



Australian Government

**Department of the Environment,
Water, Heritage and the Arts**

National Television and Computer Product Stewardship Scheme



ISSUE 1: MAY 2010

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TELEVISION AND COMPUTER SCHEME E-BULLETIN



Message from the minister

Thank you for your on-going support of the National Waste Policy. Since the decision by the EPHC in November of last year the department has been working hard developing the framework for the legislation.

The commitment of government and the television and computer industry associations participating in the joint industry-government working group will ensure the administrative and operational aspects of the proposed National Television and Computer Product Stewardship Scheme are well thought out and thoroughly considered—and ready for implementation in 2011.

I am also keen to ensure the product stewardship legislation is designed to manage the circumstances facing a range of problematic wastes and industries, not just e-waste in the television and computer industries. We will use the coming months to identify how product stewardship schemes might work in practice and address barriers or implementation challenges.

In addition to the working group, we are setting up a number of opportunities for interested members of the community, industry and government to be informed of progress and opportunities to provide input. This e-bulletin is an important first step in that process.

I look forward to working with you to ensure we meet our mutual goal of less waste, more resources.

Peter Garrett AM MP
Minister for Environment Protection, Heritage and the Arts

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To keep up to date with the development and implementation of the National Television and Computer Product Stewardship Scheme, subscribe to the e-bulletin at:
environment.gov.au/ewaste

Why is a national approach to addressing e-waste needed?

Electrical and electronic waste or 'e-waste' is a significant component of the waste stream and is expected to increase. E-waste is growing three times faster than any other type of waste. In 2005 an estimated 697 000 tonnes of electronic and electrical equipment was consumed while 313 000 tonnes was disposed.

E-waste contains hazardous materials including mercury, lead, arsenic, brominated flame retardants, beryllium and cadmium. As a party to the 1992 Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal (the Basel Convention), Australia is required to ensure that: the generation of hazardous wastes and other wastes are minimised; that adequate disposal facilities exist for sound environmental management of wastes; and that managers of waste minimise the risk to human health and the environment (Article 4.2). The Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) is responsible for ensuring Australia meets its obligations under the Basel Convention. More information can be found on DEWHA's [Hazardous waste page](#).

Internationally, programs are being developed or implemented to reduce the environmental impact of electrical and electronic products. The European Union, Canada and Japan have already implemented legislation requiring the recovery and recycling of televisions and computers. Other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries are in the process of introducing a range of mechanisms to address this issue.

All governments across Australia are working with industry through the Environment Protection and Heritage Council (EPHC) to reduce the environmental impact of e-waste. The current priority is to develop a product stewardship scheme for televisions and computers.

In addition to the hazardous components discussed, televisions and computers also contain non-renewable resources such as tin, nickel, zinc and copper. Sending these products to landfill means the resources they contain are lost.

In 2007-08, 16.8 million televisions, computers and computer products reached their end of life, with 84 per cent sent to landfill. Only ten per

cent were recycled; nine per cent being computers and one per cent being televisions. If Australia was to continue without any form of collection and recycling scheme, approximately 44 million televisions and computers would be discarded in 2028, taking into account increased ownership and shorter replacement cycles.

In 2009 a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) was developed to assess the merits of alternative approaches to encourage the recycling of televisions and computers in a nationally consistent manner. The RIS determined that there would be a net benefit to the community in the introduction of national legislation to underpin a national recycling scheme, rather than separate legislation at the state and territory level.

At the EPHC meeting on 5 November 2009, environment ministers committed to the development of product stewardship arrangements for end of life televisions and computers through the implementation of Commonwealth extended producer responsibility legislation. This will be achieved through the product stewardship framework legislation which will provide a consistent approach to reducing the environmental footprint and health and safety risks of specified manufactured products and materials, particularly at the end of their useful life. More information on the EPHC announcement is available at ephc.gov.au.

National Waste Report released

On 7 May 2010 the National Waste Report 2010 was released, providing the baseline data for the implementation of the *National Waste Policy: Less Waste, More Resources*. The report details trends in waste and resource recovery, providing comprehensive and reliable information on the state of Australia's waste. The information will be published every three years for use by government, industry and the community. The National Waste Report 2010 can be downloaded via DEWHA's website environment.gov.au/wastepolicy.

