% uplift** (2)

This alignment between transaction growth and volume growth indicates broader, more consistent participation across the population – not short-term spikes from a small number of users.

Participant acquisition: New members

Bincoin also expanded the participating base, essential in a category where growth could not rely solely on existing users.

- Average monthly new member sign-ups: **+24.2% uplift** (3)

Importantly, this acquisition translated into ongoing engagement rather than passive registration.

Sustained behaviour change: Habit formation

To distinguish durable behaviour change from temporary campaign response, the scheme tracked rolling active participation.

- Average 90-day active members: **+22.0% uplift** (4)

Because this metric requires repeated behaviour over time, it provides strong evidence that Bincoin drove genuine habit formation rather than one-off compliance.

Why these results matter?

Across every core indicator – volume, frequency, acquisition, and sustained engagement – Bincoin outperformed all previous benchmark campaigns. The uplift was not just strong; it was meaningfully stronger than prior activity delivered under comparable conditions.

Critically, these results occurred:

- Without changes to refund value
- Without expansion of return-point infrastructure
- Without increased awareness levels in an already saturated category

© 2026 Advertising Council Australia

This confirms the campaign's success was driven by a structural shift in how Queenslanders valued an everyday behaviour – and not necessarily by external or operational factors.

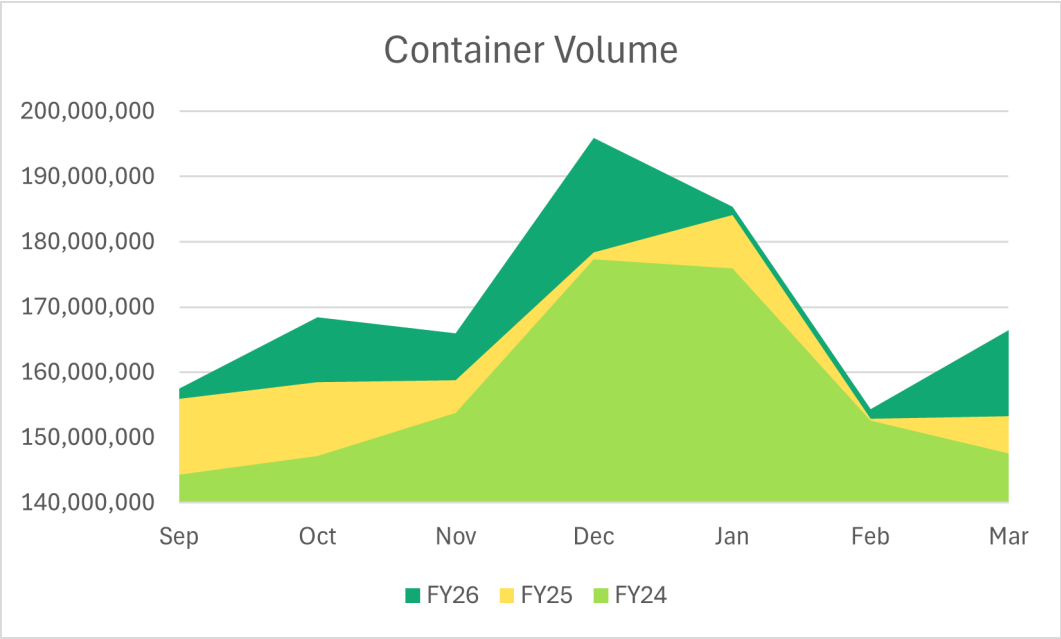
(1): Container Volume_SepMar

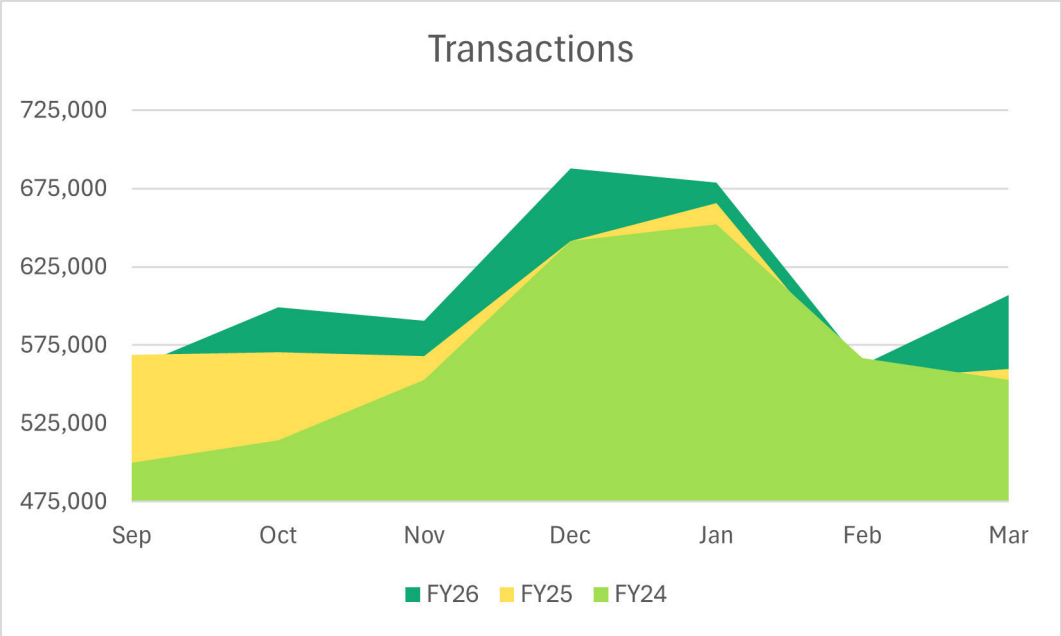
(2): Transactions_SepMar

(3): New Members_SepMar

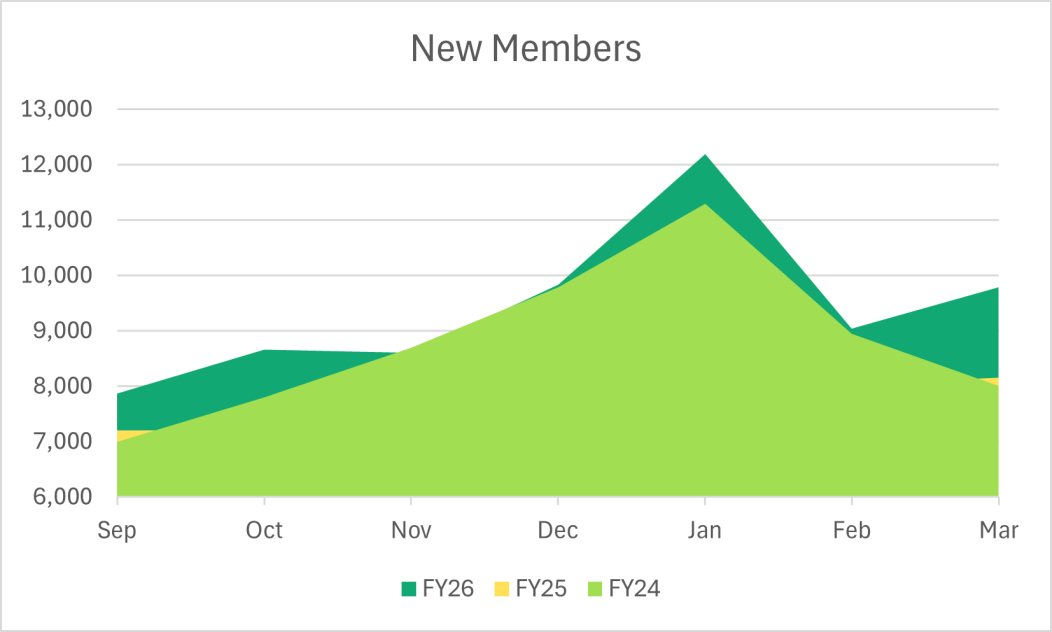
(4): Active Members_SepMar

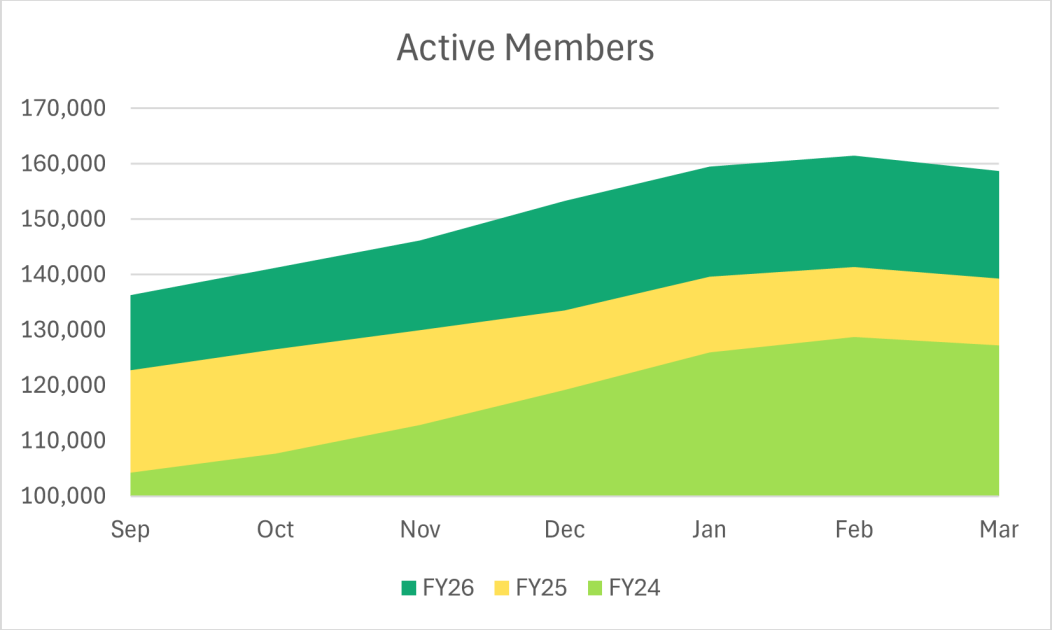
(5): Campaign Peak Average Container Volume

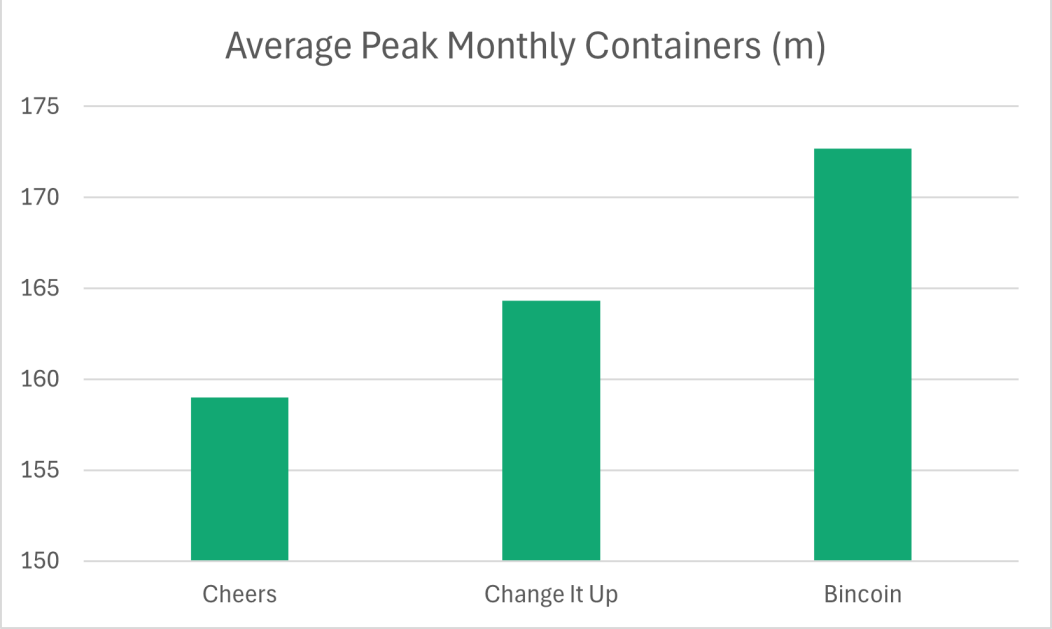




© 2026 Advertising Council Australia







© 2026 Advertising Council Australia

Q7. WAS THE CAMPAIGN A GOOD INVESTMENT?

