

WASTE & RECYCLING MEDIA ARCHIVE: 2003-15



Even though many people recycle - our economy and society still waste a lot of resources that could be re-used and made into new products. To meet insatiable public demand, industry has developed an excessive 'convenience culture'. TEC is pushing for manufacturers to take responsibility and government to take action, as well as working with the recyclers and the community to advance a zero waste society

Latest News

Queensland Waste Policy



Created on Friday, 23 January 2015 11:35

The Boomerang Alliance of 30 groups has issued a waste policy for the Queensland election - 'Don't Let Queensland be the rubbish state.'

Latest News

Marine polluting plastics in the firing line with NSW action



Created on Thursday, 28 August 2014 12:18

The battle to clean up the oceans of ever-expanding soup-like plastic pollution is worldwide and Australia, with its extensive coastline has an important role to play, the groups said.

Jeff Angel, Executive Director, Total Environment Centre said:

"Plastic pollution of the oceans, beaches and marine food chain damages what every Australian values about our beautiful environment. Action does need to be taken and we call on industry to fully cooperate with Environment Minister Stokes on the micro-plastics. Many companies are already moving on this and there are ready alternatives.

By getting industry together, rather than wading through lengthy inter-governmental processes, we should be able to quickly phase out these pollutants. We should also move onto plastic bags and drink containers."

Heidi Taylor, Founder, Tangaroa Blue, Australian Marine Debris Initiative said:

"Nationally more than 75% of marine debris collected for the Australian Marine Debris Initiative is plastic; and in some cases as high as 94%. So this decision would help reduce the plastic load entering the marine environment, but it's one step of many - including the reduction of single-use plastic, container deposit legislation and extended producer responsibility for the end-life of packaging - that need to be implemented to really address the levels of plastic pollution in the ocean."

Tim Silverwood, Co-Founder, Take 3 said:

"A single product containing micro bead exfoliates can have hundreds of thousands of micro plastic particles that evidence clearly shows is entering waterways, persisting for decades and becoming ingested by a vast range of organisms.

It's fantastic to see NSW taking a leadership role in preventing micro-plastic pollution, but important to iterate that more must be done to prevent the significant influx of plastic pollution originating from beverage containers, plastic bags and other packaging."

Paul Sharp, Founder, Two Hands Project said:

"Micro-plastic pollution is a direct threat to the marine food web. These products are full of plastic beads that are designed to be washed down your sink, are nothing short of stupid and should be withdrawn from the market immediately."

Latest News

COKE CHOKES ON ITS OWN LITTER



Created on Monday, 04 March 2013 14:47

Eight policemen threatened to arrest eight bags of Coca Cola plastic bottle litter and three mild mannered gentlemen from the respectable end of the environment movement, outside the office of Coca Cola Amatil in Sydney this morning, said TEC.

One of our most admired Australians, Ian Kiernan, accompanied by Jeff Angel from TEC and the Boomerang Alliance, and David Ritter, CEO of Greenpeace, were told they would be charged with littering and unlawful assembly if they attempted to enter the Coke building to deliver the Coke litter collected on Clean Up Day and speak to Coke executives about a container deposit scheme (CDS).

"This is on the same day that the Federal Court is due to hand down its decision on Coke legal action against the Northern Territory's CDS," said Mr Angel.

"Clearly Coca-Cola is afraid of us and the massive consumer backlash which its opposition to a CDS has produced in recent weeks."

"It's really time for state and federal governments to support this simple and effective recycling scheme which could create hundreds of jobs, conserve resources and reduce plastic pollution killing marine wildlife."

Latest News

NSW RECYCLING STRATEGY – BIG MOVE, MORE TO COME



Created on Saturday, 23 February 2013 11:40

The NSW Government's 'Waste Less, Recycle More' program is a welcome big policy with significant funding, but will require additional key elements to stay afloat, Total Environment Centre said today.

"There's no doubt the refocussing of the large waste levy revenues on new infrastructure to collect organics and remove hazardous products that contaminate kerbside recycling will help drive towards more and effective recycling. However key parts of such a program cannot survive in the long term on government or private sector grant funding. For example, the drop-off centres need to be based on a financially sustainable business model – and this is where a beverage container deposit system provides a solution," said Jeff Angel, Executive Director TEC.

"NSW consumers buy over 5.6 billion beverages a year and with a 10 cent deposit motivating return to drop-off points and the associated handling fees – you can run the drop-offs forever – and not be vulnerable to shifting grant policies from government or industry."

"Certainly organics are an important priority but the key to creating a market for the compost is that it is clean and won't poison crops or land. Again you need an effective way to remove contaminants such as plastic and chemicals. We'll need fully effective and viable drop-offs and collection programs to get this stuff out of kerbside."

"We also welcome the plan for Industrial Ecology Networks where instead of dumping industrial waste, it can become a resource for another industrial purpose. This is the next generation of recycling for an economy such as Australia's."

"Finally the government will need to be very careful about its prospective waste to energy policy. If not handled well it could blow up today's announcement by characterising the recycling policy as going down the road of 'incineration' if recycling becomes too difficult or not financially viable. I know that is not what is intended, but unless it is locked down onto small amounts of residual waste and guarantees best practice air quality – it will become a dangerous political and environmental time bomb," Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Action demanded on excess packaging



Created on Tuesday, 11 December 2012 12:04

It's not just about counting your food miles this Christmas, said Total Environment Centre today. We are wasting the planet's resources just moving excess packaging from one place to another.

TEC has released a youtube video showing a parcel which was recently received by a Sydney office. After opening 3 boxes (the first one the size of a small child) and 2 envelopes, the packaging revealed a website address, and instructed the recipient to renew a licence number by going online. The parcel had been sent from Puerto Rico on August 15th this year, and spent several months on the road, accruing new layers as it travelled.

"This would be funny if it wasn't so alarming," said TEC director, Jeff Angel.

'It's impossible to calculate how much aviation fuel and diesel were spent on moving this information around the globe, when it could have been sent by email. It's a stark demonstration of a growing problem. On line purchasing in Australia is increasing exponentially and expected to reach \$20billion by 2015. That's a lot of products and packaging.'

Mr Angel said the packaging incident showed that there needs to be urgent discussions with industry about a code of practice with targets to reduce packaging and backed up by regulation.

"Consumers should also tell manufacturers they don't want to foot the bill for this sort of silliness."

Latest News

CONTAINER DEPOSITS – QLD MINISTER OUT OF STEP



Created on Friday, 24 August 2012 17:06

“Federal and State Environment Ministers have today faced up to the fear campaign led by Coca Cola and listened to the 82% of the community in moving toward a national CD scheme,” said Jeff Angel, National Convener of the Alliance of 22 groups

“We have no doubt an efficient, low cost CDS system will mean no additional cost imposed on the consumer above the redeemable deposit and it will deliver multiple benefits to a range of sectors in the economy, governments and households creating a new recycling system not just for beverage containers but also other problem materials,” said Mr Angel.

“The QLD Minister is right in pointing out this process is too slow and the community wants action on litter and recycling. We would however warn that endorsing the commercial venue bin part of the National Bin Network will lead to a minor increase to container recycling, compared to a CDS and do nothing at all for litter – there are bins everywhere already! Mr Angel said.

“The Coca Cola and Keep Australia Beautiful (who are partly funded by Coca Cola) proposal also locks in a program that will see increases in local government rates for servicing these new bins. It’s ridiculous to back a plan that claims it can empty 30,000 rubbish bins for no cost to households,” said Angel.

“Now we are moving to the last stage of the decision making process – the full benefits of a CDS will become apparent. The Decision Regulatory Impact Statement can now focus on the real world financial benefits.”

"In the past month Coca Cola, Lion and Schweppes via the Food and Grocery Council have tried to kill off container deposits by labeling a fully refundable deposit a 'drink-container-tax'. This is ridiculous and encouragingly Ministers have rejected their lies, said Angel.

“We repeat our call on Coca Cola, Lion and Schweppes to immediately inject their millions of dollars of unredeemed deposits, unused handling fees and material sales from the NT CDS, so that NT beverage prices are significantly reduced.”

Comment: Jeff Angel, 0418 273773 in Canberra till 3.30pm; Robbie Kelman, 0423 573278

• Australian Conservation Foundation • Arid Lands Environment Centre • Clean Up Australia •

Conservation Council of South Australia • Conservation Council of Western Australia • Environment Centre of the Northern Territory

• Environment Tasmania • Environment Victoria • Friends of the Earth

• Greenpeace Australia Pacific • Local Government & Shires Association of NSW

• NSW Nature Conservation Council • Queensland Conservation Council

• ACT Environment Council • Mineral Policy Institute • Tasmanian Conservation Trust

• Total Environment Centre • Two Hands Project

• Surfrider • Take 3 • Tangaroa Blue Foundation • Project Aware

Latest News

CONTAINER DEPOSITS – MINISTERS TAKE A BIG STEP FORWARDS



Created on Friday, 24 August 2012 16:01

"In the past month Coca Cola, Lion and Schweppes via the Food and Grocery Council have tried to kill off container deposits with their 'drink-tax-campaign'. They have failed," said Jeff Angel, National Convener of the Alliance of 22 groups.

"Ministers have faced up to the fear campaign from a small section of the beverage industry, and listened to the community. Moving to a Decision RIS and expanding the CDS options, including our best practice version, indicates that this is clearly a serious examination of CD."

"We have no doubt that an efficient, low cost CDS system will incur no additional cost impost on the consumer above the redeemable deposit," Mr Angel said. "It will deliver multiple benefits to a range of sectors in the economy, governments and households. And it will create a new recycling system not just for beverage containers, but also other problem materials,"

"Now we are moving to the last stage of the decision making process - the full benefits of a CDS will become apparent. The Decision Regulatory Impact Statement can now focus on the real world financial benefits."

Mr Angel pointed out, however that disappointingly, Queensland jumped the gun before the meeting, without a proper analysis of the options. Endorsing the commercial venue bin part of the National Bin Network will only lead to a minor increase to container recycling, compared to a CDS. It also appears to lock in a program that will see local government rates rise to cover servicing of litter bins.

"It's ridiculous for a minister to back a plan that claims it can empty 30,000 rubbish bins for no cost to households," said Angel.

"We repeat our call on Coca Cola, Lion and Schweppes to immediately inject their millions of dollars of unredeemed deposits, unused handling fees and material sales from the NT CDS, so that NT beverage prices are significantly reduced."

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• Surfrider • Take 3 • Tangaroa Blue Foundation • Project Aware

Latest News

Major advance on container deposits campaign welcomed



Created on Monday, 30 April 2012 15:44

Strong signals from federal environment minister Tony Burke that he supports a national container deposits system (CDS), have been welcomed by a coalition of 18 environment groups.

The minister told a press conference at the Captain Cook event on the shores of the Cooks River in Sydney's inner west yesterday, that: 'The task at the next ministers' meeting is to get them to join South Australia and the Northern Territory. Container deposits is one of the options in front of us and certainly a CDS will work. There seems to be goodwill amongst the ministers.'

"This is a major advance. With ministers meeting by mid-year we will be ramping up our campaign in the key states. It's taken 10 years to get to this point and every day we wait, another 21million bottles and cans are landfilled or littered," said Jeff Angel, National Convenor of the Alliance.

"Not only are there guaranteed environmental benefits, but the financial case is clear. A national CDS will produce \$1.8billion in funds in the first 5 years – supporting the establishment of hundreds of drop-off centres for containers and other products and other recycling and litter programs – at the cost to the consumer of one tenth of a cent per container."

"We remain ready to talk to the beverage industry about developing an efficient and effective container deposits system."

"The Coca Cola alternative of more bins in shopping centres and airports will do nothing to clean up the Cooks River, nor the many other urban streams and highways across Australia. It's a cynical attempt to divert government attention from the real solution," Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Captain Cook to meet Environment Minister Burke on Cooks River, to call for action on litter



Created on Saturday, 28 April 2012 07:33

Environmentalists and local residents today welcome the return of Captain Cook and his advocacy for a container deposit scheme (CDS) to clean up the Cooks River and many other rivers, streams and beaches suffering from beverage container litter.

[The event including a refund stall, giant bottle float and bottle fishing will take place between noon and 1pm, 28 April at Steel Park, Illawarra Road, Marrickville South]

The famous explorer, who came to Botany Bay 242 years ago, will meet on the river bank with federal environment minister, Tony Burke who is overseeing the COAG group of environment ministers which is due to make a decision on a national CDS.

“Captain Cook’s return highlights just how badly the river and many other urban streams in Australia have been and continue to be polluted with plastic bottles and cans. In recent months the Cooks River has been a highway for many hundreds of containers floating up with every tide”, said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of Total Environment Centre and National Convenor of the Boomerang Alliance of 19 environment groups.

“We estimate 8 billion beverage containers are littered or landfilled every year. We are calling on Tony Burke to lead the environment ministers in an historic decision to implement a national CDS which will clean up this mess quickly and effectively. And it works financially unlike industry alternatives which depend on government and business grants.”

“Local community groups and residents have been disgusted at the pollution that persists due to resistance by beverage companies to a CDS and lack of action by governments. A container deposit system works in many countries and, of course, has in South Australia for over 35 years,” said Judy Pincus, President of the Cooks River Valley Association.

“Opinion polls have consistently shown 80-90% public support for CDS. Surely the ministers can see the political, social, economic and environmental sense in a national scheme. We know that companies such as Coca Cola oppose it but it is now time to stand up to them,” said Mr Angel.

Latest News

Black hole in Australia's recycling of packaging



Created on Monday, 13 February 2012 20:27

Official claims of Australia's packaging recycling rate are significantly overstated, environmentalists said today, as state and federal ministers commence consultations for a national bottle and can refund or other new recycling scheme.

"Recent industry and government data shows a black hole in reports from the Australian Packaging Covenant (APC). We estimate over 320,000 tonnes of used beverage container packaging is missing, meaning the APC is even further away from achieving its target of 65% which was supposed to be reached in 2010," said Jeff Angel National Convenor of the Alliance of 17 environment groups.

"The data confirms beverage containers are our biggest problem with only 38% recycled – some 10% less than previously claimed. This means 8 billion containers are being littered or landfilled in Australia every year (or 21 million per day) – a dreadful waste. The new information comes at a time when state and federal governments have released a review (RIS) into options for more packaging recycling and are holding public consultation sessions."

An example of the APC data problem is with glass. Its 2010 report shows 991,000t of all glass packaging while the PSF industry data shows 961,454 of beverage containers - but beverage containers are 80% of all glass packaging. So where's the other 200,000 tonnes missing from the APC data?

"The only policy that will guarantee a quick and enduring improvement is a container deposit system which can reach 80% recovery in a few short years and provide jobs, much reduced litter and support for hundreds of drop-off centres and only cost half a cent a container," Mr Angel said.

Ministers are expected to meet mid-year to decide on a new approach.

The data is drawn from a new report from Industry Edge OMG Equilibrium commissioned by the peak packaging industry group, Packaging Stewardship Forum (PSF) and the environment ministers' review. The PSF report contains more accurate information on consumption (an acknowledged weakness in APC reports). The recycling data is taken from the Regulatory Impact Statement into Packaging (RIS) and the APC as the PSF report we believe includes material collected at Material Recovery Facilities but potentially stockpiled at reprocessors, and can't be counted in any one year figure. The RIS and APC correctly excluded stockpiles. Nor can use of glass as roadbase be considered as recycling - it is a different category of one-off downcycling.

Packaging material	Adjusted Packaging Consumption (tonnes)	Adjusted Beverage Container Consumption	RIS Packaging Recycling Estimate (tonnes)	RIS Beverage Container Recycling Estimate	% Recycling Rate - Packaging	% P Bev
Paper/cardboard	2,711,321	31,321	2,024,000	12,680[1]	74.65%	40.
Glass	1,166,454	961,454	466,000	362,000	39.95%	37.
Plastics	565,285	267,216	197,000	93,000	34.85%	34.
Steel cans	136,249	68,000	41,000	27,000	30.09%	39.
Aluminium	57,196	57,196	35,000	31,640[2]	61.19%	55.
Composite Bev Containers	-	11,479	-	2,058[3]		17.
Total	4,656,150	1,396,666	2,763,000	528,378	59.34%	37.

[1] Used BDA/WCS 2010 recycling numbers

[2] Aerosol can recycling subtracted from aluminium can recycling – Source PSF Report by Industry Edge OMG Equilibrium

[3] Used BDA/WCS 2010 recycling numbers

Latest News

TEC's COOL PLANET Short Film Competition Winners!!



Created on Thursday, 08 December 2011 11:26

Total Environment Centre sites top results for the *Cool Planet Short Film Award, now in its second year....*

This dynamic short film competition was created in association with Flickerfest International Short Film Festival to encourage more creative communications for environment campaigns. In 2011 *Cool Planet* attracted a healthy number of excellent short films from students and others which tackled a range of recycling issues (from worm farms to plastic bottles) in a number of styles (from rap to animation).

The winner of the \$500 cash prize for Best Film 2011 was *Think Outside the Box*, from the "Dream Team" students at the Byron Bay SAE Institute. The Audience Award winner of the 12 month "Manage Your Film Production" software subscription prize was the short animation *Second Chance*, by Gina Prendergast and Jordan Burnett.

"The theme of the competition was about one of our biggest environmental problems – how to reduce waste and increase recycling," said TEC director, Jeff Angel. "All the entries showed passion and a clear appreciation of what needs to be done. It has certainly encouraged us to keep going with the Cool Planet Short Film Award."

"I am so happy to have been a partner with TEC in this competition," said Flickerfest International Short Film Festival director, Bronwyn Kidd. "Flickerfest is passionate about shining the spotlight on films that creatively explore sustainability, and working across various platforms to make sure that timely environmental messages are accessible to all."

The cool-as panel of judges comprised marketing guru Matt Perry from Republic of Everyone, Jake Southall from Sydney Electric Bikes, Bronwyn Kidd, director of the Flickerfest, and Jo Gunawan the Sustainability Communications Manager at Visy.

The theme for the 2012 Cool Planet Short Film Competition is Global Warming - The Future - show us your dream (or nightmare) for the planet.

entries close 30th September 2012

Best Campaign Film Prize: \$750 sponsored by Republic of Everyone + \$500 accessories/rental Sydney Electric Bikes

Best Film Prize: \$500 sponsored by GoalPost Pictures + \$500 indigenous artwork from Coo-ee Art Gallery

Latest News

TEC's "WASTE NOT" DOCUMENTARY IS "MOST INFLUENTIAL"



Created on Thursday, 08 December 2011 11:03

Six months after winning *Best Documentary Film* at St Kilda Film Festival, TEC's acclaimed 26 minute film *WASTE NOT*, has garnered another accolade, said Total Environment Centre (TEC) today.

Along with several other environmentalists, TEC's Director of Communications, Ruth Hessey, who wrote and directed **Waste Not**, has been named one of the (Sydney)magazine's Top 100 most influential, creative and inspiring people of 2011. The special Top 100 issue was launched by Peter Fray, editor in chief and publisher, The Sydney Morning Herald, and Michelle Hurley, editor the (Sydney)magazine, on December 5, at a glamorous cocktail party at the Star Complex in Pymont.

"When we were struggling to finish the film on a very small budget last year, we never dreamed it would reach so many people," said Ms Hessey, of the art house film about garbage, which was executive produced by TEC'S Executive Director, Jeff Angel, and produced by Sophie Alstergren.

"We are very proud of the film, and of Ruth for her persistence and commitment," said MR Angel. **Waste Not's** positive, inspirational tone, and lush visual style led Qantas to acquire the film for both its domestic and international inflight entertainment programs. It has also been an unexpected hit in an industry better known for dry facts and figures.

"We could see the environment message was being drowned in a sea of technical jargon and fear of change," recalls Ms Hessey, "so it was really designed to capture people's imaginations and bring about that light bulb moment of – ok, I can do this! It's not that hard to move to more sustainable ways of living."

Waste Not has been accepted into many prestigious film festivals around the world, including the Festival de Cannes Short Film Corner in France, The Rodos Eco-film Festival in Greece, The Barcelona International Environment Film Festival in Spain, as well as The Dungog, Byron Bay, St Kilda, Footprint and Melbourne Environment Film Festivals in Australia; the World Bank Environmental Film Festival Argentina; the Costa Rica Environment Film Festival; Ile de France Environmental Film Festival, Paris; La Femme Film Festival, Los Angeles; Trailer Film Festival LA, and the touring Scinema (CSIRO) Film Festival. In January it was also Highly Commended in the International Greenflick's program at Flickerfest International Short Film Festival 2011.

Waste Not was partly funded by City of Sydney to explore how recycling will help Australians transition to a sustainable future. Music for the film was composed by Peter Fenton (Praise, Crow), along with a beautiful track from Chris Abrahams (The Necks). Aden Young edited, with cinematography by Bonnie Elliott. The film cites an army of truck drivers, scientists, environmentalists, gardeners and even a famous chef, who are all working to transform the mountains of stuff we throw away into something valuable again.

"We were all so inspired by the people we met working on the Green Frontier," said Ms Hessey. "The success of the film is absolutely a tribute to all of them."

"Waste Not is not a romance or a thriller, but this film has a powerful message!" Sarah Clarke, ABC TV Environment Reporter.

"Waste Not is the first environment film I've seen which hasn't made me want to run from the cinema screaming, "We are all going to die!" Carla Khoo, Manager, Environmental Engagement & Communications, NAB.