A high resolution version of the report is available on CD. To request a copy, please email wastepolicy@environment.gov.au.

The National Waste Policy

The *National Waste Policy: Less Waste, More Resources* was endorsed by the Environment Protection and Heritage Council on 5 November 2009. The National Waste Policy sets a comprehensive agenda for national co-ordinated action on waste to 2020 across six key areas:

- ✓ taking responsibility
- ✓ improving the market
- ✓ pursuing sustainability
- ✓ reducing hazard and risk
- ✓ tailoring solutions and
- ✓ providing the evidence.

Sixteen priority strategies are identified that will give focus to work across individual jurisdictions, build on current directions and complement existing activity.

The current focus is on progressing product stewardship initiatives under the 'Taking Responsibility' direction, providing the evidence through preparation of Australia's first comprehensive waste report and planning for the first five years of the implementation of the National Waste Policy.

More information is available at:
environment.gov.au/wastepolicy

National Product Stewardship Framework Legislation—what is it going to achieve?

A key priority under the *National Waste Policy: Less Waste, More Resources* will be for the Australian Government to establish national product stewardship framework legislation in consultation with states, territories, industry and the community. The framework legislation will have voluntary, co-regulatory and mandatory components and will provide an enabling mechanism for accreditation and oversight of product stewardship schemes. The development of the legislation is on track, but is subject to parliamentary processes. Consultation on the draft legislation will occur in the coming months.

For products or materials to be covered by the framework legislation (whether voluntary,

co-regulatory or regulatory), they will need to meet specified criteria. The voluntary component relies on industry and community organisations choosing to seek accreditation of their product stewardship schemes for transparency and accountability. To access the co-regulatory component requires completion of a regulation impact assessment to establish net community benefit. This approach is consistent with existing requirements for Australian Government legislation.

Following on from this, the framework legislation will only affect manufacturers and the waste management industry to the extent particular products or materials are regulated or industry voluntarily seeks accreditation. At this stage governments have agreed that televisions and computers would be the first products to be covered under the co-regulatory arm of the framework legislation with householders able to drop off used televisions and computers and for recycling free of charge. All manufacturers and importers of televisions and computers importing above the agreed threshold will be required to take responsibility for collection and recycling of their products. These liable parties may choose to form or join a producer responsibility organisation to collectively deliver the infrastructure and services, or alternatively, manage arrangements in-house. Arrangements between liable parties and the waste management industry will be a matter for their negotiation.

How will the television and computer industry be affected?

The framework legislation will underpin the national computer and television scheme by ensuring all industry members comply with the same requirements. The framework legislation will also provide assurances for the community that the national scheme will be effectively monitored for performance and recycling outcomes. The framework legislation and the television and computer product stewardship arrangements are expected to be operational in 2011. Public consultation on the design of the framework will occur during 2010 with all members of the television and computer industry encouraged to participate. Timing will be advised on the DEWHA website and through the e-bulletin.

Television Industry Association report

Message from the Executive Officer, John Gertaskis

TV recycling is set to become a reality with collection programs commencing in major capital cities and regional areas during 2011.

This follows on from a landmark decision by all Federal, State and Territory Environment Ministers in Perth last November, to develop national Product Stewardship legislation and accompanying e-waste regulations that will require all TV and IT equipment suppliers to participate in a national scheme.

Product Stewardship Australia (PSA) – the organisation set up to manage consumer electronics e-waste on behalf of member companies has been a pro-active advocate of intelligent legislation and regulation that facilitates maximum environmental benefit and minimal competitive disadvantage.

PSA is now deeply involved in the planning and design of a permanent national TV collection, recycling and community education program. This work is being done in close cooperation with the Federal Environment Department as well as several State jurisdictions and representatives from the IT sector.

Subject to the Federal Government passing the required legislation and regulations during 2010-2011, PSA will aim to have its national TV take-back program accredited by Government very soon after so that collection and recycling can commence. In the interim, PSA is undertaking a national program of consultation and discussion with key stakeholders that might be involved, including local government, regional groups, recyclers, retailers, environment NGOs and community organisations.