In Government and Not-For-Profit categories, return on investment must be assessed not only in financial terms, but in terms of **behavioural impact and system efficiency**. For Containers for Change the value of the campaign is best measured by the additional volume of containers diverted from landfill, increased scheme participation and sustained behaviour change delivered relative to investment.

With a total campaign budget of $6.4 million, Bincoin delivered materially higher returns than all prior campaigns – without any increase to refund value or expansion of scheme infrastructure.

During the initial six months of the campaign (October 2025 – March 2026), the scheme recorded an average uplift of 12.5 million additional containers returned per month, equating to approximately **75 million additional containers** across the period compared with pre-Bincoin benchmarks. These returns represent containers that would otherwise have entered general waste, delivering direct environmental benefit and strengthening the scheme's circular-economy outcomes.

Importantly, this uplift was not driven by short-term incentives, but by:

- Higher participation frequency (+11.9% transactions)
- Stronger new member acquisition (+24.2%)
- Sustained habit formation (+22.0% growth in 90-day active members)

This indicates the investment delivered enduring value, not just temporary uplift. By shifting how Queenslanders valued containers, Bincoin increased the efficiency of the existing system -- extracting greater environmental and economic return from infrastructure already in place.

Relative to previous campaigns with comparable spend profiles, Bincoin delivered significantly greater behavioural impact, making it the most efficient major campaign investment in the scheme's history. In this context, we view the campaign not as a cost but as a multiplier of system performance, accelerating progress toward long-term waste-reduction goals without increasing ongoing operational expenditure.

Estimated SROI

Between October 2025 and March 2026, the campaign supported the return of more than 1.04 billion containers, delivering strong environmental outcomes and driving large-scale behaviour change in recycling participation.

Using a simplified SROI approach, and applying conservative proxy values, the campaign is estimated to have generated approximately **$38.4 million** in net social and environmental value from a $4.1 million investment. This equates to an estimated return of **$9.40 in social value for every $1 invested** (9.4:1 SROI).

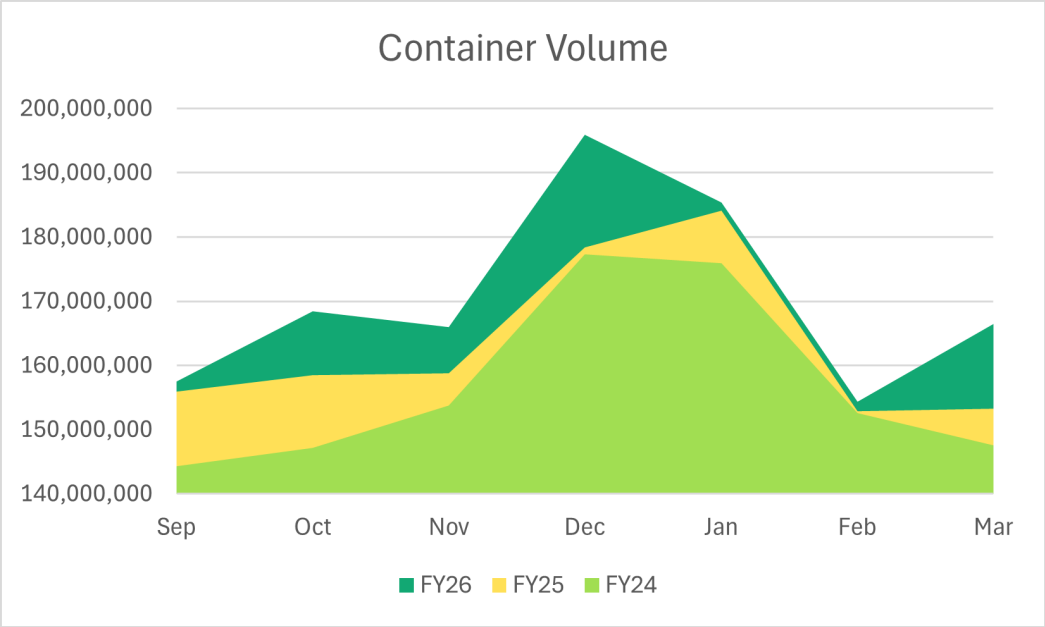
The campaign achieved a year-on-year uplift of approximately 72 million additional containers, despite no increase in spend. This uplift alone is estimated to have contributed a further **$2.7 million in incremental social value**, demonstrating improved efficiency and effectiveness in driving recycling behaviour over time.