Latest News

Ministers' Packaging Study - deeply flawed



Created on Thursday, 08 December 2011 10:54

The new packaging study released by environment ministers is shockingly biased against a container deposits system (CDS), according to environmental groups.

“We had already warned that the regulatory impact statement approach understates benefits and overstates costs of environmental policies – and this one takes it to a new level. The numbers approach unjustifiably finds a CDS is costly when all the evidence from real life operating CDS shows massive benefits,” said Jeff Angel, National Convenor of the Alliance.

“We appreciate environment ministers’ assurance that non-quantifiable benefits will be taken into account. Nevertheless it’s clear that CDS is the only option that can quickly and sustainably remove an extra 3 billion beverage containers a year from the litter and landfill streams and build a network of recycling depots around Australia for all sorts of waste items, generating jobs and economic opportunity for the financial cost of half a cent a container.”

“The other options in the RIS are based on fantasy targets and dollar numbers because they are theoretical.”

“The RIS also appears to accept that these other options will produce a lot of packaging material that can’t be repeatedly made into containers or other packaging - but will be incinerated. That’s a low quality result.”

Serious flaws

“Major problems we have already identified are:

- The failure to do a financial analysis that reveals the impact on the wallets of industry and consumers, when previous research has shown CDS will cost half a cent a container
- Treating theoretical industry options such as more bins and advertising as having the same validity as proven schemes such as a CDS. A major problem also found by ABARE in its peer review of the RIS.”

“We will ensure the community is advised that the numbers in this report are not a legitimate basis on which environment ministers can reject a CDS. We will be focusing on the community and political campaign – the best container recycling system in the world will only cost half a cent a container and environment ministers should stop doing studies and implement it.”

Latest News

New International Study Shines Light on Solutions for Australia's Lost 6 Billion Beverage Containers



Created on Friday, 11 November 2011 17:02

As Australian environment ministers prepare to make a decision on what to do with the 6 billion beverage containers littered or landfilled each year, the findings of the most extensive international study to date by PwC, launched today in Melbourne gives the answers.

"This report is relevant to Australia because it includes Germany and like them we have a kerbside collection system which a container deposit system (CDS) partly replaces. It's important to know if recycling and the kerbside system built up by local councils, are disadvantaged. Ministers will want to know if Australia will have a better and more cost effective recycling program, as well as recover the lost 6 billion containers each year making up the ugly litter in our streets, parks and rivers and dumped in landfills, if we introduce a CDS," said Jeff Angel, National Convenor of the Boomerang Alliance of 18 environment groups.

"We are privileged to have Juergen Resch, Executive Director of the national green NGO, German Environment Aid here to launch the report and meet stakeholders."

"The study, 'Reuse and Recycling Systems for Selected Beverage Packaging from a Sustainability Perspective' was carried out by 17 PwC sustainability experts from eight different countries, including Australia. The 410 page report reveals significant economic, social and environmental benefits from deposit systems compared to kerbside collection - and that they work well together. I also know from my own experience in Germany which has a relatively high deposit of 33centsAUD that beverage sales are not impacted by the CDS," said Juergen Resch.

Key results of the report include:

- Deposit systems provide significant ecological, economic and social advantages compared to kerbside collection systems. Some of the main advantages are:
 - Higher collection rates (typically 85-99%)[1]
 - Higher recycling rates (typically 85-99%)
 - Higher quality of the collected materials (e.g. due to pre-sorting via reverse vending machines and reduced contamination)
 - Practically no littering of beverage containers
- When comparing a deposit system and a kerbside collection system for one-way beverage containers none of the systems is generally more expensive than the other. Considering the achieved results of deposit systems in form of collection and recycling rates they are more cost efficient than kerbside collection
- The introduction of deposit systems for beverage packaging in countries with existing kerbside collection systems does not jeopardize existing collection and recycling systems. Deposit systems supplement kerbside collection schemes and co-exist very well.

Environment ministers will be receiving a 'regulatory impact statement' (RIS) in a few weeks examining new packaging laws including a CDS. After public consultation they will make a decision. The RIS controversially includes more voluntary action by the beverage industry which will have minimal impacts on recycling and litter.

The RIS has also been criticised by environment groups as 'another time-wasting study' after 8 years of investigation into container deposit schemes.

[1] Note: Germany has a high deposit of 33cents AUD and we are advocating 10cents, so returns in Australia would be about 80%

Latest News

ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS SHOULD GET CRACKING ON CONTAINER DEPOSITS



Created on Thursday, 15 September 2011 17:20

Seventeen national and state environment groups have urged Australia's national and state environment ministers to start planning for the introduction of a container deposit system (CDS) at their Canberra meeting tomorrow.

"We've had 8 years of studies and reviews and process cul-de-sacs. There's now enough information to show the very significant economic, environmental and community benefits of a CDS. At most it will cost half a cent a container to reap hundreds of new drop-off centres that can take a range of recycled materials, create over 1,000 new jobs, make millions of dollars for community service groups and achieve a massive drop in litter," said Jeff Angel, National Convenor of the Boomerang Alliance.

"We think that individual states should introduce a CDS but if there is a national agreement tomorrow then so much the better. But it's time to stop wasting time. Every non-decision from a ministerial meeting means another 6 billion beverage containers thrown away each year."

"Environment groups have also told ministers they have no confidence in the current regulatory impact statement process – the latest study into a CDS. Some senior officials also oppose a CDS and are advising ministers. The way it has been set up is biased and the narrow economic methodology leads to a negative view of key environmental benefits. It's just another way of saying no," Mr. Angel said.

Latest News

AUSTRALIA'S DANGEROUS LITTER



Created on Tuesday, 23 August 2011 10:28

Last Updated on Sunday, 17 February 2013 06:40

The annual National Litter Index from Keep Australia Beautiful demonstrates yet again that beverage containers are the dominant litter problem across Australia, and that South Australia with its container deposit scheme has the lowest volumes of litter, including beverage containers, of all states and territories.

“Of the ‘dirty dozen’ most littered items by volume, beverage containers account for seven of those and it is virtually the same result year after year,” said Jeff Angel, Convener of the Boomerang Alliance of 17 environment groups.

“Obviously, with its ten cent deposit on bottles and cans, South Australia is streets ahead of the rest when it comes to the littering of these items, but SA also has the lowest volumes of litter overall,” said Mr Angel.

“Unfortunately, every year this report comes out, Ministers and beverage companies pledge to tackle the scourge of litter with inadequate programs and every year the same waste appears littered across the country.”

“Broken glass bottles cause around 40,000 injuries in Australia per year including 5000 requiring medical treatment. While plastics, including from beverage containers break apart, are ingested by birds, fish, whales and dolphins and cause death to this wildlife.”

“This littered material should be recycled. A national deposit scheme like SA’s will obviously work and the beverage industry should get out of the way and allow states to act.”

“Despite some methodological questions about the litter index the Boomerang Alliance welcomes the contribution made by KAB to this debate,” said Mr Angel.

Latest News

New National Product Recycling Law to be Quickly Tested



Created on Wednesday, 15 June 2011 13:24

The successful passage of the Product Stewardship Act in the Senate today, is a welcome change to the arid waste policy scene that has pervaded national politics for years, Total Environment Centre said.

"This is real meat on the press statements and pages of policy documents that have been released over the years while millions of tonnes of products were thrown into landfill. No modern society should tolerate such waste and hopefully the new law will usher in far more producer responsibility and comprehensive recycling schemes," said Jeff Angel, Director of the Centre.

"There's pent up demand and the first off the blocks will be the well advanced e-waste program. Tyres, batteries, container deposits and mercury containing lamps are waiting in the wings."

"We welcome the amendments moved in the Senate today which will deliver more transparency and assist in prioritising products for national attention."

"While an umbrella Act was what was required so that new recycling efforts can be appropriately crafted, there is a fundamental issue that will test the resolve of governments. Under the Act it will be all too easy to adopt voluntary programs which invariably have low targets and little effective support for comprehensive collection systems. Unless we are very careful we will be stuck with these for years while the majority of a dangerous product and its valuable resources still end up in landfill - until failure becomes intolerable," said Mr Angel.

"We'll have to be smart with this legislation, not lazy or unambitious."

Latest News

ABOUT TEC'S FILM WASTE NOT



Created on Thursday, 14 April 2011 12:43

Last Updated on Thursday, 24 October 2013 11:59

TEC's award winning documentary film **Waste Not**, has had a dream run since it was made in 2011. TEC was awarded a City of Sydney Environment Grant to make a film about recycling and waste in February 2010. The application for the grant was written by TEC's Communication Director, Ruth Hessey, who initially developed the project in consultation with TEC's executive director Jeff Angel, and with City of Sydney waste unit staff.

TEC engaged an experienced production manager for the project, Sophie Alstergren, who went on to produce the film which was executive produced by Jeff Angel, with Associate Producer Jane Castle (TEC's senior campaigner). Ruth and Sophie liaised with Helen Bradley at City of Sydney to ensure the concept for **Waste Not** developed according to CoS guidelines. The film was shot on location in Sydney at Global Renewables, two VISY depots, Simms, the South Sydney Waste Depot in Zetland, and the CSIRO.

It was agreed at TEC that the film needed to avoid the common pitfalls of documentary films of this genre, chiefly being dull and boring. To this end high production values, and feature film creatives were employed, including the talented composer Peter Fenton. Bonnie Elliott shot the film, which was edited by Aden Young (with additional editing by Lindi Harrison). Subsequent to the completion of the documentary, City of Sydney commissioned several 'webisodes' amplifying key themes in **Waste Not**, which were delivered in March 2011.



The response to **Waste Not** has been phenomenal. The sheer beauty of the film, along with its emotional punch has caught the recycling and waste communities by surprise and has elicited a strong response from people outside the industry. TEC is now pushing **Waste Not** out into the community on several levels: councils, corporate staff engagement, and the education sector. **Qantas** has also acquired the film for its domestic and international inflight entertainment program. TEC was also funded by the Pratt and Myer Foundations to create an educational online resource: www.wastenot.org.au

Waste Not premiered on January 8th 2011 at **Flickerfest International Short Film Festival**, Bondi Beach, Greenflicks program and won a **Highly Commended Award**. Since then **Waste Not** has

won **Best Documentary Film at St Kilda Film Festival**, and has been officially selected by prestigious film festivals around the world, including the **Festival de Cannes Short Film Corner** in France, The **Rodos Eco-film Festival** in Greece, The **Barcelona International Environment Film Festival** in Spain, as well as The **Dungog, Byron Bay, St Kilda, Footprint and Melbourne Environment Film Festivals** in Australia; the **World Bank Environmental Film Festival Argentina**; the **Costa Rica Environment Film Festival**; **Ile de France Environmental Film Festival**, Paris; **La Femme Film Festival**, Los Angeles; **Trailer Film Festival LA**, and the touring **Scinema (CSIRO) Film Festival**.

The first the **Waste Not Community Screenings** began in Melbourne, hosted by Nick Harford from **Equilibrium**. The screening generated dozens of inquiries. Since then local councils all over Australia have licensed the film for their Sustainability Educators and community screenings. The prominent Australian Bank **NAB**, has acquired **Waste Not** for internal staff engagement. Several other big corporations have also bought for a License to Show.

Notable Australian distributor **Ronin Films** is distributing **Waste Not** to the education sector in the Asia South Pacific region. **Waste Not** also received substantial funding via the **Documentary Australia Foundation** from the **Pratt and Myer Foundations** to develop an interactive educational website which will be ready for **Back To School 2012**.

City of Sydney Mayor Clover Moore officially launched **Waste Not** at Parliament House on April 7th, 2011. Refreshments for the evening, in the form of individual boxes of edible flowers, herbs and carob, were generously provided by **Tetsuya's head chef Luke Powell**, one of the heroes of **Waste Not**. In keeping with the theme of sustainability TEC served tea made with sprigs of Lemon Scented tea Tree, Rosemary, tied with Lemon Grass leaves, which were made by TEC staff. A bouquet of lemon grass and other Australian natives, some of it supplied by Michael Mobbs from his Chippendale street gardens, was presented to the Lord Mayor, and the new state Environment Minister, Robyn Parker, who changed her schedule to attend the launch. Several members of cast and crew attended, including the composer Peter Fenton, editor Aden Young, and stars of the film Bianca Nogrady, Ben Kusto, and Bisso Rebigo. Artists such as Jenny Kee, Louise Fowler-Smith, Anne Zahalka and Janet Laurence, also attended.

An ABC news crew covered the launch and the ABC's key environment reporter Sarah Clarke filed a news piece that ran on ABC News, ABC midday, and 24 News.

"Waste Not is not a romance or a thriller, but this film has a powerful message!" Sarah Clarke, ABC TV Environment Reporter.

"Waste Not is the first environment film I've seen which hasn't made me want to run from the cinema screaming, "We are all going to die!" Carla Khoo, Manager, Environmental Engagement & Communications, NAB.

Jeff Angel, Executive Director of Total Environment Centre is the film's Executive Producer. His intimate knowledge of current local, state, and federal legislation, not to mention his role in creating a National Waste Policy, underpinned the film's research and expertise at every phase.

In December 2011 **Waste Not's** writer/director Ruth Hessey was named one of one of **the (Sydney) magazine's Top 100 most influential, creative and inspiring people of 2011**, as a result of the impact of **Waste Not**.

Latest News

Cool Planet Recycling Revolution Short Short Film Competition



Created on Friday, 07 January 2011 16:58

COOL PLANET -THE RECYCLING REVOLUTION

CALL FOR SHORT SHORT FILM ENTRIES

click: [ENTRY SITE](#)

note: 200MB upload limit

SUPPORTED BY THE PRATT FOUNDATION

Latest News

Moving on NSW waste and recycling



Created on Monday, 20 December 2010 17:38

New proposals for increased recycling from NSW Environment Minister Frank Sartor contain some good ideas, Total Environment Centre said today.

"The draft strategic directions and implementation plan proposes a better direction for the badly performing commercial sector; a welcome commitment to act on problem products like batteries if the Commonwealth acts too slowly; and improved planning for new recycling facilities," said Jeff Angel, Director of TEC.

"The intention to prohibit the landfilling of wastes such as electronic items where a producer take-back scheme is in place is another sign of muscle in the plan."

"With metropolitan landfills likely to be filled before the end of 2020 and a giant new wasteful hole in the bush at Woodlawn in waiting, we have about five years to get on top of the waste mountain, before we slide further back in the recycling stakes."

"We are concerned however that NSW lacks the bureaucratic capacity to deliver. Without good backup and clear focus, the bureaucracy could stymie good intentions. The recycling leaders are found in business and the community, not government agencies and this is a cause for concern," Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Government Toxic TV Debacle



Created on Tuesday, 23 November 2010 19:57

The Great Digital Switch Dump Report (November 2010)

Total Environment Centre (TEC) has released a devastating report which calls for the Federal Government to urgently stop millions of toxic televisions polluting Australia as a result of the Digital Switchover.

"Hundreds of thousands of televisions have already been dumped as a direct result of the Digital Switchover because no system has been put in place for recycling old analogue sets and a new recycling scheme will arrive too late for most of the switchover," said TEC's Senior Campaigner Jane Castle.

"Furthermore the Digital Taskforce set to monitor the situation is guilty of 'green-washing' to understate the problem by counting televisions stored, sold on, or given to charity as 'recycled'."

Castle said that "without Government action, even conservative estimates indicate millions more will be dumped on nature strips, in back lanes and eventually in landfill."

The Great Digital Switch Dump Report shows that over 7 million televisions will be dumped by 2014, even with the introduction of the National Television Recycling Scheme. However, as many analogue televisions are currently being stored, sold, or given to charities there is still time to save up to 11 million televisions from being dumped.

Each cathode ray tube television has 3.5 kilos of lead, a heavy metal which bio-accumulates in humans, animals and plants and causes brain damage.

"The Federal Government must fast-track the National Television Recycling Scheme and immediately deliver collection and recycling infrastructure to Australia's population centres. The recent announcement by Stephen Conroy and Tony Burke about free television recycling for Broken Hill and regional South Australia is too little too late."

Ms. Castle also noted that "television manufacturers have stepped up and recyclers are itching to get their hands on this potentially lucrative resource, so it's time for the Federal Government to get serious, before it's too late."

"Environment Ministers have been trying to reduce e-waste while Stephen Conroy's Digital Switchover has been dead-set on making more."

"It's hard to fathom why Conroy has been utterly deaf to the pleas of TV manufacturers, recyclers and the community," said Ms. Castle.

Latest News

Australia's Environment Ministers Meet – more time wasting on waste issues?



Created on Wednesday, 03 November 2010 11:13

Federal Environment Minister, Tony Burke will meet his state counterparts for the first time tomorrow to discuss solutions to the nation's waste crisis, with crucial action already delayed many months.

"The Environment Protection and Heritage Council has a reputation for taking too long to make decisions; and while last year saw major announcements on a National Waste Policy to lift recycling; a Product Stewardship Act to divert products such as e-waste from landfill; and a national container deposits scheme – major delays have now set in," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"We urge Minister Burke and his colleagues to hit the accelerator."

"The benefits from a container deposit system (CDS) are multiple and long lasting. A massive reduction in litter; at least 80% recovery rate or 10 billion containers a year; and hundreds of new convenient drop-off centres that can take containers and other problem products such as e-waste and batteries. Also the last three government supported studies have shown it financially benefits local councils and kerbside recycling," said Ian Kiernan, Chair of CleanUp Australia.

"There is really no reason to delay a national CDS."

"The Product Stewardship Act is particularly urgent as it gives legal force to product take-back schemes. Already 236 million electronic items are in or on their way to landfill – only a few per cent of products are recycled. Industry and environment groups are working together to develop a national recycling scheme which ministers promised would be introduced in 2011. But it won't happen without the new Act," said Mr Angel.

Latest News

Councils should not pay for beverage industry litter



Created on Tuesday, 19 October 2010 10:05

The Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW (LGSA) and the Boomerang Alliance are calling on the Federal and State Environment Ministers to remain firmly focused on the issue of container deposit legislation (CDL) when they meet in Sydney early next month.

The Ministers will meet on November 4th at the Environment Protection and Heritage Council (EPHC) meeting to decide what will be included in a review of packaging waste.

President of the Local Government Association of NSW, Cr Genia McCaffery, said the alternatives options being proposed - start-up grants from a packaging tax or the Australian Packaging Covenant - by some beverage industry groups and government agencies will impose significant costs on to Local Government.

“The alternative options being proposed are unacceptable, particularly since a container deposit system would save councils up to \$32 million a year,” said Cr McCaffery.

“If a packaging tax was introduced, councils and ratepayers would still be bearing the cost of delivering recycling for commercial and public space waste collections, and we’d continue to have a low return rate of drink containers,” she said.

“A container deposit system is a much more sensible and smarter option. It’s a direct user pay initiative that provides a strong incentive to recycle and raises awareness of the use of containers.”

President of the Shires Association, Cr Bruce Miller, said that CDL would bring a range of economic and environmental benefits if implemented in NSW.

“NSW councils have always been supportive of introducing CDL, as it provides multiple benefits for councils and their communities and has been extremely successful in places like the USA, Canada and Europe, as well as South Australia,” said Cr. Miller.

“A container deposit system would create hundreds of new drop-off centres across Australia at no cost to governments,” he said.

“It would also have enormous environmental benefits by reducing litter, pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and landfill.”

Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre and Convenor of the Boomerang Alliance, said they are calling on the Ministers to not be blinded by alternative options being proposed by the beverage industry.

“It’s just another way for polluting beverage companies to avoid their responsibility and cost shift to councils and ratepayers,” said Mr. Angel.

Latest News

Commit to Recycling say Industry and Green Groups to Major Parties



Created on Monday, 09 August 2010 12:25

Recycling and waste management companies have joined forces with green groups to call for a big boost to industry and environmental policies from the major parties for the 2010 Election.

“The recycling industry already delivers significant economic and environmental benefits to Australia and its contribution can be even bigger with some smart, targeted policies from the Commonwealth,” the groups said.

“The first steps have been taken with the National Waste Policy under Peter Garrett’s watch. We now need the industry development portfolios to join in to improve financial signals currently muted by policies and subsidies that encourage the waste of valuable material resources.”

“Recycling has a big role to play in energy efficiency efforts because we avoid having to expend energy on mining and transport of raw materials. It makes the economy more efficient. The industry can contribute even more than the current \$12 billion pa to the economy and 50,000 jobs with an upgraded effort from the Commonwealth government,” said Rod Welford, Chief Executive, Australian Council of Recycling.

“The recent National Recycling Initiative Summit identified priorities such as a stimulus package to encourage investment and development of markets for products made from recycled materials, including recycled organic products which will improve soil carbon storage,” said Ron Wainberg, President of the Waste Management Association of Australia.

“Recycling is at the forefront of the green economy. It produces nine times more jobs per tonne of waste than landfilling. It was unfortunate that the promised Product Stewardship legislation did not get through parliament before the election was called and it’s now essential the next government is committed to move quickly to tackle e-waste, batteries and tyres,” said Jeff Angel Convenor of the Boomerang Alliance of 17 environment groups.