Under the PSA program, member companies would fund the TV recycling program based on each company's market share and import volumes. Sufficient funds would be collected to deliver the program as well as run effective consumer and public education activities. In order to be accredited under the Federal Government scheme, PSA will be required to undertake stringent data collection and

reporting to ensure that Government approved targets for collection and recycling are being met. PSA will also work closely with the computer industry, recyclers and Government, to develop robust standards for environmentally sound recycling. It is PSA's intention to meet or exceed world's best practice in e-waste recycling.

The PSA TV recycling program will be free at the point of disposal with no fee being charged. This will provide a significant incentive to ensure that the growing number of end-of-life TVs are diverted from landfill and illegal dumping.

As part of the developing its program, PSA is eager to work with interested retailers, service and repair businesses, local councils and other groups to help recover and recycling obsolete TVs.

PSA and the Consumer Electronics Suppliers Association look forward to working very closely with the Federal Minister and his Department on the development of the regulation, and ensuring its delivery is timely and efficient.

We encourage interested organisations to contact PSA for more information and to discuss opportunities to work cooperatively.

For more information:
productstewardship.asn.au

Computer Industry Association report

Message from the CEO, Ian Birks

The Australian Information Industry Association (AIIA) is the peak ICT Industry Association representing IT equipment manufacturers, software developers and IT Service providers in Australia.

The responsible management of e-waste has been a long-term priority, and one of the most important foundations for the development of a green industry and a sustainable community. We are now seeing the fruit of nearly a decade's work dedicated to establishing responsible computer take-back and recycling program based on a partnership between our industry, government at every level, and the wider community.

AllIA partnered with the Victorian Government and a number of AllIA members in 2007 to establish 'Byteback', a voluntary and ongoing end-of-life IT equipment collection and recycling program: www.bytebackaustralia.com.au

This program is providing our industry with significant insights on how we move forward under the national scheme with a responsible program underpinned by a regulatory safety net to ensure broader industry participation. To date, over 2,500 tonnes of IT equipment (over 700 000 pieces of IT equipment) has been processed through the Byteback program.

At the 17th meeting of the Environmental Protection and Heritage Council, held in November 2008, a decision was made by the council to support the ICT industry and TV industry in its endeavour to establish a responsible and sustainable collection and recycling program.

This was one of the most significant and important developments in e-waste management over the past decade.

The council noted that there were a number of brands that were not taking responsibility for their products and this was part of the reason for establishing a legislative framework that ensures broader participation.

As a result, the Federal Government is currently developing legislation and regulations for a national television and computer scheme, which it will bring into place in 2011.

At a state level we are also involved in ongoing and productive dialogue.

A measured and structured approach is needed. We are currently negotiating targets and a roll-out plan.

The ICT industry and government are on a clear path to delivering successful e-waste outcomes to the Australian community on the back of many years' work.

The key factors that will drive the desired change are:

1. **Comprehensive, national legislation that mandates participation**
 - a. Suitable regulations in place that drive participation from the whole industry (subject to threshold levels)
 - b. Strong legislation that encompasses the regulations
2. **Shared responsibility between governments and industry** to prepare the programs for operation across Australia
3. **Educating the public and corporate Australia** about the roll-out and the steps required to meet targets, etc
4. **Commitment by companies to prepare** and join those companies now doing the right thing – no more fence sitting!

While there is still enabling legislation that must be passed, AllIA and our members are very pleased with the progress that has been made over the past 18 months and confident that the required legislation and regulations are on track for implementation of a national television and computer scheme by early 2011.

Work on the creation and management of a Producer Responsibility Organisation to support these outcomes and provide an accredited forum for the responsible disposal of e-waste in every state and territory is underway. AllIA is also working very closely with PSA to ensure that both of our program maximise economies of scale.

CONTACT US

If you have any questions or comments, please contact us at:

ewaste@environment.gov.au

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Australian Government or the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts or the Australian Information Industry Association or Product Stewardship Australia.

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