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MEDIA RELEASE



Attention: - News & Current Affairs
- Environment, ICT & Consumer Electronics writers, editors & presenters

All Static and No Vision from Federal Government on E-Waste and the Switch to Digital

At a time when electronic goods are part and parcel of most Australian households, the resulting e-waste is growing at a rapid rate. Millions of TV s and computers are ending up in landfill, with little or no recycling taking place in Australia. Why? Australia has no 'product stewardship' regulations unlike most other OECD countries.

A meeting of all State, Territory and Federal Environment Ministers in Hobart this Friday (22 May 2009) will effectively determine whether Australia catches up with the rest of the world on e-waste recycling.

To date, the Federal Environment Minister – Peter Garrett, and his Department have been breathtakingly slow in delivering the necessary regulation required before Australian TV suppliers are prepared to invest millions in a permanent national TV collection, recycling and community education scheme. The Federal Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts has perfected the art of resistance and indifference when it comes to facilitating timely national environmental solutions.

Product Stewardship Australia (PSA) – the organisation set up by TV suppliers to run the national scheme – is expecting a significant decision from the Hobart meeting. In simple terms, PSA could be ready to roll-out its proposed TV recycling service within six months provided the Federal Government demonstrates some vision and leadership on effective environmental regulation with regard to e-waste.

Under the scheme, environmental contributions would be collected by PSA from TV importers to ensure that a permanent recycling service could be offered to the community in all capital cities and regional areas across Australia within a five-year timeframe.

Time is clearly running out for the Federal Government with the switch to digital television commencing in 2010. This will result in a significant increase in the volume of TVs going to landfill as consumers discard their old analogue TVs in favour of new integrated digital models. The need for a national TV recycling scheme has become critical and Government must provide the enabling regulation.

PSA Executive Officer, Mr John Gertsakis said *"this Friday's meeting in Hobart is a landmark gathering of Environment Ministers – they can either deliver the required regulation to enable TV recycling, or they can focus on making Australia a global straggler in dealing with obsolete TVs."*

A recent report on jobs growth and economic development by Environment Victoria, estimates that upwards of 800 new jobs could be created on a national basis if e-waste recycling schemes are implemented.

PSA's proposal has the support of many of the major consumer electronics brands in Australia and has attracted significant recognition and support from State Governments and green groups.

For more information and media comment:

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