Packaging

On-Line Letter for Container Deposits



Created on Friday, 30 July 2010 15:07

To: The Minister for Environment

Below are some suggested points you might like to make:

I support the introduction of a container deposit system in Australia which will:

- *significantly lift our recycling rates of glass, plastic and metal beverage containers*
- *substantially reduce litter*
- *help charities*
- *create new jobs*
- *support hundreds of new convenient drop-off centres for other products like batteries and e-waste, as well.*

{chronocontact}petitions{/chronocontact}

Latest News

CONTAINER DEPOSITS WIN WIN



Created on Monday, 05 July 2010 13:55

Australia's environment ministers made an historic step towards a Container Deposit System today. Peter Garrett announced the Ministers' decision in Darwin after the EPHC.

"We welcome this significant step towards a national container deposit system," said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of Total Environment Centre and Convener of the Boomerang Alliance. "The government is to be congratulated for preferring an evidenced based approach instead of a process open to negative beverage industry influence."

"Clean Up Australia applauds this decision," agreed Ian Kiernan AO, Chairman and founder of Clean Up Australia. "It shows that our political leadership is listening to the concerns of the Australian community in taking action on waste management reform."

Mr. Angel pointed out that South Australia already has container deposits and the Northern Territory will have soon, not to mention many countries including the USA - all with massive public support and an 80% recycling rate.

"The environmental and economic benefits have been proved a reality. The Boomerang Alliance is willing to participate in the process announced by the Ministers today if it is independent, balanced and grounded by real results - not esoteric economic theory and unfounded fears."

Mr Angel said a new green collection system should be established by the private sector, "leaving government to regulate a CDS, rather than investing in new infrastructure or imposing a new tax."

"A CDS in Australia will produce a major reduction in litter; significant financial benefits to charities; up to 2,000 new jobs; an 80% recycling rate of containers; and hundreds of convenient drop-off centres not only for containers but also for other problem wastes such as batteries and electronic items"

"We urge the government to maintain its momentum by committing to a timetable to make this scheme a reality across the rest of Australia," said Mr. Kiernan.

Latest News

Why Environment Ministers Must Act on 5 July



Created on Wednesday, 30 June 2010 17:29

Why a RIS into Container Deposits is Needed

Federal and state environment ministers (EPHC) meet on 5 July to decide if they will take the next formal and necessary step of a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) into a CDS. The RIS assesses the benefits and costs of a number of options including types of CDS and deposit levels; and is exhibited for public comment before a final decision.

So far the EPHC has undertaken a number of studies which have delayed a decision to commission a RIS – further delay will **exacerbate significant public discontent** with the lack of progress.

We understand that the willingness to pay report by PWC found the community value the **environmental benefits at over \$650m and did not feel there it was inconvenient to return the containers**. If this is applied to the latest (BDA) economic analysis, CD clearly becomes a **significant positive economic proposition** (taking account of all factors, unlike industry which quotes selectively). A RIS is the natural next stage particularly given the precedents set by the E-Waste RIS and superficial Packaging Covenant RIS.

Why it's time for a RIS

- Over the last decade there have been **five major studies**[1] – all of which show significant benefits from a CDS. There's been enough research – now it's time for a RIS to bring it all together to help answer the key questions being posed by supporters and opponents.
- Key bureaucracies keep suggesting **more time wasting studies** in order to delay a RIS. They should stop interfering – it's time for the public to have a say.
- A RIS with broad and appropriate terms of reference and independent management can **assess a full range of community, economic and environmental benefits and costs** – the most recent study by BDA which is before the EPHC has been found to understate the benefits and overstate the costs. It's time for a balanced approach.
- Repeated opinion polls show **the community clearly support a CDS**. By continuing to delay a decision, ministers and their governments are signalling they don't want action or a CDS while Australia continues to landfill over 6 billion beverage containers a year. It's time to increase recycling.
- A CDS in Australia will produce an **80% recycling rate of containers**; major reduction in litter; significant financial benefits to charities; up to 2,000 new jobs; and hundreds of convenient drop-off centres not only for containers but also for other problem wastes such as batteries and electronic items. It's time for a new green collection system that can be established by the private sector leaving government to regulate a CDS rather than invest in new infrastructure or impose a new tax.

Some companies in the beverage industry will no doubt be opposing a RIS – they don't want a balanced assessment or the community to be involved. They will repeat their previous tactic of refusing to support the Australian Packaging Covenant (APC). But they are required **by law** to sign the APC. And as revealed in the NPC review, the Packaging Covenant has done little to directly increase recycling – which has instead resulted from export materials demand and kerbside recovery systems - which are not linked or benefited by the Covenant.

[1] White Report to NSW Minister for Environment (NSW) 2001; West Australian Stakeholder Advisory Group to Minister for Environment 2007; Boomerang Alliance 2008; BDA Beverage Container Investigation to EPHC 2009; Hyder Report to Tas Environment Dept, 2009.

Latest News

Container Deposits Key Issue in Federal, Vic, NSW Elections



Created on Wednesday, 30 June 2010 13:55

Key environment and local government groups today declared that the introduction of a container deposits system (CDS) would be an important issue in the coming federal, Victorian and New South Wales Elections.

They urged Peter Garrett to take the lead after previous meetings of environment ministers engaged in excuses and delay. Minister Garrett needs to fix this appalling buck passing next Monday when the Ministers meet again, the groups said.

“Politicians can only ignore the public’s strong support for CD for so long – and the coming federal and state elections will be a proving ground for their positions. We are disappointed that Minister Garrett and his state colleagues have been sitting on this issue,” said Dave West National Campaign Director of the Boomerang Alliance.

“So far we have seen governments dither – but next week’s meeting of environment ministers in Darwin will be a test of where they want to go – allow 6 billion beverage containers to litter the landscape or be landfilled each year or introduce a CDS that solves the problem and provides several hundred million dollars of benefit to the Australian community and economy and some 1,200 new green jobs across the country,” said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre and Convenor of the Boomerang Alliance.

““In Victoria we’ve seen strong support from the Greens and the Coalition for container deposits. At the Darwin meeting the Brumby Government needs to back container deposits or risk it becoming a major environment issue at November’s state election,” said Mark Wakeham, Campaign Director of Environment Victoria.

“There have been positive discussions in New South Wales with the Greens and the Opposition but the Keneally government is acting like a headless chicken. If it wants to have any chance of improving its polling position it will have to wholeheartedly and consistently adopt strong environmental policies. It couldn’t go wrong by supporting container deposits,” Mr Angel said.

Supporting the call to action, Ian Kiernan, Chairman and founder of Clean Up Australia noted that 40 per cent of the rubbish that Clean Up Australia Day volunteers remove from environment each year relates to beverage containers. “The public is very much behind a refund scheme. National research conducted for Clean Up Australia in 2009 found that 88 per cent of people support the introduction of a 10 cent refund for drink cans and bottles,” said Mr Kiernan.

“And the community, our politicians claim to represent has had enough of the rhetoric and the endless reports being put between them and a decision.”

The groups will also be launching a Facebook Page, ‘Cash for Containers Campaign’ as part of ramping up public engagement over the next 12 months.

Latest News

MINISTERS MUST ACT ON CONTAINER DEPOSIT PLUSES



Created on Tuesday, 29 June 2010 13:36

Australia's environment ministers have been urged to introduce a Container Deposit System today by seventeen national and state based environment groups. The ministers will be making a decision when they meet in Darwin next Monday.

"It's time for a new green collection system that can be established by the private sector leaving government to regulate a CDS, rather than investing in new infrastructure or imposing a new tax," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre and Convenor of the Boomerang Alliance.

"A CDS in Australia will produce a major reduction in litter; significant financial benefits to charities; up to 2,000 new jobs; an 80% recycling rate of containers; and hundreds of convenient drop-off centres not only for containers but also for other problem wastes such as batteries and electronic items""It makes economic and environmental sense," Mr Angel added. "The Ministers need to stop doing time delaying studies and instead listen to the community and start making decisions."

The environment groups also hit back at industry claims that a container deposits system will be expensive.

"Industry is not presenting the full picture of all the economic evaluations of costs and benefits. It is using the data selectively. Our latest report on NSW takes account of the public's assessment of the dollar value of environmental benefits, zero inconvenience cost and the latest adjustment to the BDA study," said Mr Angel.

"Also the cheaper methods the beverage companies are touting don't work. They propose a tax which will not significantly increase container recycling, and will be passed onto consumers including those who do the right thing and recycle. The other suggestion of more bins in public spaces is equally inappropriate. They are never used properly and contain a lot of contamination that prevents bottles and cans from being recycled."

"A ten cent deposit is a far better incentive, and it's been proved all over the world that it works. And contrary to industry claims people are smart enough to know it's not a real price increase."

Latest News

CONTAINER DEPOSITS BONANZA SUPPRESSED



Created on Monday, 28 June 2010 11:28

Crucial information that shows \$650mpa of significant economic benefits from the introduction of container deposits into Australia is being hidden from the public, environmentalists alleged today.

“Our FOI has been rejected: the NSW government has opposed its release to the NSW Parliament, and now the Federal Government has refused a demand by the Senate. With environment ministers due to meet next week to decide the future of container deposits it’s essential such information is released to the public,” said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre. “What do they have to hide?”

“We understand the report proves the public is willing to support container deposits (CDS) and estimates the economic value of reducing litter and saving resources at over \$650m. Further, the public is not inconvenienced by having to return bottles and cans to get the deposit back. If you apply this to recent economic studies* of the costs of having a CDS, then a CDS would be worth several hundred million dollars a year to the nation.”

“We challenge the ministers to release the report before they meet instead of hiding it. There are claims it is only a final draft but this is just another ploy to prevent its release,” Mr Angel said.

The Ministers are meeting in Darwin on 5 July to decide whether to commission a regulatory impact statement into container deposits, the final formal step before its introduction.

* Environment ministers commissioned BDA consultants to examine benefits and costs last year – ‘Beverage Container Investigation’ BDA (2009)

Latest News

E-WASTE CRISIS CLOGS SYDNEY'S ARTERIES



Created on Tuesday, 08 June 2010 15:48

Don't miss TEC's senior campaigner, Jane Castle on ABC Lateline's incisive report by Karen Barlow on the electronic waste crisis clogging the city's arteries.

<http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2010/s2919052.htm>

Latest News

TOXIC TELEVISIONS



Created on Tuesday, 08 June 2010 15:38

Jane Castle's opinion piece on Toxic Televisions is up on ABC Online:

<http://www.abc.net.au/environment/articles/2010/06/08/2921309.htm>

Latest News

FOI on crucial CD report quashed



Created on Thursday, 06 May 2010 12:06

Refusal by officials to release a key report commissioned by environment ministers into a national container deposit system has aroused suspicions of bureaucratic obstruction, Total Environment Centre said today.

“Our freedom of information request for the report which assesses the public’s willingness to pay for a CD system was rejected recently on the basis that the report was in draft form and the committee of bureaucrats has not yet met to consider it. Their last meeting was October 2009 and we believe the extensive delays are unjustified,” said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of Total Environment Centre.

“Federal and state ministers had committed to meet ‘out of session’ after receiving draft results last November in the expectation that a final report was not far way. Now it’s been almost six months of delay. The longer we wait for a decision, that’s another 6 billion beverage containers to landfill a year.”

“The report by Price Waterhouse Coopers is a crucial missing link in the assessment of benefits and costs of a container deposit system. It seeks to quantify the public’s willingness to pay for improved recycling and the controversial ‘inconvenience’ cost. The willingness to pay increases the benefits while inconvenience (if it exists) increases the costs, in economic analysis.”

“They are both big figures and have a major bearing on the economic case for container deposits,” said Mr Angel.

“We call on the bureaucrats to stop stuffing around. The NEPC Service Corporation that services the ministers’ Environment Protection and Heritage Council has told us they expect a decision by key bureaucrats on release by 21 May – but there’s no guarantee it will be made public.”

Latest News

Container Deposits - NT move welcomed, time for national action



Created on Thursday, 06 May 2010 14:20

The announcement by the NT Environment Minister's office today of their new container deposit system is a positive step for the NT environment and should be another step towards a national system, Boomerang Alliance said today.

"With legislation for their "cash for containers" system to be drafted this year and implementation at end of 2011 the NT community is on the way to high recycling rates, more green jobs and big reductions in litter," said Jeff Angel, Convenor of the Alliance and Director of Total Environment Centre.

"This move should only further strengthen the signal to the Federal Government that this is the right way for the whole of Australia to go. National Container Deposit legislation is long overdue."

"Local governments want CD, environment groups want CD, and recent research shows that the general community wants action and is willing to pay the tiny increase (half a cent) in purchase price to make it work."

"It is the most effective way we know of achieving return rates of at least 80% of beverage containers, as South Australia has demonstrated for so long now," said Jeff Angel.

"Today's NT move shows the national decision process is moving too slowly, along with the recent rejection of our FOI request for a crucial national CD report due to bureaucratic inertia."

"It's time the state and federal governments released the Choice Modeling study and got on with a Regulatory Impact Statement. The Commonwealth should be taking the lead on this issue", Mr Angel said."

Latest News

Vic Landfill Levy = Green Jobs



Created on Wednesday, 24 March 2010 17:17

Environment Groups today welcomed the Brumby Government's decision to increase the landfill levy and predicted that the improved pricing will make recycling competitive and lead to a green jobs bonanza.

The new levy will also offset commodity downturns experienced by recyclers since the global financial crisis and by providing forward projections until 2016 will give the entire sector (including local government), economic certainty. Another feature of the changes to the landfill levy is a commitment to invest almost \$54million back into the sector, particularly \$28million for new recycling infrastructure.

"The combined impact of increasing landfill levies and a \$28million investment into new recycling infrastructure will create a massive boost for both the state's economy and environment" said Boomerang Alliance's National Campaign Director Dave West

In April last year the Boomerang Alliance's National Recycling Initiative (NRI) campaign with the Australian Council of Recycling and Waste Management Association of Australia identified 12 major Victorian recycling developments that had been stalled as a result of the global financial crisis. The developers committed to building these programs if governments increased levies and government provided infrastructure grants worth between 5-10% of the total development cost.

"Our research for the NRI indicates that the Brumby Governments decision will likely see at least 12 major recycling projects go ahead," said West this will see the private sector invest some \$585million - creating at least 1,290 new green jobs," said West

"On the environmental front, this package should increase the state's recycling by at least 950,000 tonnes per annum taking Victoria's overall recycling rate from just under 62% to over 71%, amongst the best in Australia," concluded West.

Overall the package is a very good one and touches on most of the key themes to lift resource recovery and recycling in Victoria, said Boomerang Alliance member group, Total Environment Centre. "We note the \$5.5million allocated to achieve best practice collection and management systems and call on the government to focus this on initiatives that would reduce the amount of residual waste from existing recycling (contaminated materials etc.)," said TEC Director, Jeff Angel.

"Nearly a third of Victoria's total landfill actually comes out of the gates of recyclers, material that is too difficult to sort or too contaminated to re-use, so it's very important that the government direct a significant proportion of their grants towards helping existing recyclers reduce their level of residual waste."

"By focussing on residuals, the government can increase the amount of waste they divert but also help offset any cost impacts of the increased levy on existing recyclers," Angel concluded.

Another BA member, Friends of the Earth were particularly pleased that the proposed changes had allocated over \$11million to improving regulatory enforcement and cleaning up contaminated sites.

"It's great to see greater enforcement and action to clean up our past mistakes. This will be a big step towards cracking down on illegal dumping and putting dodgy operators out of business," said Cam Walker

Latest News

CABONNE COUNCIL DUMPS ON ORANGE



Created on Wednesday, 25 November 2009 09:37

“Cabonne wants to keep dumping for another 35 years instead of recycling. It is keeping the entire area in the environmental dark ages,” said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre. The Orange recycling project, years in the making, is tipped to lift recycling rates from its current 20% up to 60%.

“It is ludicrous that Cabonne has pulled out of this opportunity to vastly improve what is currently a very disappointing recycling rate – the new facility is even in its own backyard,” Mr Angel said.

“The decision is also a financial disaster - it will cost Cabonne ratepayers \$1 million to withdraw from the joint project, yet the benefits include up to \$45 savings per household per year compared to the cost of current waste management.”

Council is also ignoring the increased costs of landfill that will come with the introduction of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) next year and the positive boost to the local economy and in particular green jobs that the Orange project will bring.

“This polluting and economically irresponsible course of action adopted by the Cabonne councillors doesn’t stack up on any grounds. There should be a full public debate so the community knows what their elected officials stand for.”

Cabonne instead aims to review capacity across its six existing landfills and expects to get another 35 years of dumping into these sites with no commitments to improve recycling.

“This strategy is out of line with the NSW targets for recycling. We call on the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) and its minister to step in to ensure a more environmentally sustainable outcome for the region.”

Latest News

EXPLOSIVE SUMMER BBQ HAZARD



Created on Wednesday, 25 November 2009 09:31

Last Updated on Sunday, 17 February 2013 06:40

State Governments are avoiding their responsibility to protect recyclers from dangerous gas cylinders by not providing a safe recycling scheme, Total Environment Centre said today.

“Australians love their barbeques but few realise the potential hazards of used gas cylinders,” said TEC’s senior campaigner, Jane Castle.

“245,000 cylinders per year are disposed of in NSW and many sneak into the wrong places where their potential to explode proves a real danger to recyclers and landfill operators.”

“Not recycling these cylinders is a complete waste of resources and without being safely decommissioned, too many become dangerous stowaways amongst old cars and fridges headed to metal recyclers and landfills.

“State governments must urgently address this problem,” said Castle. “Metal recyclers are spending millions on protective equipment and employee hours as they search out hidden cylinders, as well as dealing with major OH&S risks, damage to equipment, fines, and shut downs.

“The Department of Environment and Climate Change should set up a product stewardship scheme with strong recovery targets and transparent reporting processes instead of blaming the recyclers,” Castle concluded.

“This is a case of community groups and business which are working together to identify resource recovery solutions being hindered by our governments’ refusal to take responsibility.”

Latest News

Australia's Rubbish On The Move



Created on Thursday, 05 November 2009 16:14

Peter Garrett and State Environment Ministers have taken their first historic steps towards a recycling economy, the Boomerang Alliance said today.

“The announcement of a National Waste Policy for Australia is long overdue and should set the basis for future leadership on waste and recycling. This is an opportunity for recycling to lead the much needed momentum for Australia’s green economy,” said Dave West, National Campaign Director of the Boomerang Alliance.

Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre said today’s decision “marks a sea change in waste policy after years of inaction with the endorsement of the first national scheme to make producers responsible for collecting and recycling televisions and computers.

“The door is now open for the wide-scale recycling of all electronic waste and other problem products. This should be the end of the inertia and short-term thinking that has dominated so far.”

Environment Victoria campaigner Fraser Brindley said this decision was very welcome and very timely.

“Australians currently send more than 14 million televisions and computers to landfill each year,” he said. “With the switch over to digital transmission looming the need to deal with this issue is urgent, so it’s great news that the federal government has announced a scheme today.

The EPHC delayed however, on a final decision on a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) on container deposits, with ministers agreeing to consider the issue out of session after final material confirmed is acquired.

“The delay on container deposits is disappointing,” said Jeff Angel, Total Environment Centre (TEC) Director. “Ministers should be assured that the growing campaign won’t stop and the sooner they meet the community’s demands for a container deposit system, the better it will be for the environment and the economy.”

The overall outcome of the EPHC has also been tainted by a complete debacle on toxic tyres, said Dave West.

“For every week we delay a decision we are allowing the export of millions of tyres, causing pollution in developing countries. This has exposed the failure of the assessment processes for new environmental policy. Australia should not be condoning a toxic trade as a solution to our waste problem.”

Latest News

BEVERAGE COMPANIES TALK NONSENSE



Created on Monday, 02 November 2009 15:32

Claims by beverage companies that consumers will be hit by the costs of a container deposits scheme are utter nonsense, Total Environment Centre said today.

“This is a deliberate attempt to mislead the public. The latest economic analysis commissioned by Australia’s environment ministers found that the cost of beverages could rise by half a cent a container,” said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

“And that was by a study we think inflated the costs of a scheme and undervalued the benefits.”

Beverage companies are saying that people would not bother to redeem the ten cent deposit and would thus bear the cost.

“That too is nonsense as actual operating schemes have about 80% participation in South Australia and overseas. Consumers do want their money back. Another strong piece of evidence is that in the last three months Alice Springs has had a 5 cent deposit and over 1.6million cans have been handed in.

“When the Environment Ministers meet in Perth on Thursday they should take the next key step to consult the community by releasing a regulatory impact statement,” Mr Angel said.

Latest News

AUSTRALIAN RECYCLERS READY TO RIP



Created on Tuesday, 27 October 2009 09:42

Industry and green groups say Australia could have an electronic waste recycling scheme by mid-2010 if federal and state environment ministers deliver on new laws at their meeting next week.

"It's been a five year wait due to government procrastination, but the scheme could be rolled out by June 2010, generating environmental benefits and green jobs," said Jeff Angel, Director of the Total Environment Centre (TEC). "But only if the Commonwealth plays ball by linking imports to involvement in the recycling scheme."

Meanwhile tens of millions of end-of-life TVs and other electronic goods are heading straight to landfill, wasting rare resources and creating a toxic legacy.

"There is no time to waste," said John Gertsakis, Executive Officer of the TV industry's Product Stewardship Association. "In simple terms, industry is asking to be regulated to ensure a level playing field for all companies."

"Minister Garrett and his State counterparts hold the key to permanently solving an increasingly serious environmental problem. Next week's meeting will test whether Australia's environment ministers are serious about e-waste. A poor decision from governments will not only disengage the TV industry, it will also fail the community and their desire for a sustainable future," said Gertsakis.

