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MEDIA RELEASE

Attention: Environment, IT and Communications writers/editors

Switch to Digital TV to Create Landfill Problem

The switch to digital television commencing in 2010 is likely to result in an increased volume of TVs being disposed of. Despite the adoption of 'set-top' boxes helping to extend overall product life, the resulting number of obsolete TVs going to landfill will only increase, and potentially spike in the next two to three years. The need for a national TV recycling scheme has become critical.

While the vast majority of TV suppliers in Australia are committed to implementing a national collection, recycling and consumer education program for end-of-life TVs, it seems the Federal Government is less interested in an environmentally sound solution.

Product Stewardship Australia (PSA) – the organisation set up by TV suppliers to run a national scheme – has been waiting patiently for Governments to enable its proposed scheme with regulatory underpinning that will ensure potential industry free-riders take on their recycling obligations.

PSA has developed a comprehensive proposal in collaboration with key stakeholders to collect vast quantities of obsolete TVs across the country at no cost to the community. The scheme would commence in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and Adelaide, and migrate to all other urban centres, as well as rural and regional areas within a five-year timeframe, after which the scheme becomes an ongoing community service.

A major barrier to the scheme has been the reluctance of Governments and in particular the Federal Government to provide effective safety net regulation that can maximise the resource recovery benefits of an industry-wide recycling initiative.

Mr Ken Thompson, Chairman of Product Stewardship Australia – said that *“industry is totally committed to funding and developing a TV recycling infrastructure to directly deal with the switch to digital television, but this can only be achieved with the support of the Federal Government. Without safety net regulation to direct environmentally indifferent TV suppliers into socially responsible recycling initiatives, obsolete analogue TVs will end up in landfill with no materials recovery and resource conservation whatsoever.”*

PSA Executive Officer - John Gertsakis noted that the forthcoming Environment Protection and Heritage Council (EPHC) meeting to be held in Adelaide on 7 November 2008 is a pivotal opportunity for the Federal Government, and especially Minister Garrett to clearly show leadership on ewaste recycling and act decisively on supporting regulatory intervention. *“The time has come for the Federal Environment Minister to demonstrate a clarity of vision and environmental leadership in pursuit of sustainable outcomes that benefit the community.”*

Gertsakis also noted that Australia is effectively one of very few OECD countries that has yet to comprehensively address electronic waste with legislation or regulatory underpinning. Indeed, Australian Governments are regarded as laggards on intelligent ewaste policy from a global perspective.

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