

COLLECT-A-CAN: PASSION FOR PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Collect-a-Can is one of those organisations that can claim to have a truly positive impact on the environment.

Most people know Collect-a-Can for its recovery of used steel cans, but it also adds value further along the chain through the extraction from the tinplate scrap material to create tin ingots that can be used in industry. It has been in existence for almost two decades, created through a joint venture by ArcelorMittal South Africa and Nampak who are the shareholders to curtail the impact of used cans on the environment.

Through adherence to best South African accounting and legal practices, Collect-a-Can is able to run an environmentally beneficial business through financial subsidy from the two shareholders.

The collection of cans goes well beyond mere lip service to a green cause and Collect-a-Can refuses to rest on its laurels. This was clear in 2009, when they broke the Guinness World Record they had set in 2007, for the most cans collected from schools in a month.

Collect-a-Can has established itself as one of the best at what they do

"Not only do we want to make South Africa's streets cleaner, but we also recover 70% of beverage cans, which is a very high number," says MD Annie Tsima. "This not only means there is less litter lining our streets, but also that less litter is going to landfill sites.

"In the month when we ran the Guinness World Record competition, we managed to generate enough interest to better the record. The challenge now remains to keep on improving.

"Our intention is to teach children the value of recycling while they are young, so that they grow up to be more disciplined adults, as far as recycling and environmental consciousness are concerned. School education is therefore a big focus for us."

Can recovery also means that resources, such as coal, iron ore and energy, are saved and Collect-a-Can



even goes as far as recovering tin plate scrap from offcuts in the can manufacturing process.

Collect-a-Can now boasts a truly international footprint, with national depots in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, Durban and Vanderbijlpark, as well as depots in Botswana and Namibia. All recovered cans are sold on the open market – to steel mills to produce new prime steel or to niche markets – with cans that have been compacted into briquettes serving as a cheaper alternative to ferrosilicon in some mining industries.

Through its innovative approach to the collection and reuse of cans, Collect-a-Can has established itself as one of the best at what they do in the world, as numerous awards attest. These include the World Wildlife Fund Green Trust Corporate Conservation award and the *Mail & Guardian* Greening the Future award for Best Environmental Practice in a not-for-profit organisation. 🌱



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This article was commissioned by Collect-a-Can. For more information please call 011 466 2939 email info@collectacan.co.za or visit www.collectacan.co.za