Environment Victoria Campaigner Fraser Brindley said that the federal government must introduce a national e-waste recycling scheme while analogue television transmission is being phased out. "Australia is facing a turnover of the entire stock of televisions. A national e-waste recycling scheme goes hand in hand with the transfer to digital television."

"The recycling industry needs effective Federal safety net regulation such as import licensing to give business certainty. This must include stringent enforcement and associated penalties to ensure that all TV and computer manufacturers and suppliers take on their e-waste recycling and waste management obligations," the groups said.

Latest News

AUSTRALIA'S TOXIC TYRE TRADE DISGRACE



Created on Tuesday, 20 October 2009 12:26

Australia has hit a new low in the irresponsible disposal of hazardous waste, said the Boomerang Alliance today, after reviewing the export of wasted tyres to developing countries – a toxic trade which exposes Australia's failure to develop an effective recycling scheme.

"Tyres are known to be hazardous and over 60% (over 11 million) of Australia's waste tyres are being sent overseas – mostly to Vietnam where the environment regulator does not want them," said Dave West, National Campaign Director of the Boomerang Alliance.

"This is equivalent to over one million kg of toxic chemicals being sent offshore – it's absolutely irresponsible for us to expect a developing nation to deal with our pollution," said Mr West.

Australia is a signatory to The Basel Convention (the international agreement to restrict international trade in waste) which calls for its OECD members (including Australia) to minimise their waste exports into developing nations. In response the European Union has prohibited trade in tyres and just last month the UK Environment Agency successfully brought the first prosecution on tyre export. Waste tyres can also become vectors for mosquito borne diseases such as dengue and yellow fever.

"We have alerted Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett to the dangers of this deplorable situation and we are confident that he will act," said Mr West.

For over a decade the Tyre Industry has lobbied government to assist in the implementation of a National Tyre Recycling Scheme* that will see industry invest nearly \$2million, but it has been stymied by state and federal bureaucracies unwilling to provide any regulatory protection to stop unscrupulous operators avoiding the scheme to undercut prices. The proposed tyre recycling scheme is on the agenda for the combined state, territory and federal environment ministers to discuss at the Environment Protection and Heritage Council meeting on November 5th in Perth.

"The focus now is on whether we can turn the page and build a 21st century recycling economy," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre. "This is the moment for an historic decision on A National Waste Policy and the long overdue recycling schemes for tyres, electronic waste and beverage containers."

* The tyre recycling scheme is projected to generate around \$90m per year in GDP, creating new jobs; saving 500,000+ tonnes of greenhouse gas a year; and generating over \$7m pa in government revenue.

Latest News

OPPORTUNITIES LOST AS E-WASTE SPIRALS



Created on Thursday, 08 October 2009 15:42

A new report detailing the spiralling electronic waste (e-waste) problem in Australia was released by Total Environment Centre (TEC) and Environment Victoria today.

The 2009 Update of the Tipping Point Report estimates that there are 234 million items of e-waste in or on their way to landfill. This is a marked increase on what was originally predicted in the 2008 edition of the report.

“The huge Australian appetite for electronic products means the Environment Ministers must urgently get the ball rolling on a national television and computer recycling scheme at their 5 November EPHC meeting,” said Director of the Total Environment Centre, Jeff Angel. “We mustn’t tolerate next to zero recycling rates alongside sales figure that are going through the roof any longer.”

The Report shows that a recycling scheme for televisions and computers would create 2,570 jobs nationally by 2015. This could be increased to 6,190 new jobs if all electronic waste was included.

Environment Victoria Campaigner Fraser Brindley said that e-waste recycling made economic sense. “The government’s own figures show that a recycling scheme for televisions and computers would have a net economic benefit,” Mr Brindley said. “We’ve shown that this will translate into thousands of green collar jobs across the country.”

Mr Brindley also said that a recycling scheme for televisions and computers was a good start, but that the federal government should include all other e-waste in the future.

“Televisions and computers are only 38% of the e-waste going to landfill,” Mr Brindley said. “We also need to deal with the mountains of mobile phones, printers, games consoles, videos and stereo that are not being recycled.”

This 2009 Update follows the release of the consultation Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) for televisions and computers. This is a government process that will inform the 5 November 2009 meeting of the Environment Protection and Heritage Council (EPHC), at which Ministers have promised to announce a recycling scheme for televisions and computers.

The Total Environment Centre and Environment Victoria have joined with recyclers and industry groups in supporting an import license model for televisions and computers. This model would require importers of televisions and computers to join an organisation responsible for the collection and recycling of end-of-life televisions and computers.

For a copy of the report: <http://rebornewaste.wordpress.com/>

Latest News

AUSTRALIA'S E-WASTE CRISIS



Created on Tuesday, 06 October 2009 11:11

The Total Environment Centre and Environment Victoria have released a new report today detailing the spiralling electronic waste (e-waste) problem in Australia. The 2009 Update of the Tipping Point report estimates that there are 234 million items of e-waste in or on their way to landfill.

This is a marked increase in what was originally predicted in the 2008 edition of the report. Director of the Total Environment Centre Jeff Angel said: "Australians' hunger for electronic products underscores the urgency for Environment Ministers to get the ball rolling at their 5 November meeting with a national television and computer recycling scheme. Next to zero recycling rates can no longer be tolerated alongside sales figures and the waste of resources that is going through the roof."

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Latest News

NSW wastes \$1.8 billion recycling opportunity



Created on Monday, 28 September 2009 15:59

While the governments of Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia are making big investments in their recycling industry, NSW has made little to no investment in recycling, despite having the highest waste levies in the country, the Boomerang Alliance said at the forum at NSW Parliament.

The forum involving members of the recycling industry, local government and environment groups was also told that NSW risked losing \$1.8 billion in investment unless the state government acted to boost the NSW recycling industry.

“NSW has a big economy and a big population which produces large amounts of waste which we should be recycling and using to create jobs, increase productivity and feed into a vibrant new green economy,” said Jeff Angel, the Boomerang Alliance Convener and director of Total Environment Centre.

“Recent reports that NSW will fail to reach its recycling targets and has fallen well behind Victoria, South Australia and the ACT are worrying,” he said.

“Over the past 5 years the amount of waste going to landfill has increased by over 800,000 tonnes. The 7.3million tonnes of decomposing garbage and toxic contaminants we landfill in NSW are producing something like 7 million tones of greenhouse gas each year,” said Dave West, Campaign Director for the Boomerang Alliance.

“The state government must lift its game,” Mr West added. “It collects an enormous amount of money from the waste levy but investment in reprocessing is languishing. This is where we can create several thousand jobs and make a big contribution to reducing greenhouse gas pollution.”

The National Recycling Initiative has been proposed by the historic coalition of green and industry groups which attended the forum today to review progress and work on a recycling industry plan to present to state and federal governments.

“It’s extraordinary to think that at a time when the state is going broke, the NSW Government is passing up \$1.8 billion in potential investment,” said Mr West. “While the industry, local government and environment groups are working together to find solutions the state government continues to stick its head in the sand. What a waste.”

Latest News

QUIT PUSSYFOOTING ON RECYCLING BONANZA



Created on Thursday, 17 September 2009 15:36

In the latest inquiry the Australian Senate has reported this afternoon that federal and state environment ministers should advance analysis of container deposits schemes 'without delay'.

"A container deposit system (CDS) will collect 11 billion containers a year," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre. "It will underwrite thousands of new convenient waste collection centers, not only for beverage containers but also problem products like batteries and electronic waste.

"CD will also deliver well over 3,000 new jobs; \$500million of new economic activity each year; and a surplus of \$50million to invest in waste reprocessing to help cut our greenhouse footprint by well over 1million tones."

Dave West, National Campaign Director of the Boomerang Alliance, called on government to stop pussyfooting and get on with one of the most important recycling decisions in decades.

"The public has been waiting ten years for action. Poll after poll shows that the community demands a container deposit scheme. It's time for government to stop listening to the beverage industry which thrusts one way containers onto the community as well as massively increasing waste dumping," said Mr West.

"On 6 November every Commonwealth, state and territory environment minister will be meeting in Perth to decide on container deposits. It's time for environment ministers, in particular from NSW and Victoria, to stop passing the buck."

Previous CD reports to government are – Independent review of container deposits legislation in NSW (2001); Stakeholder Advisory Group on Best Practice CDS for Western Australia (2007); Feasibility of a CDS for Tasmania (2009); Senate Inquiry into the Management of Australia's Waste Streams (2008); Senate Inquiry into Environment Protection (Beverage Container Deposit and Recovery Scheme) Bill (2009).

Latest News

HISTORIC E-RECYCLING BREAKTHROUGH



Created on Saturday, 29 August 2009 01:18

Environment Victoria's campaigner Fraser Brindley said the new system would be no trouble at all for consumers and would mean most of the 16.8 million computers and TVs thrown away each year would be recycled.

"Instead of dumping old or broken TVs and computers on the nature strip, consumers would be able to drop off their e-waste at one of the specialised recycling depots," he said.

The Customs Import Model is one of nine options put forward by the federal government in its recently released Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) for televisions and computers.

Environment Victoria, the Total Environment Centre (TEC), Product Stewardship Australia (PSA) and recyclers MRI and Sims agreed to support the model because it will be simple to implement for everyone and will help stop e-waste from going to landfill.

Senior Vice President of SIMS Recycling, Kumar Radhakrishnan, said a Choice Modelling study "proves the community wants an e-waste recycling system and is willing to pay for it. With green groups and industry having reached consensus on the recycling model and the necessary investments, the government must act immediately and put the legislation in place."

Executive Director of the Total Environment Centre, Jeff Angel, said "this is a watershed moment where Australians' love of technology crosses paths with their love of the environment. It makes sense to tag imports for e-waste recycling rather than buying electronic goods and then dumping them as toxic products."

Managing Director of MRI, Will Le Messurier, said a comprehensive television and computer recycling scheme will lead to the creation of hundreds of jobs.

"E-waste recycling is a complex and high-tech process that requires skilled labour to extract valuable and rare resources that would otherwise end in landfill," he said. "This scheme will be a winner for both jobs and the environment."

John Gertsakis, Executive Officer from Product Stewardship Australia, a not-for-profit industry body representing major televisions brands, said "the time has come for the federal government to match the commitments of TV suppliers with intelligent regulation that enables cost-effective environmental outcomes."

Latest News

CONTAINER DEPOSITS KICK ARSE



Created on Tuesday, 25 August 2009 21:40

“The cost of CD to consumers will be a miniscule 0.4 cents a container, and the system is expected to create some 2,000 jobs and a net yearly saving to governments of at least \$83 million,” TEC will tell a Senate Inquiry into Environment Protection (Beverage Container Deposit and Recovery Scheme) Bill 2009, at a hearing in Melbourne today.

“The only cost will be to those who don’t retrieve their deposit, i.e. those who choose to either landfill, litter or donate their deposit,” said Jeff Angel, Director of TEC.

“Nationally we estimate that CD will inject approx. \$100mill p.a. into the economy and increase the Australian tax wedge by some \$36million p.a.,” said Angel.

More importantly CD will finance a second tier recycling system, in addition to kerbside, with hundreds of local hubs that can receive problem materials such as e-waste and batteries.

“CD has the potential to kick-start the most substantial investment in recycling that Australia is likely to see, serving the community and the environment for decades to come,” said Angel.

Latest News

GREEN GROUPS, BUSINESS AGREE ON E-WASTE SCHEME



Created on Thursday, 20 August 2009 04:25

Green groups and industry have declared their joint support for the creation a national televisions and computer recycling scheme to be run by the Federal Government.

In response to proposals in a 'regulatory impact statement', Environment Victoria (EV), the Total Environment Centre (TEC), e-waste recyclers MRI and Sims, and Product Stewardship Australia (PSA), a not-for-profit industry body representing major televisions brands have all called for the Federal Government scheme, that would include products imported into Australia. Local councils are also supporting the scheme.

After many years of deliberation the Federal Government needs to honour their commitment to resolve this issue when environment ministers meet later this year.

Boomerang Alliance submission to E-Waste RIS

Latest News

LOCAL COUNCIL CLOUTS CPRS



Created on Thursday, 20 August 2009 01:10

“This bold step shows that Marrickville Council is spearheading the call by councils to ensure that all voluntary action counts,” said Jane Castle, senior campaigner at TEC. “Local governments are reducing emissions beyond the Federal Government’s weak targets, but unless these reductions are counted under the new law, they will simply subsidise the obligations of the big polluters.”

Voluntary actions account for reductions of around 6 million tonnes of carbon every year but under current Federal Government policies, the present scheme merely allows big emitters to pollute more, while Australia’s cap stays the same.

In 2007/08 Australian councils reduced 4.7 million tonnes of emissions, equivalent to taking one million cars off the road for a year. Marrickville Council has set a target of reducing emissions in the Marrickville LGA by 20% below 1996 levels by 2010. The Council saved over 18,000 tonnes of CO2 in 2006/07, with even more expected for the following year.

“We call on all Australian councils to vigorously pressure the Federal Government to fix this problem,” said Castle. “Councils are on the frontline, with direct relationships with the public. It is vital that their voices are heard and that they encourage Australians to take action – both at the home and by holding their Federal representatives to account.”

Latest News

LANDFILLERS DO THE DIRTY



Created on Thursday, 06 August 2009 19:45

“If the owners are successful a myriad of small but potentially toxic tips will be excluded from the emissions trading scheme,” said Sarah Van Erp, Waste Minimisation Campaigner at TEC.

“Landfill is already responsible for millions of tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions each year. Once you throw waste into a dump it leaks methane, a potent greenhouse gas for many years.”

Van Erp said the move is a blatant attempt to exempt small landfill sites from being responsible for reducing their emissions.

“It’s being done for vested interest reasons and is not a helpful climate change policy. The result could be waste going to hundreds of smaller, uncovered sites.”

Analysis used by the landfillers recommends that only 20-30 km - compared to the current suggested 82 km – is adequate to stop waste displacement between landfills covered and not covered by the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS).

“The CPRS already ignores emissions from legacy waste. We are concerned that weakening the policy on waste displacement will worsen Australia’s greenhouse emissions problem,” said Van Erp.

Latest News

WITLESS WHITSUNDAY COUNCIL REJECTS RECYCLING



Created on Friday, 31 July 2009 21:53

“The Whitsunday Council needs to be transparent about what they have, and more importantly have not, included in their analysis,” said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

“The Mayor talks about the greenhouse impact of the use of diesel fuel but that’s not the full story. We want to know if Council has included the big carbon cost of methane emissions from landfills, and the benefits of recycling, which include more jobs, reduced carbon emissions, and energy, water and virgin resource savings in the economy. These things have major economic and environmental implications for the community.”

“We suspect the Council is taking a narrow, parochial view,” Mr Angel said. “The majority of people are willing to pay for recycling. This is the case for all ratepayers who have a kerbside recyclables collection system in Australia.”

“However it’s also a fact that the lack of a government waste levy on landfills makes landfill artificially cheap by ignoring the environmental costs. Queensland is the largest state in Australia not to have a waste levy, while grossly underpricing landfill and making it very difficult for resource recovery to compete. Local councils have opposed waste levies in Queensland and the inevitable result is more waste and pollution.”

Mr Angel said this is totally irresponsible.

“Without a waste levy and council support for recycling, the environmental and social impacts of land filling, which include buried resources, methane emissions, toxic leachate, degraded and contaminated land, are simply disregarded,” Mr Angel said.

Latest News

THROWAWAY TRUMPS REPAIR



Created on Saturday, 25 July 2009 01:13

The closure last month of The Electronic Technician's Institute of Australia (TETIA) and the shut-down at the end of the year of Television Electronic Services Association (TESA), signals a throw-away society out of step with environmental imperatives.

With almost 16 million electronic items going to landfill each year, environment ministers are currently discussing options for e-waste recycling, but a recycling scheme might not start until late into 2010 or 2011.

“State and federal governments have utterly failed to drive sustainable consumption,” said Jane Castle, Senior Campaigner at TEC. “We’re supposed to be in an environmental crisis, yet the throw-away society is becoming even more rapacious. Governments need to build a green economy with incentives for remanufacturing, not unsustainable consumption.”

TETIA, founded in 1956, provided professional technical support for electronics technicians and engineers in each State. TESA NSW (the last remaining branch) which was formed in 1962, and supports electronics businesses involved in repair, rentals, sales or the supply of electronic parts, has decided to cease operating at the end of 2009.

“Australia needs to rebuild a vibrant repair industry that increases the life cycle of products. Remanufacturing and reuse can help stop climate change, conserve non-renewable resources and reduce pressure on landfills.”

“The environmental costs of ‘buy-dump-buy’ should be included in the price of new products and the environmental benefits of repair and remanufacturing recognised. Currently it’s the other way around: extending the lives of products is artificially expensive, and drives consumers back to the mall rather than to the local repairer.”

“Manufacturers need incentives to design products for longevity, not for premature obsolescence. Implementing extended producer responsibility needs rapid implementation to ensure that manufacturers are responsible for the collection and recycling of the products they design and sell.”

Latest News

EXPLOSIVE GAS CYLINDER BURDEN



Created on Saturday, 18 July 2009 00:24

“Australians love their barbeques but few realise the potential hazards of used gas cylinders,” said TEC’s waste minimisation project officer, Helen Kerley.

“245,000 cylinders per year are disposed of in NSW and many sneak into the wrong places where their potential to explode proves a real danger to recyclers and landfill operators.”

A Victorian take-back scheme for gas cylinders could be in place as early as October 2009, but the New South Wales Government has snubbed efforts by swap operators, recyclers, community groups and the Victorian state government to bring the scheme to NSW.

“Not recycling these cylinders is a complete waste of resources and without being safely decommissioned, too many become dangerous stowaways amongst old cars and fridges headed to metal recyclers and landfills.

“The NSW government must urgently address this problem,” said Kerley. “Metal recyclers are spending millions on protective equipment and employee hours as they search out hidden cylinders, as well as dealing with major OH&S risks, damage to equipment, fines, and shut downs.

“The Department of Environment and Climate Change in NSW should set up a product stewardship scheme with strong recovery targets and transparent reporting processes instead of blaming the recyclers,” Kerley concluded.

“This is a case of community groups and business which are working together to identify resource recovery solutions being hindered by a government’s inability to accept its responsibilities.”

Latest News

INQUIRY NEEDED INTO PACKAGING INDUSTRY BLACKMAIL



Created on Wednesday, 08 July 2009 20:48

“We understand that KABC Qld was told it would lose tens of thousands of dollars in support if it publicly supported the introduction of a container deposit system. An independent inquiry is needed,” said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

Groups such as Coca Cola and the key packaging lobby group, the Packaging Stewardship Forum run out of the Australian Food and Grocery Council (AFGC) have been vociferous opponents of container deposits.

“We have a clear understanding that this is about a direct threat to influence an environment group’s public statements and was expressed as such. It was not as stated by the AFGC today, that a container deposit system would inevitably lead to KABC projects becoming irrelevant. After all KABC has a wider agenda than just litter.”

“Australia’s federal and state environment ministers are in the throes of deciding on whether to introduce a container deposit system which would massively increase collection and recycling to over 11 billion beverage containers a year and set up hundreds of local hubs that would also collect other products like used batteries and e-waste.”

“The packaging industry is already using misinformation in the public debate and now appears to have resorted to intimidation and dirty tactics.”

“The behaviour is unacceptable and there should be an independent inquiry into which group or groups acted in this manner,” Mr Angel said.

“We also wonder if this tactic is restricted to the Queensland branch. Other branches should reveal if they have also come under pressure to keep quiet about support for container deposits in return for funding,” Mr Angel concluded.

Latest News

COUNCILS NEED TAKE-BACK E-WASTE SUPPORT



Created on Saturday, 13 June 2009 01:27

“Local Government consistently carries the cost of e-waste disposal practices. What’s urgently needed is a national recycling program supported at State and Federal levels which would massively increase support for kerb-side collection and create convenient drop-off centres for e-waste and other products such as beverage containers,” said Mr Angel.

With over 100,000 toxic electronic items on their way to Australia’s landfills at the end of 2008, Mr Angel said an “extended producer responsibility approach” is the only way to take the pressure off local government and push responsibility back up the chain to the producers.

“Electronic waste contains toxic elements such as lead, cadmium, mercury and barium. It is clear the community no longer deems it acceptable to send these materials and the other recyclables such as glass and plastic to landfills.

“Australia’s environment ministers recently announced they were moving towards a national e-waste recycling scheme with a final decision in November. It’s been a long time coming and we need to keep up the pressure to make sure they deliver,” said Mr Angel.

TEC urges the community at large to take action by visiting www.reborn.org.au and by e-mailing Minister Garrett and Minister Tebbutt in support of a sustainable electronics recycling scheme.

Latest News

MINISTERS MAKE WASTE HISTORY



Created on Monday, 25 May 2009 20:48

The 18th meeting of the Environment Protection & Heritage Council (EPHC) in Tasmania today resolved to introduce a 'fluoro recycling scheme' and to finalise industry schemes for tyres, computers and TVs by its next meeting in November. The EPHC also rejected the beverage industries calls to retain the controversial National Packaging Covenant as the sole tool to increase packaging recycling and will progress investigations to introduce a national container deposit system.