These results were calculated by applying proxy values to each container returned, capturing avoided landfill costs, environmental benefits, and behaviour change impacts. Standard SROI adjustments were then applied, including deadweight, attribution, and displacement, to ensure a conservative estimate of net impact.

This analysis is **indicative only** and is based on proxy data, simplifying assumptions, and standardised SROI methodology. It has not been independently audited and does not represent an official position of COEX. Rather, it provides a directional view of the potential social and environmental value generated by the campaign.

(1): Container Volume_SepMar

© 2026 Advertising Council Australia



Q8. DEMONSTRATE THAT THE RESULT WAS NOT DUE TO OTHER FACTORS

We believe the results achieved during the Bincoin campaign cannot be attributed to external or structural factors.

There were no changes during the campaign period to:

- The 10-cent refund value
- Return-point availability or scheme infrastructure
- Regulatory settings or competitive environment

Awareness was already saturated at 97% prior to the campaign, ruling out awareness growth as a driver of behaviour change.

Seasonality and underlying system growth were controlled for by benchmarking performance against previous major campaigns (Cheers and Change It Up) delivered under comparable conditions. Across all core metrics – container volume, transactions, member acquisition, and sustained participation – Bincoin delivered materially stronger uplift than these prior campaigns, breaking the established performance plateau.

Economic pressure alone also does not explain the results. Cost-of-living pressures existed prior to the campaign, yet had not previously translated into increased participation. The change occurred only when communication explicitly reframed containers as lost financial value at the moment of disposal.

The timing, scale, and consistency of uplift across multiple behavioural indicators confirm that the results were driven by the campaign's strategic revaluation of containers – not by external market conditions, operational changes, or short-term effects.

© 2026 Advertising Council Australia

Q9. GIVE CONTEXT TO BUDGET IN COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS.

> Not Applicable

Q10. GIVE CONTEXT TO THE BRAND'S OVERALL BUDGET.

> Brand budget is about the same

Q11. MEDIA BUDGET ELABORATION

> The campaign budget was predominantly invested in paid media, supported by owned channels within the Containers for Change ecosystem and earned amplification through cultural integration and partnerships. Media was deliberately weighted toward moments of behavioural intervention rather than broad reach alone, prioritising contextual relevance over sustained awareness messaging.

Q12. DESCRIBE OWNED MEDIA ACTIVITY

> Owned media included Containers for Change physical infrastructure, digital touchpoints and scheme-owned platforms, which reinforced the Bincoin framing at moments of disposal and participation. Owned assets were used to support behaviour change rather than act as primary reach drivers.

Q13. OUTLINE ANY SPONSORSHIPS

> The campaign did not include traditional sponsorship arrangements. Cultural integrations and partnerships were used as communications channels rather than sponsorship assets.

Q14. OUTLINE COMMUNICATION TOUCHPOINTS

> Broadcast and BVOD
>
> Outdoor (retail, convenience, large and small format)
>
> Digital video and display
>
> Programmatic (location-based)
>
> Audio (streaming, in-store radio)
>
> Social
>
> Gaming integrations
>
> Experiential activations
>
> Owned scheme assets

© 2026 Advertising Council Australia