"This is a change from the years of inaction, but there's a still long way to go. The ministers have recognised the overwhelming public support for more recycling and were clearly unimpressed by arguments from the packaging lobby, such as Coke. Supporters of electronic and tyre recycling who have been pressing for national regulation will have to work hard in the next six months to get the best result," said Jeff Angel Director of Total Environment Centre.

Environment Victoria's Production and Consumption Campaigner Fraser Brindley supported today's decisions. "While there hasn't been any final resolution today, Ministers have shown a willingness for progress that has been absent in recent years" said Mr Brindley. "We look forward to some concrete decisions by the end of the year so that Australia can take advantage of the green jobs opportunities available in recycling."

"Ministers have begun to hear the community's demands but we will still have to combat the beverage industry untruths and ensure the major economic benefits of recycling receive full recognition. We will be mobilising the full resources of the Boomerang Alliance and community's support for recycling to ensure this unique opportunity is not squandered." said Dave West National Campaign Coordinator for the Boomerang Alliance.

Latest News

CONTAINER DEPOSITS – NOT JUST ABOUT LITTER



Created on Wednesday, 20 May 2009 22:50

“CDS is not just about litter,” said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre. “It lays a sustainable financial basis for convenient drop-off systems for other products like electronic waste that people want recycled. This already occurs in South Australia where over 24,000 tonnes are collected each year. Major businesses like Sims and Global Renewables support such a system.

Mr Angel said beverage companies and environment ministers that oppose CDS “are standing in the way of a 21st century recycling system that will collect 11 billion containers a year and hundreds of thousands of tonnes of other products; create over 2,000 jobs and generate over \$100 million (net) each year for federal, state and local governments.

“There are no political, economic and environmental downsides to the scheme, and Federal and state environment ministers who are meeting in Hobart this Friday should grasp this opportunity.”

The scheme has the support of key businesses such as SIMs, Global Renewables, and the Australian Battery Recycling Initiative. Extracts from letters to TEC follow:

Wayne Richardson, President, Australian Battery Recycling Initiative said: “the predominance of kerbside recycling within Australia has meant that the development of convenient and accessible recycling hubs for other items not collected as part of household recycling services has been neglected....computers, electrical appliances, mobile phones, other e-wastes, beverage containers, light globes and plastic bags would benefit from a shared product/shared brand platform for reverse logistics.”

John Lawson, General Manager Development, Global Renewables agreed that “if this return infrastructure is appropriately designed and located, it ...could provide for the efficient consolidation and return of products which are at the same time hazardous and valuable - gas bottles, lead acid batteries, post-consumer pharmaceuticals, household hazardous chemicals, paints and solvents, and so on.”

Kumar Radhakrishnam, Sims, Vice President APAC said “we see no reason why e-waste and beverage container recyclers cannot work together - a system of suburban container depots which could also be used for non-bulky electronic waste such as mobile phones, home telephones, batteries, chargers etc is a welcome idea... and recyclers have the necessary infrastructure to treat this appropriately.”

Latest News

RECYCLE TOXIC ELECTRONIC WASTE, SAY GREEN GROUPS



Created on Monday, 18 May 2009 20:47

The call for action comes days before State and Federal Environment Ministers are due to meet for the bi-annual Environment Protection and Heritage Council (EPHC) meeting where they will discuss the issue of recycling electronic waste or e-waste as it is commonly known.

Fraser Brindley from Environment Victoria said e-waste was the fastest growing waste stream in Australia and was only going to get worse with the switch to digital technology next year.

“E-waste is toxic and should not be thrown into landfill. Old TVs and computer monitors each contain more than a kilogram of lead which is poisonous and can leak from rubbish tips into our environment. With approximately 168 million pieces of e-waste already in landfill, this is already a huge problem,” he said.

“Keeping e-waste out of landfill is not rocket science but state and federal governments have been procrastinating for years on the issue. They are lagging behind others including the European Union who introduced a ‘take back’ scheme for e-waste six years ago.

“Introducing a recycling scheme for e-waste will also boost the economy. The government could potentially create 210 jobs in Victoria and more than 850 nationwide. There are other benefits too, check out our new website www.reborn.org.au launched today for more information.”

TV and IT industry groups, including Product Stewardship Australia (PSA) which represents a dozen leading television manufacturers, also support a nation-wide take-back and recycling scheme for e-waste.

PSA’s executive officer John Gertsakis said manufacturers are eager to see the development and enforcement of effective regulations to ensure that all consumer electronics companies and TV suppliers fulfil their environmental and recycling responsibilities.

This historic agreement between environment groups and the electronics industry association means that a recycling levy in the price of products can and must happen said TEC’s director, Jeff Angel.

“The environmental and economic credentials of state and federal governments will be on trial at the EPHC meeting in Hobart this Friday,” he said.

“Government can’t afford – economically, environmentally or politically - to be the odd man out. We can create jobs, recover valuable resources and avoid the dumping of hundreds of millions of electronic items in landfill. The level of public support is high and the community wants action.”

Latest News

ToxicElectronicWasteZombiesComeToTown



Created on Monday, 18 May 2009 20:36

Made by TEC's senior campaigner Jane Castle, an internationally successful music clip maker and cinematographer, ToxicElectronicWasteZombiesComeToTown features e-waste zombies appealing to Minister Peter Garrett's office for a second chance at life after obsolescence.

Castle, who has worked with Prince, U2, Usher, Midnight Oil and of course INXS, cut the ToxicZombies clip from TEC campaign footage using music by local musicians she found on ww.looperman.com. (Kiyari by Ioka; [NEW] Power Generation by Gui Killer; and Kick BASS by Ferdani)

"The music industry is heavily into new technology, but how many bands think about where their equipment goes when they upgrade?" Castle asked today. "Most of it ends up in landfill where it leaks a motherload of toxins such as lead into the earth.

"Australians need to lobby our environment ministers to deal with this issue before they gather later this week in Hobart for the bi-annual Environment Protection and Heritage Council (EPHC) meeting. This problem is not going to go away. Government needs to provide us with infrastructure and solutions before we see mountains of toxic junk surrounding our cities and despoiling the landscape."

Castle urged Aussie music lovers to visit www.reborn.org.au to register their support for the campaign.

The YouTube link for ToxicElectronicWasteZombiesComeToTown is <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bw3ZNTqoz0I>

Latest News

AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITIES DEMAND CONTAINER DEPOSIT SCHEME



Created on Friday, 15 May 2009 20:13

“Environment Ministers meet next Friday May 22nd in Hobart to make a decision on whether to introduce container deposits. It’s time to act,” said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

“Such a scheme will recover over 11 billion containers each year, reduce litter, increase recycling and create hundreds of jobs and new financial support for local government kerbside operations.

“The roll out of a container deposits system will be an investment in 21st century green infrastructure that will serve the community and the environment for decades to come.”

Mr Angel urged Ministers to ignore the opposition coming from the supermarkets and beverage companies like Coca Cola.

“The companies don’t have the facts and are misrepresenting information,” he said.

“For example they are claiming a massive impost on consumers through higher prices. But if you return the container to claim the deposit back, you pay virtually nothing.

“The many container deposit systems overseas and in South Australia show a participation rate of about 80%, so obviously most people won’t face higher prices,” Mr Angel said.

Latest News

GREEN WASTE STREAM IS A MUST



Created on Thursday, 07 May 2009 23:11

TEC called for the introduction of an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Scheme to keep toxic waste such as lead batteries out of landfills and Advanced Waste Treatment (AWT) plants.

“We must divert lead batteries and other nasties from our composting waste streams,” said TEC’s spokesperson, Helen Kerley.

“Batteries, particularly used, lead-acid car batteries (aka ULABs) are a major source of contamination for AWTs, and render compost worthless. Just two crushed ULABs are enough to contaminate a day’s compost production at a standard AWT plant.”

Creating top quality compost which is not contaminated by plastics, e-waste, and other hazardous waste, is imperative said Kerley.

“AWTs represent some of the best practice approaches to waste management. It makes environmental and economic sense to divert rubbish from landfill to composting and recycling streams.”

Kerley also pointed out that each tonne of lead manufactured from virgin resources emits around 2.1 tonnes of CO₂-e.

“Australia urgently needs to reduce the carbon emissions associated with the manufacture of lead from primary raw materials and recovery of the lead from batteries will help,” she said.

Latest News

INDUSTRY AND ENVIRONMENTALISTS UNITE ON E-WASTE



Created on Thursday, 07 May 2009 00:44

The 'End-of-life Computer Equipment Compact' comes as Australia's environment ministers prepare for a key meeting later in May.

"We have to stop the stream of millions of computers and televisions being dumped into landfill," said Jeff Angel director of the Total Environment Centre. "This compact sets out the principles we want government to build into a proper regulatory regime that covers the entire industry. The environmental benefits are significant."

Ian Birks, Chief Executive Officer of the AIIA, said: "We are pleased to be working with the environment movement to develop a uniform national approach to the management of electronic waste. There is clearly widespread recognition by consumers of this need. We have been pushing for the government to provide a consistent regulatory framework that excludes 'free riders' for some time, so that we can confidently roll out a nationwide take-back and recycling scheme".

Both groups said a computer and television recycling scheme would create jobs in the push for a green economy.

"Industry and green groups agree on principles and are calling for action, and the government needs to catch up," said Mr Angel. "But the situation can be fixed when the Environment Ministers meet in Hobart on 22 May."

Ian McAlister, Executive Director of the Consumer Electronics Suppliers Association, whose membership includes the majority of television manufacturers, agreed.

"It is accepted across industry that we want to do the right thing on end-of-life product stewardship, but we do need government help. We need it to provide a framework that ensures that all suppliers, not just the 'good guys', do the right thing.

"This compact is a powerful call to government for action, which we whole heartedly support," said Mr McAlister.

The compact is also supported by Environment Victoria, and Clean Up Australia.

Computer and Peripherals Compact

Latest News

\$2billion recycling plan to turn economic gloom to boom



Created on Saturday, 04 April 2009 00:15

Launched today in Sydney, the National Recycling Initiative details (NRI) the industry's commitment to produce significant environmental benefits and increase its workforce by 20 per cent.

The alliance behind the NRI said the plan for growth and new jobs made good business and environmental sense and urged the federal government to partner them in ensuring maximum benefits were delivered for all Australians.

"By investing heavily in new infrastructure over the next five years, Australian recyclers will be able to ensure more steps in the recycling process occurs in Australia, creating new economic opportunities, instead of going offshore," Lee Smith from Visy Recycling, which will commit almost half of the \$2 billion in new investment, said.

Signatories to the NRI have committed to:

1. Retain 10,000 current recycling industry workers
2. Inject \$2 billion into new infrastructure
3. Increase recycling by two million tonnes per year
4. Employ 2000 extra direct staff and a further 4000 indirect jobs
5. Increase the value of recycling exports by \$500 million per year
6. Direct benefit to Australian economy of \$1.5 billion/yr and approx. \$7 billion in new activity.

David West, the National Campaign Director of the Boomerang Alliance urged the federal government to support the NRI. "Recyclers are asking governments to commit \$100 million per annum for the next five years. Its investment would be more than offset by increased government revenues from the sector, which are conservatively valued at \$445 million per annum."

Total Environment Centre Director Jeff Angel said the NRI would also significantly boost recycling in Australia. "Right now there is over 20 million tonnes of landfill that can be recycled rather than buried in the ground. Every tonne of material diverted to recycling will produce an extra \$775 in economic value to the Australian economy. This is all about bringing recycling, one of the community's most popular environmental actions, together with thousands of new green jobs."

Anne Prince, CEO of the Australian Council of Recyclers said "The global economic downturn and collapse in demand for recycled commodities has put pressure on every link in the recycling chain. But, rather than slowing down and trying to simply ride out the storm, recyclers have a plan for major growth to boost recycling, protect and create Australian jobs."

The NRI has been developed by the Boomerang Alliance, with the support of the Australian Council of Recyclers (ACOR). The NRI brings together more than 20 of the nation's biggest recyclers, Australia's leading environment groups and a substantial cross section of local governments.

Latest News

NT CONTAINER DEPOSITS DECISION OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE



Created on Friday, 13 March 2009 04:06

“This decision will be good for the environment; create jobs and reduce waste management costs of councils. It creates a green infrastructure for resource recovery,” said Jeff Angel, TEC director.

South Australia has had Container Deposit Legislation (CDL) in place since 1977. CDL in South Australia requires beverage companies to place a refundable deposit on containers.

“South Australia’s greater than 80% beverage container recovery rate and the noticeable lack of litter on highways, parks and beaches, shows that container deposit systems are proven to be highly effective in addressing away from home litter,” said Mr. Angel.

“It’s been a long time since another state embraced CDL and the decision by the Northern Territory should encourage other states to follow. We agree with the government that national progress has been too slow – a decision should be made at the May meeting of federal and state environment ministers for all states to go for container deposits.”

Latest News

E-Waste Outcasts Want a Home, Tell Garrett



Created on Friday, 12 December 2008 03:03

The report, "Tipping Point: Australia's E-waste Crisis" to be presented to Peter Garrett's office at 10am Friday 12th Dec, outlines Australia's spiraling electronic waste problem as millions of computers, televisions, mobile phones, compact fluorescent lamps and other e-waste products make their way into landfill every year.

"This is the motherboard of all problems," said Jeff Angel, TEC Director. "Federal and State governments must act to stop the dumping of millions of electronic items in landfill, each year. They're recycled overseas; the community and business want the same here."

"We're talking 37 million computers, 17 million televisions, 56 million mobile phones in landfill or on their way there by the end of 2008 with less than 4% recycling rate. And it's only going to get worse. Australians are among the top 10 ten consumers of electronic technology in the world, however Australia has fallen behind the rest of the developed world because it lacks responsible end of life management for these products."

Electronic products contain toxic materials such as mercury, lead, arsenic brominated flame retardants, beryllium and cadmium which are leaked from landfill into the environment.

"Inaction from State and Federal governments on the issue has seen the lack of environmentally responsible options for electronic waste reach crisis point. We are asking the Environment Ministers to act swiftly on regulating to support the television industry's product stewardship scheme and mandate producer responsibility for the collection and recycling of all end-of-life computers and mobile phones."

"We hope to see Peter Garrett take the lead," stated Mr. Angel.

The media stunt taking place this morning (12th Dec) will see "E-Waste Outcasts" in the form of malfunctioning computers converging on Peter Garrett's office, 77 Phillip St, Sydney at 10am. Media are encouraged to attend and interviews can be arranged with Jeff Angel from TEC and Fraser Brindley from Environment Victoria.

To download the report click [here](#).

To see a full list of E-waste recyclers, go to TEC's [Computer Recycling Guide](#) by clicking [here](#).

Latest News

Recycling and E-waste: TEC on "Australia Talks" ABC radio



Created on Friday, 21 November 2008 22:24

About 8 million new mobile phones are sold in Australia each year and at last estimate, there were more mobiles in this country than people. But what happens to old phones when it comes time to buy new ones? Only about three per cent are recycled; most end up as landfill. The story is not much better for other e-waste— computers, electronic goods, televisions.

Environment groups want the federal government to introduce a scheme of 'extended producer responsibility', where the manufacturer takes charge of the disposal of the goods, not just their production. So what could that add to the cost of a new TV or computer? Should schemes like that be voluntary rather than regulated by government? And what's the consumer's role in recycling?

Latest News

EPHC Mid-term Review of National Packaging Covenant



Created on Wednesday, 12 November 2008 02:07

TEC released the following reports endorsed by the Boomerang Alliance on the mid-term review of the NPCC:

REPORT ONE: Recycling Performance and Data Integrity (Full report here)

Executive Summary:

In order to obtain an accurate view of performance against targets, good data quality is essential. In recent years assistance has been obtained from Pitcher Partners to review the confidence level of the data supplied by the NPCC. Some improvements and adjustments have been made by the NPCC but significant problems remain with the level of confidence over the five year period from 2002 to 2007. The least confidence is for consumption for glass and plastic and imported finished goods cardboard and collection of steel can data which has been suspended by industry.

We have extended the analysis in terms of obtaining additional data, applying several 'tests' and examining other packaging materials that come under the ambit of the NPC but which have so far been excluded, for example, the significant volumes of composite, aseptics and liquid paperboard packaging and tertiary packaging, transport packaging and bulk goods packaging.

It is clear that consumption has been understated and this has the effect of overstating the reported recycling rate. For example, the fastest growing packaging sector – plastic – is shown by the NPCC as having a decreasing consumption rate over the last five years despite increases in population and vigorous economic growth in Australia.

We estimate 2006-07 recycling as 48%, not the 56% reported by the NPCC. Further the overall target of 65% by 2010 is unlikely to be met taking account of NPCC projects, even under an optimistic scenario.

More needs to be done to produce figures that can withstand scrutiny and it is recommended that in order to increase confidence levels so that robust policy decisions can be made, further work is commissioned from Pitcher Partners into data veracity and scope. A substantial assessment of packaging on imported finished goods should also be undertaken.

REPORT TWO: Lessons for the Future (Full Report here)

Executive Summary:

Despite the potential for some benefits the NPC is ill equipped to continue to be regarded as the primary tool to govern the environmental impacts of packaging. It has produced poor results in terms of packaging waste generation and resource recovery; inconsistent performance across the supply chain and regions of Australia; and shrinking domestic reprocessing capabilities and increasing export of recyclate – to name a few problems.

Our report examines weaknesses in the current approach that promotes a refuge from high quality jurisdictional and company action on packaging and promotes piecemeal actions, leaving a gaping absence of a coordinated and comprehensive strategy. According to the Centre for Responsible Design report commissioned for the mid-term review, stakeholders are clearly lacking in drivers to improve product design for recyclability due to a failure of the action plan process. Further there has been a serious reduction in domestic recycling infrastructure with poor planning and funding to keep and develop further sustainable infrastructure.

The NPCC lacks good governance processes and sufficient resources to deal with signatories and improve their performance.

We reapply the RIS criteria applied to the current NPC at its inception in 2005. Our findings include:

1. With one Territory, the largest local government group and entrenched NGO opposition to the NPCC it is clear the original score on stakeholder acceptability was exaggerated.
2. The Centre for Responsible Design report (2008) highlights that labelling remains a significant problem and NPC

education programs are very limited and superficial.

3. The administrative burden of the NPC MkII is if anything, higher than the original NPC.

4. The Centre for Responsible Design reports ongoing issues with the take up of the Environmental Code of Practice for Packaging (ECOPP), and quality of action plans and reports, and NEPM enforcement remains piecemeal.

5. There has been little improvement and at the end of 2007 there was more packaging materials being landfilled than was the case in 2005 and the 'baseline' year of 2003 [see our Report 1].

6. The Centre for Responsible Design report indicates disappointing results in terms of in-house environmental change.

We suggest three tiers that should be used for the current review – effectiveness in meeting resource recovery and environmental objectives (50% weight); scope and economic impacts on signatories and role of key packaging polluters (35%); and administrative considerations 15%) such as independence of processes and equity. In regard to the latter consideration we ask - why are state governments and industry allowed to set their own financial limits on their contribution to packaging recycling, yet local government are expected to carry over 90% of the costs (via support for kerbside) and are underrepresented at the NPCC level?

The ECOPP could be a very strong tool for the future. It could also form the 'shell' to house future action and intervention.

For brand owners like Kellogs, Sanitarium, Kimberley Clark and many other NPCC signatories the vast majority (80%+) of their packaging is readily and viably recyclable (cardboard, aluminium, and PET) and are overwhelmingly sold for "at home" consumption. Visy are also in this category. We believe that it is inequitable that they be expected to make major financial contributions and undertake detailed action plans and reports when a simple annual report on materials consumption and compliance to the ECOPP would more than suffice.

For the more traditional problem packaging (glass, LPB, some plastics, and increasingly steel cans) and convenience products (soft drink, beer, confectionary, take away foods etc) there is a need for a moderate level of regulatory intervention and there is no reason why a model cannot be framed such as a Container Deposit System to address these problems.

For the remaining problem sectors and materials like composite and aseptic packaging, PVC, etc. there are only two choices: a product ban or a mandatory 'take-back to the point of sale' scheme.

Latest News

Waste Mountain Range Needs to be Climbed by Environment Ministers



Created on Friday, 07 November 2008 01:28

“We are calling for five key actions:

- Expedite the establishment of a national extended producer responsibility scheme for televisions, via mandatory industry participation (as requested by the proposed industry plan).
- National regulation to mandate for the capture of burgeoning landfill greenhouse gas emissions.
- Expedite a national extended producer responsibility scheme for computers.
- Prioritise development of a recycling scheme for compact fluorescent lamps in line with the national phase out of incandescent lamps.
- Plan for the 2010 introduction of a national container deposit system,” said Jeff Angel, Director of TEC

“The Senate inquiry heard a lot of evidence from all key stakeholders and came firmly down on the need for action. Australia has lagged behind the world on this issue for too long. The meeting is an opportunity for some true leadership from our governments, let’s not see them waste it again. Take-back schemes that involve the producer in recovery and recycling efforts are essential.”

“If national action is too difficult then we need a key state like NSW (or a group of states) to take the lead.”

“Methane emissions from landfill are responsible for the bulk of greenhouse gas emissions from the waste sector in Australia. Regardless of whether waste is covered by the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS), methane capture should be mandated to ensure that this gas does not contribute to Australia’s emissions. An added benefit is that gas captured can be used to produce energy and run machinery onsite,” he said.

“With billions of containers dumped each year in Australia it’s time for a proven and sustainable way to recover and recycle them to be introduced. Ad hoc schemes like the National Packaging Covenant don’t work. The best proven method overseas and in South Australia is container deposits.”

Latest News

National Packaging Covenant Needs Radical Surgery



Created on Wednesday, 05 November 2008 21:14

“Despite improved data collection by the NPC we’ve discovered a half a million tonne black hole of packaging that has been ignored. This has led to exaggerated claims about recycling. Items like liquid paperboard containers for milk and fruit juice have been missed and the NPC has no figures on glass and plastic packaging on imported goods such as cooking oils, cosmetics, electronics and beverages,” said Jeff Angel, Director of the Centre, who is also the community representative on the Covenant Council.

“We estimate the recycling rate at under 50%, way off the 2010 target of 65% and packaging to landfill is increasing. Our research has used the best available data and confidence ratings.”

“It’s also clear that while packaging recycling has improved in the last eight years, this is more due to export demand and action by local councils at kerbside, than the NPC. It’s difficult to link the NPC to a substantial increase in recycling and there are serious questions about contributions from projects it has funded.”

“This means we have to reassess the future of the NPC which has limited funds and staff so that it can focus on areas where it can make a difference.”

“The Ministers should clear the air about packaging policies. The NPC is not the panacea for the problems of packaging waste and we need a national packaging strategy that can attack the product supply chain, recovery and recycling of waste and consumer behaviour. New regulatory and economic instruments to reduce packaging to landfill should be considered.”

“This is also an important climate change policy because packaging dumped into landfill causes greenhouse gas emissions. Each year about 1 million tonnes of CO₂ is added to greenhouse pollution. ”

Ministers meet on 7 November to review reports from the National Packaging Covenant Council and Total Environment Centre on the future of the Covenant.

Latest News

Industry, Local Government and Green Groups Call for Government Action on Electronic Waste



Created on Tuesday, 04 November 2008 23:39

The Total Environment Centre, the Australian Information Industry Association, Product Stewardship Australia and the NSW Local Government Association are urging Ministers ahead of the Environment Protection and Heritage Council meeting on November 7 to fast-track regulation for end-of-life televisions and computers.

John Gertsakis, Executive Officer of Product Stewardship Australia said, "The television industry has done the right thing by the community, but Governments are resisting a national scheme. Since 2005 we've allocated significant time and resources into developing a permanent collection and recycling program for end-of-life televisions. Environment Ministers effectively hold the key to TV recycling in Australia, yet no decisive action has been taken by Ministers to enact sensible regulatory intervention."

Ian McAlister, Executive Director of the Consumer Electronic Suppliers Association, said, "A national regulatory regime to support industry initiatives to manage end-of-life televisions is a top priority for consumer electronic suppliers. CESA is eager to see the development of regulations and standards to ensure that all consumer electronics companies fulfill their environmental and recycling responsibilities in a fair and equitable way."

Jeff Angel, Executive Director of Total Environment Centre said, "There is a massive disconnect between the community and government on this issue. When green groups and business get together and advocate effective and urgent action, politicians should know there's a big problem that needs solving. Whatever is stopping a comprehensive e-waste recycling scheme, ministers should identify it and eradicate it."

A spokesperson for the Local Government Association of NSW said, "Local Governments have been shouldering an unfair share of the burden on electronic waste. Ironically, the manufacturers of these products are seeking a fair, national extended producer responsibility system. On 7 November, the Environment Protection and Heritage Council must commit the proper resources to regulatory solutions for e-waste."

Chief Executive of the Australian Information Industry Association, Ian Birks added that "an appropriate regulatory framework will be essential to creating a successful industry-based end-of-life product recycling scheme for the ICT sector in Australia. Regulation must be universally applied at the Federal level to be effective, and AIIA members support a penalty system for suppliers who are not willing to participate."

Latest News

Woolies CFL Phase Out Needs Toxic Plan



Created on Thursday, 23 October 2008 23:56

“Woolies need to finish the job they’ve started,” said Helen Kerley, Waste Campaigner at TEC. “We applaud their leadership on energy efficiency but without recycling, they’re creating yet another environmental problem. Woolworths should commit to collecting and recycling the mercury containing lights to avoid a toxic waste legacy, either as part of a national program or stand alone Woolies project. The mercury contained in CFLs will cause a toxic nightmare for the environment and they must be collected and recycled by producers.”

“An early move by Woolworths would help convince state and federal environment ministers to get moving on this urgent problem. Leadership would also enhance the company’s environmental reputation.”

Woolworths Ltd sold 4.3 million CFLs last year in Australia and has recently announced plans to reduce the price of their ‘own brand’ CFLs to increase sales. CFLs contain anywhere between 1–5mg of mercury which, when disposed of in landfill, often breaks down into the toxic methyl mercury. This vapor is even more toxic and is easily distributed via the wind and can find its way into local environmental systems, including waterways.

“Woolworths currently sell over 9 million light bulbs annually, if all these sales are converted to CFLs this could see up to 48 million mgs of mercury being sent to Australia’s landfills. Woolies should take responsibility for the products they sell rather than forcing the costs on the environment and future generations.”

An extended producer responsibility (EPR) scheme would provide a viable recycling pathway for the imminent increase in CFL use. An EPR scheme would solve problems associated with curbside recycling contamination, disposal to landfill and infrequent council hazardous waste collections.

“Australia’s governments are lagging perilously behind on extended producer responsibility for CFLs. Woolies should lead the way by introducing its own recycling scheme aiming for 100% return and recycling of the CFLs they sell. TEC calls upon Woolies to do the right thing and finish what they’ve started.”

“CFLs should be a top priority at the next Environment Protection and Heritage Council meeting on November 11th. There is a straightforward solution - the introduction of producer responsibility recycling schemes. Let’s not avoid this issue any longer,” said Miss Kerley.

Latest News

Litter Study Highlights Need for Container Deposits, Shames Coca-Cola



Created on Thursday, 25 September 2008 20:34

“It’s no surprise that South Australia has again comprehensively trumped the other states on litter. The key difference: South Australia has refundable deposits on drink containers – which also helps save an enormous amount of resources and reduce greenhouse pollution,” said Jeff Angel, TEC director.

“It’s ironic that one of the most vociferous opponents of a proven, successful policy to reduce litter is the worst performing brand: Coca-Cola the most littered brand, comprising almost 10% of all litter.”

“These results support the urgent need for Australian governments to follow South Australia’s lead. Currently, in all states except South Australia, councils are shouldering the cost for collection and disposal of this waste.”

The Keep Australia Beautiful Branded Litter Study was released on Tuesday. Findings show that only 27% of litter in South Australia is containers, which includes alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverage containers and milk containers. This compares with an average in other states and territories of 47%. This is 43% higher than South Australia, with the highest in Western Australia at 61.6% followed by Northern Territory at 54.1%.

South Australia has had Container Deposit Legislation (CDL) in place since 1977. CDL in South Australia requires beverage companies to place a refundable deposit on containers.

“South Australia’s greater than 80% beverage container recovery rate and the noticeable lack of litter on highways, parks and beaches, shows that container deposit systems are proven to be highly effective in addressing away from home litter,” said Mr. Angel.

Latest News

Viability of Recyclers Threatened by Rudd's Climate Change Policies



Created on Wednesday, 24 September 2008 19:36

"It would be a tragedy for Rudd's climate change policies to kill off Australia's greenest companies," said Sarah Van Erp, Waste Minimisation Officer for TEC.

"Companies that are considered emissions intensive trade exposed (EITE), which includes paper and packaging industries that use virgin materials, stand to receive a subsidy for 60-90% of their carbon emissions through free permits. This will severely disadvantage domestic recyclers who won't get the subsidy and may no longer be viable in Australia."

"For example, a packaging and paper manufacturer who uses virgin material emits 14.8% more carbon than a manufacturer who uses recycled materials. Recycling reduces emissions a further 75% by avoiding methane emissions from the landfilled paper waste. Additional co-benefits of recycling include reduced water use and conservation of non-renewable materials makes support for the sector a no-brainer."

Sectors that could be affected include: metals, glass, plastics and other recyclers. The recycling industry represents over 1.2% of Australia's GDP.

"The waste and recycling sector is able to deliver reductions for over 5% of Australia's net emissions by 2020. These fast cuts can be achieved because the technology already exists and is proven, and the lead time to construct infrastructure is relatively short."

"It's vital that the commonwealth and state and territory governments act to ensure that the CPRS does not produce an unintended perverse outcome."

"TEC believes that complementary measures are needed to ensure the survival of the recycling industry in the short to medium term. These should include:

- The phase out of non-stabilised biodegradable waste from landfill (as currently required in Europe) and;
- An inclining carbon levy on all landfill waste, similar to the NSW or the UK systems, with accumulated funds directed to investment in recycling and alternative waste technology infrastructure," Ms Van Erp said.

Latest News

Victoria – more to do on growing waste mountain



Created on Saturday, 30 August 2008 00:06

“In this age of increasing concern over climate change and resource conservation Victoria (and the rest of Australia) needs to reduce waste generation and push recycling efforts even further. The more waste recycled, the less energy used and greenhouse pollution produced,” said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

“The Victorian government should seriously consider a major increase in the waste levy and support for comprehensive product take-back schemes for electronic waste and container deposits. The answer to this growing problem is to adopt policies that can sustain continuous improvement, not pilot projects or ad hoc schemes,” he said.

Environment Victoria’s Campaigns Director Mark Wakeham said:

“To date waste has been a sleeper in the greenhouse debate. However with over 4 million tonnes of materials still going into landfill each year, Victoria needs to give it immediate attention as part of our response to climate change.”

“This report projects that waste to landfill will grow over the next decade, so unless we ramp up recycling and waste reduction, we will be going backwards in this area.”

Latest News

Packaging Industry Gets It Wrong Again



Created on Thursday, 03 July 2008 21:24

In a paper submitted to the hearings into Australia's waste problem by the Senate Environment Committee, it was revealed industry claims that the best recycling European countries did not have a container deposit scheme – were false.

“The fact is that all of the top six countries have deposit systems, producing the best practice recycling. This is a clear guide to where Australia needs to go,” said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

The Centre will be giving evidence to the Inquiry at 12.15pm today at Level 2, 190 George St. on container deposits, the crisis in electronic waste and the future of the National Packaging Covenant.

“There has been much debate over the future path of waste in Australia, but the answers are crystal clear. The best way to minimise landfill and boost beverage container recycling rates is the introduction of a container deposit system,” stated Mr. Angel.

“Only 40.8% of containers are currently recycled at a cost of \$175million p.a; a container deposit system would lift recycling rates to approximately 81% and reduce the costs of container litter, waste and recycling by \$85 million p.a.”

“It's not just a question of doing the right thing by the environment, it makes sense economically as well,” stated Mr. Angel.

“Containers are the largest single waste priority; they create nearly 8 times more waste than motor vehicle waste and 50 times more waste than plastic bags. If Australia wants to get serious about minimising waste and increasing recycling, this is the smartest and most effective way to do so.”

**Photo courtesy of woodleywonderworks on flickr.com*

Latest News

SA says 'its time to go' - to the plastic bag



Created on Thursday, 19 June 2008 20:24

"This is great positive step in the fight against pollution and it sends a clear message to the other states and the national government. Australia wants and needs this ban," stated Jane Castle, waste campaigner for Total Environment Centre.

The legislation proposes that the ban comes into effect on January 1st 2009 and from this point all retailers will be required to offer a reusable bag, with single use bags still available and a complete ban of all polyethylene bags under 35 microns weight from May.

"The Liberals and industry in SA have been pushing for a 10c levy on plastic bags, and while this is a measure used by some countries, its impact reduces over time. A total ban strongly counteracts excessive consumption and will have the greatest benefits in both the short and long term future," said Ms. Castle.

Heavier bags such as those from departments stores will be exempted as will bin liners but a review after 6 months will determine if the ban needs to be adjusted for any potential product switching.

"Plastic bags are an environmental hazard. Over 4 billion bags are purchased by supermarkets every year. Not only does this amount to the same energy consumption as driving the family car 35.5 million kilometres a year, but a significant majority of these bags end up floating in our waterways, killing wildlife or taking up valuable space in landfills. Its time for them to go," said Ms. Castle.

Latest News

TEC needs 2 waste project officers



Created on Monday, 16 June 2008 22:23

TEC has 2 jobs with our waste minisation program. Join our team to make a difference on recycling, resource recovery and greenhouse emissions. Positions vacant.

Latest News

Big Business Influence Likely to Stymie Action on Recycling?



Created on Thursday, 17 April 2008 19:09

“Industry should grow up and become part of the modern push for environmental responsibility. For many years they have avoided the issue through the failing National Packaging Covenant. It is also reprehensible that they expect local council and ratepayers to fund additional container collections at the cost of hundreds of millions of dollars a year, said Jeff Angel, member of the Boomerang Alliance.

“This is the first big test for federal environment minister Peter Garrett. He should not ignore the overwhelming community support for container deposits,” said Angel.

The strategy is to ‘modify’ the South Australian push for a national ‘cash for trash’ scheme by moving away from an independent investigation into a closed shop review managed by the controversial National Packaging Covenant. The National Packaging Covenant independence was discredited earlier this week when the Recycling Rates outlined in its Annual Reports were shown to be dramatically exaggerated.

Environment groups have learnt that major beverage companies have been lobbying fiercely to stop the reviews. Confidential sources have informed the Boomerang Alliance that at least one state is listening and is proposing to try and shift the review into an internal process by the industry controlled National Packaging Covenant Council.

“Government’s need to show the public that they are serious about improving our national recycling rates” said Dave West, National Campaign Director for the Boomerang Alliance.

“We have every confidence that our environment ministers want to do the right thing, but frankly a small minority seems to be far too close to industry and can’t seem to understand that the lobbying of Coke and Fosters has nothing to do with protecting the public interest. Its about trying to avoid their responsibility as polluters,” said West.

Latest News

Big Benefits from Recycling Bottles and Cans



Created on Tuesday, 15 April 2008 19:16

A new study produced by The Boomerang Alliance shows that our precious kerbside recycling system is making significant losses and container deposits will make it more financially viable.

“Local councils and ratepayers are footing a massive annual bill to deal with the 8.3billion drink bottles we consume each year” said Jeff Angel Director of Total Environment Centre.

“Residents are forking out over \$257million a year to deal with bottle and can waste and that’s just for 40% of our containers, with the rest going to landfill. Also more beverages are consumed ‘away from home’ (food halls, restaurants, public spaces) where there is no recycling system. We have to get a better solution to stop the waste of resources which will also help reduce greenhouse gas pollution.”

“Container Deposits are a proven and effective tool that have been in place for over 30 years in South Australia, there is far less litter, they have recycling rates that are double the rest of the country and the public love the initiative said Angel.

The beverage industry has been lobbying governments not to accept the South Australian call claiming it would cost Australian households.

“Sure the price of a bottle or can of drink will go up by 10¢ but it’s temporary - you get that back” said Angel “its pretty simple really, you stop off at the recycling centre located in the supermarket car park and drop off your containers. And it helps to make kerbside more viable because, as in South Australia, those who don’t want the deposit and put the container out for collection are making a donation to the council recycling system which gets the money instead.”

The economic study ‘Financial Analysis of Costs and Benefits of a National Container Deposit System’ was produced to rebut industry’s misleading claims and shows that South Australia’s proposal will:

- Double bottle and can recycling rates;
- Reduce the amount of waste to landfill by over 630,000 tonnes per annum;
- Reduce recycling costs by over \$84million and also save ratepayers another \$59million a year.
- The public understand, that they pay a 10¢ deposit up front and if they can get a refund when they return their containers, around 90% are happy to do so.

“Doubling the amount of aluminium, glass and plastic containers we recycle will have huge environmental benefits. The greenhouse gas reductions alone are about the same as switching every house in Canberra over to renewable energy” said lead author Boomerang Alliance National Campaign Director Dave West.

“Container Deposits will also produce enough water savings are enough to permanently supply over 16,000 homes and improve air quality by the equivalent of taking 141,000 cars off the road” said West.

The analysis also highlighted that if the current strategy of the controversial National Packaging Covenant is implemented, the costs to local government and the community of managing packaging waste and litter will increase by over \$222million pa.

“Our analysis shows us that Container Deposits will provide the single biggest stimulus to recycling we have seen in 20 years; if governments want to lift recycling rates they have only two choices - introduce Container Deposits, which will double recycling and save money; or place a \$300million levy on all bottles and cans to cover council and other costs and get maybe half the results,” said West

Latest News

More Recycling Targets Broken



Created on Tuesday, 08 April 2008 02:36

“There has been little to no progress under the Covenant” said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre and community representative on the NPC.

“A primary target of the National Packaging Covenant is ‘no new packaging to landfill’ so that consumption and population growth did not make the packaging waste problem worse. However, this has already been exceeded. Unless immediate action is taken, by 2010 we estimate the amount of packaging rubbish that is littered or landfilled will be well over 2.3million tonnes per annum – several hundred thousand tonnes more than allowed.”

Taken together with wrongly reported recycling figures, the NPC is now in crisis. When the Covenant Council produced its draft 2005-06 annual report we told them the figures were inflated but were ignored; our assertions have now been shown to be true. How can governments allow this sort of exaggeration to be printed under their name?” asked Angel.

“The NPC Annual Report was published citing national recycling rates for packaging as 56%. The review showed that at best recycling rates were 47.1% and the author of the original report Mr Russ Martin of MS2 (and Hyder Consulting) in response inflated the figure for 2006 to 58%. He also concedes that if figures for newsprint and office paper are removed, in reality the rates are even worse with an appalling 43%. The ‘errors’ are unacceptable,” said Dave West, National Campaign Director for the Boomerang Alliance.

“This has been a feature of NPC reporting ever since it has used Martin’s data. During negotiations to renew the controversial NPC in 2005 Martin’s data consistently overstated recycling rates using industry figures to exaggerate the sector’s recycling performance.”

Green groups today called for Martin and MS2 to be sacked from its current role as assessors of Australian packaging recycling rates.

“MS2 needs to be replaced; its principal Russ Martin places far too much faith in industry’s claims to be seen as independent. These reports are used to assess whether government should regulate industry. Letting packaging companies decide what our recycling rates are is like letting criminals sit on a parole board’ said West.

The Boomerang Alliance renewed its calls for national and state environment ministers to introduce a National Container Deposit System whereby consumers receive an incentive to recycle. The ministers meet in Melbourne on 17 April to discuss the future of the Covenant.

Latest News

Plastic Bag Move Welcomed



Created on Friday, 11 January 2008 01:46

“TEC and other green groups have been campaigning for years on this problem, but the Howard government created obstacle after obstacle to a sustainable solution. There has been a mountain of analysis and studies, but no action,” said Jeff Angel, Director of the Centre.

“State environment ministers were ready to act and now the feds have come on board, we will very quickly see a massive reduction in litter and marine pollution. The supermarkets had failed to meet their agreements on bag reduction and presented dodgy economic data to justify continued use. Our ‘undercover supermarket’ survey in 2007 showed their program seriously failing. They have no excuses left.”

“Initially people might have a few issues in adjusting to the ban. However, it’s easy and there’ll be a lot less plastic floating around – and within a year or two there will be no inconvenience felt.”

“The ALP came to power with a waste policy that embraces a new era of product responsibility, from computers to packaging. We’ll be pressing for more action in these areas, as well.”

Latest News

Toxic Batteries Light Up Government Recycling Failure



Created on Friday, 16 November 2007 23:01

An Extended Producer Responsibility Rationale for Used Lead Acid Batteries calls for governments to impose a refundable deposit on car batteries sold for DIY consumers to ensure they are brought back for recycling.

“Recycling is far more important than retaining a sloppy waste collection system that lets batteries contaminate resource recovery operations. If governments are serious about supporting recycling, they’ll ensure that DIY consumers have an incentive to return them,” said Jane Castle, TEC’s Resource Conservation Campaigner.

“If only one battery contaminates 25 tonnes of compost, then up to a million could cripple municipal recycling operations Australia-wide. Government action is long overdue.”

The report questions industry claims that 96% of used car batteries are recycled. It shows that each lead acid battery costs recyclers \$62.50 in additional labour, equipment, maintenance and opportunity costs. This creates a potential barrier of \$31 million to municipal waste recycling across Australia. As recycling avoids the greenhouse emissions from landfill, the batteries could also prohibit 3.7 million tonnes of greenhouse emissions being avoided by 2010.

“Australia is falling behind countries like Germany, the US, and Canada where laws ensure that batteries don’t contaminate compost or end up in landfills. A deposit on every battery sold would pull batteries out of kerbside bins. People need a clear incentive to take their batteries back.”

The NSW Government has identified lead acid batteries as a “waste of concern” and a candidate for an extended producer responsibility scheme. However, the NSW Minister for Environment has so far opted for a voluntary approach, with little success.

“A high deposit on all lead acid batteries where there is no trade-in of another battery would directly target the DIY market without the need for implementing a deposit on all batteries.”

Latest News

Queensland at Waste Crossroads



Created on Wednesday, 31 October 2007 21:00

Queenslanders are the second highest landfillers of waste in Australia, and are the second worst recyclers, with only 27% of the 8.3 million tonnes of waste generated being recycled.

It's also the only mainland state without a defensible waste strategy that incorporates both targets and associated action aimed at improving resource recovery.

Total Environment Centre Director, Jeff Angel said "Queensland is at a waste management and resource recovery crossroads. An important component of a sustainable society is the ability to recycle a maximum amount of material back into the economy. If Queensland wants to have a waste management system that is sustainable, this poor performance needs to be improved dramatically."

The 'State of Waste in Queensland' report, produced by Warnken ISE predicts the high levels of waste generation could very well rise to over 20 million tonnes each year by 2025 and 18 million tonnes of this will be wasted in landfill.

"These levels will present a major future challenge for improvements in resource recovery. It is essential the Queensland government acts now and in a substantial way. Queensland is way behind other states which have waste strategies with targets and action plans," Mr. Angel said.

Queensland will need drastic changes at a policy and regulatory level, if the state is to meet national best practice standards. The report suggests improvements to waste management such as setting targets to benchmark resource recovery, the introduction of landfill levies and "polluter" fees and taxes, creation of a tradeable market such as in the UK LATS scheme, recycling credits under the National Emissions Trading Scheme and deposits, refunds and subsidies to encourage resource recovery.

"The recently released discussion paper, Queensland Waste Strategy (EPA) is just a small start and much more will be needed to ensure a sustainable Queensland," argued Mr. Angel.

State of Waste Series: Queensland

Latest News

Councils and Rubbish: carbon footprint problems



Created on Tuesday, 16 October 2007 03:37

"Councils need to come to grips with this issue if they are to make genuine contributions to avoiding dangerous climate change," said Jeff Angel, Director of TEC.

"When councils prepare an inventory of their greenhouse gas emissions as the basis for a policy on carbon neutrality, they should include where they send municipal waste. The study by consultants NetBalance* shows councils usually only consider pollution produced by car fleets and energy used in council buildings. However, councils also directly influence what happens to an area's waste – they make the decision about whether to landfill waste or send it to a modern facility that can recycle and produce green power".

"If they send waste to landfill, it means they have a much bigger carbon footprint; if it is recycled and produces green power it can cancel out their car fleet and energy greenhouse pollution. It's also been revealed recently that landfilled waste will pollute the atmosphere for decades to come, creating a long term climate liability,**" stated Mr. Angel.

Creating an inventory of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) is swiftly becoming essential for improving councils' and residents' understanding of GHG emissions. GHG inventories provide greater transparency into managing GHG risks, markets and opportunities, as well as giving Councils the opportunity to be recognised for early voluntary action.

While Councils are providing their GHG emissions in annual State of the Environment or sustainability Reports, there is little evidence that it is being done in accordance with a set standard or including all possible sources of GHG.

Furthermore, a recent report from Griffith University's Urban Research Program suggests councils that fail to take into account climate change in their approval and regulation of polluting activities could very well be setting themselves up to face significant legal challenges in the future.

* NetBalance (2007) Greenhouse Gas Implication for Councils in Managing Municipal Waste

Resource Recovery Collaboration (2007) The potential greenhouse gas Liability from landfill in Australia: An examination of the climate change Risk from landfill emissions to 2050

Latest News

Waste Companies, Recyclers and Environmentalists Unite To Prevent Global Warming



Created on Thursday, 16 August 2007 22:36

Currently, the dumping of food, garden, paper and wood wastes produces high levels of landfill gas, consisting mostly of methane, which has a global warming potential 25 times that of carbon dioxide. Unless new recycling policies are implemented, there is a significant risk of increasing greenhouse gas emissions over the next 50 years, making up potentially 85% of Australia's future carbon budget, according to original research conducted by sustainability consultants Warnken ISE. In order to address this challenge there are a range of solutions available said the Resource Recovery Collaboration.

Total Environment Centre director, Jeff Angel, said "This is a pollution liability we must avoid. To combat it, these degradable materials should be recycled, instead of land filled. Measures such as a landfill allowance scheme, emissions trading, bans and levies imposed at the tip, are available."

Visy General Environment Manager, Nick Harford agrees saying "Closed loop recycling and re-use of these materials is vital with significant potential for future investment in these new generation industries."

John Lawson, Manager at Global Renewables, stated that "strategy needs to be implemented now to decrease greenhouse gases and increase the sustainable use of resources. Business-as-usual projections of landfill emissions show an increase from 15.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year in 1990 to 46.9 million tonnes by 2050. We believe removal of this pollution would be widely accepted by the Australian community."

Anna Mitchell, Corporate Development and Sustainability Manager with WSN Environmental Solutions pointed out that "WSN's customers are seeking responsible waste management solutions as they realise there is a real opportunity to reduce their climate change impact by the choices they make about waste management."

The Resource Recovery Collaboration Participants and Contacts:

Total Environment Centre

Total Environment Centre (TEC) is an independent, non-profit group that have operated for over 30 years, working to protect this country's natural and urban environment, flagging the issues, driving debate, supporting community activism and pushing for better environmental policy and practice.

Contact: Jeff Angel, Director
Ph: 02- 9261 3437

Global Renewables

Global Renewables is a leader in sustainable business which delivers economic, social and environmental results by reducing, reusing and recycling municipal waste and improving carbon efficiency. Global Renewables provides innovative technological solutions to the growing problem of municipal solid waste in order to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contributes to a sustainable environment for the benefit of all, while delivering a positive economic return to shareholders.

Contact: John Lawson, Manager,
Ph: 02- 9223 8099 M: 0438 873 475

WSN Environmental Solutions

WSN Environmental Solutions provides responsible recycling, resource recovery and waste management services to the greater Sydney area and beyond with a network of 12 waste and recycling facilities, kerbside collection and commercial waste management services. WSN currently employs 380 people and in 2005-2006 processed over 1,900,000 tonnes of waste. In 2004, WSN partnered with GRL to open Sydney's first alternative waste processing facility at Eastern Creek. In 2008 WSN will open Australia's largest fully integrated resource recovery site for household waste in Sydney's south west, with an alternative waste processing facility capable of diverting around 70% of household waste from landfill.

Contact: Anna Mitchell, Corporate Development & Sustainability Manager
Ph: 02- 9934 7029 M: 0408 408 690

VISY

Visy is an integrated packaging and recycling company, committed to sustainability and environmental improvement. In Australia and New Zealand, Visy employs about 6000 people and operates more than 120 packaging and recycling facilities. Visy collects and processes almost 2 million tonnes of used material and makes more than 1 million tonnes of recycled content paper every year, as well as a range of beverage, food and specialty packaging. VISY was judged Australia's leading company for environmental performance in the Sydney Morning Herald and Age newspapers' annual corporate reputation index for four consecutive years.

Contact: Nicholas Harford, General Manager, Environment
Ph: 03- 9247 4519 M: 0419 993 234

SITA Environmental Solutions

SITA Environmental Solutions is one of Australia's leading recycling and waste management companies, operating in all Australian mainland states and the Australian Capital Territory to provide environmental and sustainable waste management services to more than 43,000 commercial and industrial customers and more than 800,000 households each week across Australia. Services include recycling domestic collection, commercial and industrial collection, waste assessment and resource recovery options, sorting, processing such as composting, autoclaving, product destruction, waste stabilisation, engineered landfill operations and transfer facilities.

Contact: Mike Ritchie, National General Manager, Marketing and Communications
Ph: 02- 8754 0105 M: 0401 980 391

Latest News

Nokia battery recall shows the way on mobile phone recycling



Created on Thursday, 16 August 2007 00:19

“Compared to Nokia’s sensible plan, Mobile Muster is wallowing in a pit of inaction,” said Jeff Angel, TEC Director. “After 7 years and a dismal 3% recycling rate, Mobile Muster can think of nothing better than putting a few bins in a few shops. And for the privilege, consumers are paying a levy on every phone sold.”

TEC contacted Nokia call centres to find out what would happen to the old batteries when consumers received a new one. Nokia advised TEC that a returnable envelope would be mailed to all consumers who sent in their old battery for replacement.

Every year 8 million new phones are sold in Australia. Mobile Muster, the Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association voluntary industry program purported to deal with the toxic phones, collects only 3% of phones sold. Once mobile phones reach landfill heavy metals such as cadmium, lead and arsenic can leach into ground water and put the environment and community health at risk.

“Governments need to regulate this industry before a mountain of toxic phones goes to landfill. Even the industry admits a lot of phones are being stored temporarily, before final dumping.”

“A pre-paid return envelope with your new phone would be a good start, and a refundable deposit would be an even better incentive to get phones recycled. They’re doing both these measures overseas. Why not here?” said Mr. Angel.

Latest News

Mobile Phone Recycling Fails



Created on Monday, 30 July 2007 23:37

“After seven years in the game, all the industry can claim is a pathetic 3% recycling rate, despite collecting a levy on every new phone sold. Mobile Muster is all spin and no substance”, said Jeff Angel, Director of the Total Environment Centre.

“The Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA) in two reports to the NSW Government shows only a few percent of the mobiles sold have been recycled. AMTA likes to selectively play with figures but they can't hide their hopeless program.” *

“They also claim that most people don't dump their phones, preferring to keep them. But this is a temporary situation. Once the phone is technologically redundant, neither the original owner nor the person they may have passed the phone onto, is going to keep it.”

The TEC survey in the City of Sydney, Mobile Muster Myth Exposed, shows the scheme is failing on a number of fronts:

- The scheme's coverage is extremely poor; fewer than 20% (25 retailers) of mobile phone retailers actually participate.
- Only 8% of all stores (11 retailers) have a visible recycling bin.
- The performance of those retailers participating in the scheme is inconsistent, and lacking in many aspects such as:
 - * Minimal promotional and/or educational material (29%)
 - * Easily visible position of recycling bin (38%)

We believe the survey to be representative of other parts of Australia.

“Voluntary measures alone are proving insufficient. The toxic time bomb is ticking,” said Mr Angel.

“It's time environment ministers imposed a regulated Extended Producer Responsibility scheme with clear targets, and make industry responsible and accountable for the waste it creates. A refundable deposit or a pre-paid return envelope with the phones would be a great incentive to get those phones out of cupboards and bins and recycled. There are successful examples from overseas,” said Mr. Angel.

* AMTA rely on the increase in the rate of recycling (from 19% to 30%) but what counts is how many mobiles sold are recycled – only 3%.

AMTA - (Nov 2006) 'A progress report to the NSW Minister for Environment; (June 2007), Industry Update on Mobile Muster'.

See the full report: Mobile Muster Myth Exposed

Latest News

Mobile Muster Myth Exposed - levy paying for more hot air



Created on Monday, 30 July 2007 20:31

“After seven years in the game, all the industry can claim is a pathetic 3% recycling rate, despite collecting a levy on every new phone sold. Mobile Muster is all spin and no substance”, said Jeff Angel, Director of the Total Environment Centre.

Results from the survey, Mobile Muster Myth Exposed, show the scheme is failing on a number of fronts:

- The scheme’s coverage is extremely poor; fewer than 20% (25 retailers) of mobile phone retailers actually participate.
- Only 8% of all stores (11 retailers) have a visible recycling bin.
- The performance of those retailers participating in the scheme is inconsistent, and lacking in many aspects such as:
 - * Minimal promotional and/or educational material (29%)
 - * Easily visible position of recycling bin (38%)

The ten bins and the four located in ANZ banks in the City of Sydney area are intended to cater for half a million people, who discard 300,000-350,000 mobile phones every year. We believe the survey to be representative of other parts of Australia.

“How long will governments allow mobile phones to go to landfill and levy money go down the drain? The NSW Government is running out of excuses not to regulate. Voluntary measures alone are proving insufficient. The toxic time bomb is ticking,” said Mr Angel.

Every year 8 million new phones are sold in Australia. Mobile phones are typically replaced with new ones every 18-24 months, leaving behind a growing mountain of potentially toxic waste. Once mobile phones reach landfill, heavy metals such as cadmium, lead and arsenic contained in the phone and battery can leach into ground water and put the environment and community health at risk.

“It’s time environment ministers imposed a regulated Extended Producer Responsibility scheme with clear targets, and make industry responsible and accountable for the waste it creates. A refundable deposit on old phones would be a great incentive to get those phones out of bins and recycled. There are successful examples from overseas,” said Mr. Angel.

For the full report, see [Mobile Muster Myth Exposed](#).

Latest News

Supermarkets Fail Plastic Bag Test: Regulation Needed



Created on Thursday, 05 July 2007 20:58

“The survey results are a testimony to the failure of the voluntary approach to reducing plastic bags” said Jeff Angel, TEC Director.

The survey, Supermarket Shame: City of Sydney Plastic Bag Survey 2007 , found that:

- * In 67% of cases checkout operators automatically handed out a free plastic bag, without asking if one is required, even when 3 item or less were bought.
- * 64% of shoppers used a free plastic bag while 32% brought their own bag;
- * 42% of supermarkets in the City of Sydney area had no recycling bin. All IGA branches have no recycling facilities
- * 65% of supermarkets have no promotional material aimed at reducing plastic bag use

City of Sydney Lord Mayor Clover said: "The survey results expose the Code as nothing but a delaying tactic, and enforceable legislative action is needed for a better and faster outcome. Government inaction is allowing billions of plastic bags every year to go to landfill, litter our streets, pollute our waterways and damage our marine life.

Plastic bags can take up to 1,000 years to break down - they create long-term problems that generations to come will have to deal with. The Government should stop bowing to industry pressure and take urgent action to ban lightweight plastic bags, encourage the use of reusable alternatives to plastic and provide levies on other disposable plastic bags”

The community has vocalised its concerns over the impacts of plastic bags and Government inaction. 81 community groups across NSW joined to urge the NSW Government to ban free plastic bags, but although the NSW government has had the power to regulate plastic bag use, it has been too timid to do the job.

“We can not let retailers delay regulation any longer. Its time environment ministers called ‘time up’ and regulate, every year we delay means more litter and Greenhouse gas pollution are created, and precious resources are wasted” Mr. Angel said.

Governments around the world have regulated to reduce plastic bag use, including Ireland, South Africa, India, Victoria, most recently San Francisco banned plastic bags from supermarkets.

Mr. Angel said, “Only a ban on the light weight bags and a levy on the alternative throw-away bags will make a dramatic impact on the 4 billion bags consumed annually. A levy alone will not be sufficient to make the necessary cuts, since experience has shown people will simply absorb the cost and continue to consume plastic bags” said Mr Angel.

Latest News

Tick for Sydney City Council call for e-waste recycling



Created on Thursday, 15 March 2007 02:12

“Sydney City Council has rightly added its voice to the growing call for the NSW Government to act on e-waste. Councils are at the frontline of this fight against toxic waste being dumped in landfill as they confront it with each garbage collection and e-waste dumped on the streets”, said Jeff Angel, TEC Director.

“You have to ask why councils and rate payers are having to absorb yet another expense that should be borne by industry. Inaction today by manufacturers and the State Government carries not only this financial burden but also a heavy burden for the future. The cocktail of toxic substances contained in computers has the potential to leach into the environment from landfill sites. The leaching of these substances impacts not only on ecosystems but potentially has very serious human health impacts - and we are wasting resources”, he said.

“We encourage other local councils to pass similar motions to Sydney City, Woollahra and Marrickville Councils and urge the NSW Government to take decisive action on the mounting problem of e-waste.”

Of the 2.4 million computers sold in Australia every year 1% is recycled. NSW has had the power in legislation to mandate producer responsibility for five years, but despite the mounting volumes of toxic waste and the computer industry’s failure to establish a voluntary scheme, the Government has failed to act.

“We congratulate Councillor Marcelle Hoff who proposed this motion for taking this initiative on the urgent e-waste problem”.

Latest News

Government Scapegoats Recyclers for Exploding Gas Bottles



Created on Wednesday, 28 February 2007 03:52

The NSW Department of Environment (DEC) successfully prosecuted metal recycler, Sell and Parker, on Friday for an explosion in 2005 despite failing in its own duty to require manufacturers to take back and recycle these hazardous products.

“The NSW Government is using recyclers as a whipping boy for their own failure to protect the recycling stream,” said Jeff Angel, TEC Director. “DEC should require producers to take back and recycle gas bottles and other problem products.”

In a decision handed down on Friday, the NSW Land and Environment Court fined Sell and Parker \$8,400 plus the DEC’s costs. This is despite the company spending \$2.75 million installing equipment specifically designed to prevent the explosion of hidden gas bottles.

“Recyclers should be supported, not left to the mercy of dangerous and toxic products. DEC needs to take a long, hard look at itself.”

NSW’s Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001 enables the Minister for Environment to implement regulated extended producer responsibility schemes for problem products. This would require manufacturers to take-back and recycle problem products, instead of allowing them to hamper recycling operations and clog landfills. However, despite NSW’s rising waste volumes the Government has failed to act.

“The NSW Government should be prosecuting itself for failing to deliver producer take-back regulation. Problem wastes should be dealt with at their source, not thrown into the too-hard basket. Gas bottles should be re-used; or failing that, gas bottle producers need to be made to safely drain them of the left-over gases before they go to recyclers.”

Latest News

Boomerang Alliance Slams Productivity Commission's Final Report



Created on Friday, 22 December 2006 21:12

The original terms of reference tasked the Commission with making recommendations on optimising resource efficiencies to improve economic, environmental and social outcomes. The Commission was warned that implementing their recommendations would cut recycling in half, send an additional 7.5 million tonnes to mass-dump landfill, lose \$400 million in commodity sales, lose 5,000 full time jobs, and add significant amounts of greenhouse gas emissions through landfill gas and increased energy to manufacture from virgin, as opposed to raw materials.

"The Commission has not addressed any of the fatal flaws in its methodology." said Jeff Angel, Director, Total Environment Centre. "It is impossible to see how the Commission's recommendations represent anything but a backward step to the 1970s truck and dump waste industry. They are also impractical and not properly costed."

"The Commission's report can be summarised as saying that because waste is a cost to business, and business needs to reduce its costs, we need cheap landfill for business to be competitive" said Angel.

"However this type of neo-classical nonsense has been completely discredited by the Stern Review of the economics of climate change, where the environmental consequences of climate change were identified as the greatest and widest ranging market failure ever."

The Productivity Commission has not costed landfill gas emissions at the latest cost estimate of climate change damage of \$110 per tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent – which completely invalidates all of their conclusions. It is estimated that every tonne of Municipal Waste has a societal cost of \$125 from its potential landfill gas emissions – at 25 times greater than the Commission's conclusion of \$5 per tonne.

"The rejection of the waste management hierarchy, removal of landfill levies and removal of waste diversion targets is completely out of step with what the community demands. Zero waste is more than an aspirational target. It is an achievable goal that will drive technological innovation and improved environmental outcome. Furthermore, given the amount of embodied energy and embodied water in waste, in addition to the enormous climate change liability of landfill, it is imperative that a national policy of zero waste is established as an immediate priority. Industry needs to realise that its 'free lunch' is over."

"The community refuses to continue to subsidise large corporations to the tune of \$300 million for their bad design and refusal to accept responsibility for the wastes they force onto the community. A raft of market interventions is required to support the drive to zero waste, including container deposits, take back schemes, extended producer responsibility, and other polluter pays initiatives," Angel concluded.

Latest News

Woollahra Council commended on e-waste recycling



Created on Wednesday, 15 November 2006 02:55

“Woollahra Council has rightly added its voice to the growing call for the NSW Government to act on e-waste. Councils are at the frontline of this fight against toxic waste being dumped in landfill”, said Jane Castle, TEC Campaigner.

“Inaction on e-waste by manufacturers and the State Government is dragging us all into a toxic future. Computers are full of toxic chemicals, and when they’re dumped in landfills, these can leach out to damage environmental and human health.”

“We encourage other local councils to follow Woollahra’s lead and pass similar motions to encourage the NSW Government act on e-waste.”

2.4 million computers are sold in Australia every year and 1.5 million become waste. NSW has had the power in legislation to mandate producer responsibility for five years, but despite the mounting toxic waste and the manufacturers’ failure to set up a voluntary scheme, the Government has failed to act.

“We congratulate David Shoebridge, the Greens Councilor who proposed this motion for taking this initiative on the urgent e-waste problem.”

Latest News

84 groups want the plastic bag banned



Created on Wednesday, 08 November 2006 00:54

Eighty-four environment groups have today called on NSW Minister for the Environment, Bob Debus, to ban the free plastic bag and to stick to his promise of regulation. Each year the free plastic bags given out are equivalent to 11,500 tonnes of greenhouse gases.

“Victoria is legislating for such a ban, why not NSW?” said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

“The signatory groups from across NSW represent thousands of community members who want to see plastic bag use reduced dramatically. Community frustration is palpable about this no-brainer,” he said.

“We have been swamped with responses since initiating this letter; groups are banging at our door asking for action on this issue. Every year we delay means 1 billion more plastic bags are handed out in NSW alone, in addition to wasted resources and greenhouse gas emissions, tens of millions will pollute our parks, waterways, streets and beaches every year.”

There is proven damage to wildlife caused by plastic bag litter and the Federal Government has declared plastic bags and other marine debris a direct threat to 20 marine species, and a Key Threatening Process under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

Despite repeated commitments by Environment Ministers across Australia, and an agreement made by all Australian Governments with the Australian Retailers’ Association (ARA) to phase out plastic bags by the end of 2008, it appears the industry is attempting to break its promises and Minister must not cooperate.”

“The failure by retailers to meet 2005 voluntary plastic bag reduction targets and community outcry show that we need regulation now. Viable reusable alternatives already exist and shop staff are already familiar with them at the checkout;” said Mr Angel.

Latest News

Packaging and drink companies dump new costs on local govt



Created on Tuesday, 31 October 2006 00:10

Producers of packaging should be the ones taking financial responsibility for collection and recycling of container waste. Container deposit and refund systems take the burden off local government and should be mandated by government, they said.

In its current approaches to local councils around NSW the PSF is offering 'seed funding' for councils to set up so called 'public place recycling' infrastructure – i.e. recycling bins in parks etc and pick up services. As part of this arrangement the PSF requires the local council to take on future liabilities for this new infrastructure.*

"The new National Packaging Covenant (NPC) acknowledges the fact that 50% or more of packaging is consumed away from home. Industry has been told to address this massive waste stream and the Covenant also explicitly states there should be no new costs on local government. Yet the beverage and packaging industry is attempting to do just that with its new scheme.

"All local councils should be very wary of accepting this seed funding, it's simply a ploy to burden local councils with extra and ongoing costs of new recycling services", said Cr Genia McCaffery, President of the NSW Local Government Association.

"We have seen this before with kerbside recycling which now costs local councils hundreds of millions of dollars every year. Industry offers financial help in the first year or so to set the system up and then walks away leaving local government to carry the financial burden and we won't be accepting it this time", said Cr McCaffery.

Jeff Angel, Total Environment Centre Director said: "The only place where we have had public place recycling deliver substantial portions of materials is at the Sydney Olympics. This involved enormous investment and constant supervision. This won't be possible for local councils to arrange. And even with the mammoth effort at the Sydney Olympics there were still problems of contamination. It's about time we introduced a comprehensive national system of container deposits. It's the only truly viable and financially sustainable method to collect the now over 50% of packaging consumed 'away from home.'

"Rolling out Public Place Recycling through the country will cost tens to hundreds of millions of dollars to start and run every year. With no financial base for this system industry is seeking ways to dump costs on local government, said Dave West, Campaign Coordinator of the Boomerang Alliance.

"This is madness when in fact Australia could build a best practice, financially sustainable and cost neutral container deposit system. It's about time industry dropped their ideological opposition to deposit systems and got onboard with designing the best system that wouldn't have to cost anyone but the people that still pollute or don't redeem their containers, said West.

* stating: "That the ...council maintains an appropriate standard of resource recovery infrastructure systems that is (sic) established as part of this project and that quarterly reports / information are provided to the PSF as a way of monitoring resource recovery levels and provide an ongoing example of best Council practice in this important area of recycling."

Latest News

WA – biggest waster, poor recycler



Created on Wednesday, 18 October 2006 22:38

“We don’t think that is because West Australians are any less environmentally concerned than other Australians, but there is a severe lack of recycling facilities and producer involvement. The report shows that if the present situation continues then there will be a rapidly widening gap between actual waste recycled and generated and government policy goals,” said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of Total Environment Centre.

“The State Government has begun the process of tackling this problem with its moves to introduce deposits on cans and bottles and the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Bill. Landfill levies also play an important role. Market based instruments in a clear regulatory setting with goals and compliance can help both industry and the community to deliver,” he said.

“The report should really give momentum to industry and environment group plans for extended producer responsibility and new resource recovery facilities. We are aware of key industry recalcitrance but it should not be tolerated,” said Sue Graham Taylor, Senior Vice President of the Conservation Council of WA.

The report shows that a total of 4.5 million tonnes of waste was produced in 2004 and less than 20% was recycled. This is equivalent to 0.4 tonnes recycled per person compared to 0.3 in Queensland, 0.9 in Victoria and NSW and 1.4 in South Australia. Waste generated per capita is the worst in Australia. The dollar value of the resources lost to landfill is estimated to be over \$250million, every year.

It also found the gap each year between actual waste disposed and resource recovery will grow unless planned waste avoidance activities curb waste generation rates and innovative market based solutions are used to grow a robust recycling industry in Western Australia. Left unchecked, waste generation in WA could rise to over 10 million tonnes per annum by 2020, with 9 million tonnes wasted to landfill.

State of Waste in WA

Latest News

Industry, Community Kick-Start Campaign for Computer Recycling



Created on Thursday, 14 September 2006 23:57

The alliance of local government, community groups and recycling companies held its inaugural meeting last Friday in Melbourne in response to lack of state government action on toxic computers. The meeting also called on all state governments to end, once and for all, the disposal of computers in landfills.

“This is a key test for the NSW and Victorian governments with elections on the way,” said Jeff Angel, TEC Director. “In the case of NSW, after five years of legislation awaiting implementation, the Government is running out of excuses not to regulate. There are only so many threats Government can make while producers continue to stall and recycling infrastructure waits for volume. Producers will get a nasty shock when they’re lumbered with individual state regulation.”

“The Federal Government holds the key to making a computer recycling program work,” said Rick Wakelin, Victorian State Manager Sims E-Recycling. “At the very least, the Federal Government must provide essential customs data that will allow state regulators to track computer importers.”

“The computer industry is too fractured to pull together agreement on this issue. If individual companies operate their own schemes, there will be no economies of scale, consumers will be confused and recycling will remain expensive. Government leadership is well overdue,” Mr Wakelin said.

“Australia is lagging well behind other OECD countries on toxic e-waste,” said Kane Siegel, General Manager of TIC Ewaste Solutions. The community wants a green solution to this toxic waste, and it’s up to the state and Federal governments to provide it.”

“The computers on every street corner during local council collections are testimony to the failure of governments to stand up to industry,” said Jenny Henty, Director Zero Waste campaign at Environment Victoria. “It’s not only costing our environment, it’s costing rate-payers who are footing the bill for land-filling these toxic time-bombs.”

Five years of industry stone-walling and continued rounds of government talks have not delivered any action on end-of-life computers. As a result, the Let’s do IT! group has been formed to press for urgent action.

Latest News

Dell Urged to Recycle Battery Millions



Created on Wednesday, 23 August 2006 23:42

There has been no guarantee that the recall, announced on Monday, will not just add to the thousands of tonnes of e-waste mounting up in landfills.

Jeff Angel, TEC Director, said, "For Dell to recall 4.1 million lithium-ion batteries without assuring the public that this massive amount of e-waste will not be dumped into landfill is very, very worrying. Producers of electronic products must be responsible for recycling of the e-waste that they have created. Dell, who should want to protect their reputation, needs to assure the community that it will act responsibly to recycle and conserve these precious resources."

"This incident is just the tip of the massive e-waste iceberg. It highlights the inadequacy of current government regulations for the entire industry that fall well short of requiring producers to take responsibility for the waste that they create. To date the computer industry has stalled any progress."

"Thousands of tonnes of toxic e-waste are going into Australian landfills every year to pollute the environment and waste non-renewable resources. The problem is only getting worse, with 2.4 million new computers sold here every year - there's a lot more e-waste to come and governments must act."

Latest News

New Alliance Calls for Urgent Action on Computer Recycling Laws



Created on Wednesday, 23 August 2006 23:39

The Alliance, calling itself the Lets do IT! Group, is calling on the Federal and state governments to introduce mandatory extended producer responsibility schemes to ensure the millions of computers currently dumped in landfill each year are instead recycled.

The alliance has been formed because of frustration with the drawn-out process by industry and government to agree on a computer take-back scheme. The launch coincides with yet another Computer Product Stewardship Meeting (CPSM) held with computer companies and hosted by the NSW Department of Environment and Conservation.

“The industry is in go-slow mode and is pushing for a mirage based on a national, voluntary process,” said Jeff Angel, Total Environment Centre (TEC) Director. “It’s another diversionary tactic to avoid responsibility for dumping of hazardous computers in landfills. For the past five years consumers, recyclers and environment groups have been excluded from the process while computer manufactures and governments have done little but talk. While we wait, more and more computers go to landfill.”

Approximately 1.6 million computers are dumped in landfill each year with toxic chemicals including mercury and cadmium able to leach into the environment.

“The recycling industry is raring to go,” said Peter Netchaef, General Manager of SIMS Recycling Solutions. “We have the facilities in place, technology and the experience to recycle e-waste in an environmentally responsible manner. There is no longer any excuse for state governments to continue to procrastinate on this matter.”

“The only way to ensure the safe disposal and recycling of e-waste is through governments’ banning computers from landfill and making manufacturers and importers introduce take-back recycling services,” said Jenny Henty, Environment Victoria’s Zero Waste Campaign Director.

“The infrastructure is in place to enable large scale e-waste recycling, but it is being under-utilised as increasing volumes of toxic e-waste continues to go to landfill” said Kane Siegel, General Manager of TIC Ewaste Solutions.

Cr Genia McCaffery, President of the NSW Local Government Association said, “Local councils are being unfairly burdened with increasing volumes of throw-away e-waste, with industry actively promoting product replacement and redundancy. Councils don’t have the capacity to recycle it, so known hazardous materials are going into landfill even though recycling technology is available. Clearly it’s time for state governments to prevent computers from being dumped in landfills and mandate producer responsibility for collection and recycling”.

“Many of the brand owners are committed to the concept of Product Stewardship but are hampered by lack of a government commitment and legislation to mandate compulsory membership of a recycling scheme. The waste processors also need a series of measures to ensure they are not required to compete unfairly with landfill” said Will Le Messurier, General Manager of MRI.

Previous take-back proposals by the industry group Australian Information Industry Association have been rejected by state and Federal ministers.

Governments have rejected industry proposals because they do not address ‘historical’ or ‘orphan’ equipment – no-name products or computers from manufacturers that have closed down. Despite promises to include these products, no new proposal has emerged. Some producers want to stick to their own take-back schemes and the CPSM has yet to engage the multitude of small component importers, which make up half the industry.

The Computer Recycling Roundtable will have its first meeting in Melbourne in September. Top priority on the agenda is to rapidly progress computer recycling schemes across Australia.

Let’s do IT Roundtable Members

Total Environment Centre - Total Environment Centre is a leading non-profit environmental advocacy group working at state and national levels since its inception in 1972. www.tec.org.au

SIMS Recycling Solutions - SIMSGroup is the World's largest recycling company with more than 120 sites across 16 countries processing end of life products, metals, plastics, tyres and other non-metallic materials as well as a producer of sustainable energy.

MRI Australia - MRI Australia offers End-of-Life and End-of-Use solutions for computer and telecommunications equipment through environmentally innovative refurbishment, remarketing and recycling.

Environment Victoria - Environment Victoria is the state's peak non-government environment organisation and has been campaigning across Victoria for more than 30 years.

NSW LGA - The LGA represents 73 councils in NSW's metropolitan and major regional cities.

TIC Group - TIC Ewaste Solutions, a division of TIC Group, provides integrated services for the collection and recycling of electronic waste throughout Australia.

Conservation Council of Western Australian - The Conservation Council of WA is the State's peak conservation organization, representing 80 affiliated groups and working to promote conservation and a sustainable society.

Latest News

Revealed: Beverage Industry Secret Anti Container Deposit Plan in WA



Created on Thursday, 06 July 2006 20:22

The industry plan called, 'Project Jet', released by the Boomerang Alliance today, aims to undermine the West Australian Government's program and neutralise community support.

"It's certainly a find for us as we now know what the industry is up to. We aren't going to fall for the industry tactics of stalling and injecting misleading information and are determined to engage in an intelligent debate on the best way to introduce container deposits. Industry is trying to avoid responsibility for the waste it creates and is seeking to sabotage the effective introduction of container deposits. We call on the West Australian government to reject the industry plan," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"For thirty years the beverage and packaging industry have fought against deposits on cans and bottles being introduced in states beyond South Australia, despite the fact South Australia recycles more than double the amount of containers than any other state and has far less litter," said Ian Kiernan, Chairman Clean Up Australia.

"WA could have clean parks and waterways and the highest rates of recycling in Australia. The Newspoll shows the community are willing to play their part in achieving this. It's about time Coca-Cola and other companies in the industry accepted that they and container deposits also have a big role," said Sue Graham-Taylor, Vice President Conservation Council WA.

The Project Jet document outlines a plan to replace a successful container deposit scheme with the failed voluntary approach. It seeks to advance the industry position, including through - pilot programs to slow down implementation; alliances with retailers, waste management providers and some councils; advocacy to senior decision makers; and a 'time to talk' strategy to neuter community groups, through the new Packaging Stewardship Forum. (Copies of the leaked industry plan available from Total Environment Centre).

The Boomerang Alliance also welcomed the appointment of technical consultant Dave West, with a specific expertise in the environment and economic benefits of waste programs, to be based in WA to assist the community groups and government with its inquiry into a best practice CDL model.

Latest News

Time's up for plastic bags



Created on Friday, 23 June 2006 22:58

The meeting of the Environment Protection and Heritage Council (EPHC) this morning in Sydney is considering a report on the performance of the big supermarkets and a joint government phase-out plan.

The groups are calling for regulation to come into force this year to eliminate the free light-weight plastic bag as promised. If applied from 2007, regulation would avoid 8 billion bags being handed out over the following 24 months, the groups said.

Since 2003 Environment Ministers across Australia have repeatedly made a commitment that plastic bags would be phased out. Major supermarkets entered into an agreement with governments to reduce plastic bag use by 50% by 2006 on the understanding that mandatory measures would be introduced if the target was not met.

The supermarkets managed a 41% reduction only and failed on a number of other parts of their agreement, such as increasing the recycling rate of plastic bags.

Ministers have the evidence before them – the supermarkets have not done enough and, except for stores like Bunnings that charge 10 cents for plastic bags, the rest of the retail sector have done nothing.

Retailers have squandered the opportunity to make significant reductions voluntarily and now must be regulated. Consumers have shown great enthusiasm and willingness to switch to reusable bags instead of single-use plastic bags, and 81% of Australians support a ban on lightweight plastic bags.

Latest News

Governments Must Stand up to Industry on Plastic Bags



Created on Thursday, 25 May 2006 00:38

"It's time to ban the free bag once and for all," said Jeff Angel, TEC Director. "The retail sector was given a fair chance to reduce plastic bag use voluntarily and has failed to the tune of 190 million bags in the last year alone. Allowing them to continue stall for another year as the Federal Environment Minister suggests and then even more years before there is a complete phase-out would be a complete waste of time. It's a political and environment win-win to get rid of them now."

"Australia remains addicted to plastic bags with more than 4 billion handed out last year even with a drop in supermarket consumption of 45 per cent," said EV Zero Waste Campaign Director, Jenny Henty. "In 2003 Environment Ministers agreed to a voluntary reduction code that aimed for: a 25% reduction by end 2004 and a 50% reduction by end 2005."

"The Australian National Retailers Association claim they want to reduce plastic bags but at the same time they are talking of introducing dodgy degradable plastic bags which are just as dangerous to wildlife. These degradable bags break down into non-biodegradable plastic pieces and should be banned."

"How long will the Federal and State Governments sit idly by when it's clear the voluntary system isn't working?, "said Ms Henty.

Latest News

Productivity Commission Stuck in Dark Ages on Recycling



Created on Tuesday, 23 May 2006 23:07

The groups are calling on all state and federal governments to reject the report and get on with the job of encouraging reusing and recycling of materials, at the environment ministers joint meeting next month.

“This report is a policy cul-de-sac and its only use would be to send it off for recycling

or if you are the Commission, you would send it to landfill” said Jane Castle, TEC

Campaigner. “The report ignores the huge majority of submissions that supported more resource recovery. Only seven submissions from over a hundred to the Commission supported landfill over more recycling. This report won’t stop the tide of community and business efforts towards further recycling.”

“This is just a last-ditch attempt to protect retailers from facing up to the inevitable phase-out of plastic bags,” said Jenny Henty, Environment Victoria’s Zero Waste Director. “The failure to meet voluntary plastic bag reduction targets shows that we need regulation, as has been promised by all the Australian Governments. The bizarre calculations of these economists won’t change the fact that the plastic bag is on the way out.”

“Millions of tonnes of valuable materials will continue to be wasted if we go down the landfill slippery slope that the Productivity Commission recommends,” said Suzie Brown, Australian Conservation Foundation Sustainability Coordinator. “The Commission is putting short term profits ahead of responsible conservation of scarce natural resources. The report claims that only two percent of plastic bags end up as litter. Going by this figure, this means 94 million plastic bags are ending up in our parks, waterways, streets and beaches every year.”

“The Federal Government’s own Threatened Species Scientific Committee has found plastic bags and other marine debris are a direct threat to 20 marine species, including the Loggerhead Turtle, Southern Right Whale, Blue Whale and Tristan Albatross,” said Ian Kiernan, CEO of Clean Up Australia. “The Minister for Environment and Heritage has accepted that evidence and listed plastic bags as a Key Threatening Process under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.”

A Newspan survey commissioned by Clean Up Australia in April 2005 found more than 80 per cent of consumers support a ban on single use plastic bags.

Latest News

2005 Missing plastic bag numbers: where are they?



Created on Tuesday, 23 May 2006 03:09

Environment Victoria (EV), the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) and the Total Environment Centre (TEC) said the supermarkets had committed to a 50% reduction in plastic bag use and the withholding of the report rang alarm bells.

"We smell a rat," said Jeff Angel, TEC Director. "If the supermarket sector can't deliver last year's numbers after five months, we need to know who's holding out and why. It's urgent that the plastic bag problem is solved."

In 2003 Environment Ministers agreed to a voluntary reduction code that aimed for: a 25% reduction by the end of 2004 and a 50% reduction by end 2005.

"If these reductions were not achieved, Ministers have repeatedly said that regulation would be back on the agenda," said Jenny Henty, EV Zero Waste Campaign Director. "The Government has developed options for regulations – let's put these on the table so the community can have its say. Industry has been dominating this debate for too long."

"Federal and state governments must agree to take decisive action on the plastic bag issue. Urgent changes are needed to stop these bags from littering the environment and harming our marine life," said Ian Kiernan AO, Chairman and Founder of Clean Up Australia.

"Many governments around the world – including Ireland, South Africa and India – have regulated to reduce plastic bag use. It's time the Howard Government took action." said Suzie Brown, ACF Sustainability Campaigner.

"Many Australians are supporting BYO bags, but we all need prompts and reminders to help us break our plastic bag addiction," Mr Angel said. "The environment and community cannot tolerate more years of slow voluntary programs – introducing dodgy degradable bags and recycling more is not the answer – it's time for major reduction in bag use."

Packaging

Beverage Container Deposits



Last Updated on Sunday, 17 February 2013 06:40

A final decision is expected on the introduction of container deposits in 2012. This is the culmination of many years of campaigning by environment groups and local government. Australia's environment ministers have decided to release a 'regulatory impact statement' into a CD system - this is the last big step before a national decision which could take place in 2011.

This briefing dispels the myths propagated by the beverage and packaging industries against deposits on containers and explains its use in tackling the scourge of packaging litter; financially underpinning a new generation of recycling infrastructure (at no cost to local or state government) and reversing flagging recycling rates.

Changed societal trends - kerbside recycling and away from home consumption

Kerbside recycling has been a major success with high levels of community engagement and awareness. It costs local government over \$300M p.a. Local government supports the introduction of CD because it enhances the kerbside system through removal of contamination (for example glass fragments in paper and organics); and generation of additional revenue to support kerbside. Recent government reports estimate a \$75m per year boost.

However, kerbside collections do not deal with 'away from home' consumption of packaging, which unlike twenty years ago – now accounts for up to 50% of packaging waste. CD offers the essential incentive for the community and business.

A new 2nd tier of recycling centres

A CD system will finance the next generation of recycling infrastructure such as 'drive through' recycling centres and reverse vending machines (RVM's). Such a system is increasingly needed because a range of new products such as e-waste and batteries contaminate and increase the cost of kerbside collections. Indications are that the private sector will build 400+ large scale recycling depots and 1,600 convenience collection points.

Costs of CDL

In the case of kerbside it is local government and rate payers who fund the system. With container deposits it is brand owners and consumers (mainly those who don't return the containers as their deposit is used). A well designed CDL system (as is the case in Canada and the US) operates at a surplus helping subsidise kerbside and market development programs. Issues such as not sorting containers by brand, automated rather than manual collection and return to depot rather than return to retail models all serve to drive these economic efficiencies. Even South Australia's system, which features some design inefficiencies, operates at around \$120 a tonne compared to kerbside which operates at \$300 a tonne.

The recent report (BDA et al 2009) received by environment ministers estimated the financial cost on consumers per container to be less than half a cent.

Opponents suggest CDL's 'expansion has almost halted since the mid 1990s'

This is incorrect, as evidenced by the following:

Year Country/State
2005 Hawaii, Estonia
2004 Germany
2002 Denmark
2001 Israel
1999 Norway
1997 Newfoundland
1996 Finland, Nova Scotia

and the Northern Territory will join South Australia in 2010. Tasmania has also received a positive report on CD and is considering its next move.

The negative 'impact on kerbside economics'

This myth has been extensively propagated. However, local government supports CD. CDL systems have been introduced for the main purpose of reducing kerbside costs, and there are many examples of deposit systems working in parallel with kerbside (not least South Australia).

By far the most comprehensive international study and the only study with the joint support of all parties – i.e. beverage and packaging industries plus recycling industry and NGOs - is the so-called "BEAR report" (Beck et al 2002). This US study found deposit systems were both the most effective in reaching high levels of recovery and the most cost-effective on a per unit or per tonne basis. And the most recent Australian study found local government would benefit financially by \$75m each year.

Other benefits

The scheme will create between 1 – 2,000 new jobs; provide recycling services to around 350,000 rural and remote homes for the first time; and recover over 600,000 tonnes of new material saving - 1.3million tonnes of co2-e pa.; 8.1gigalitres of water a year; reduce the amount of litter by around -15-20%.

More information

CD Benefits and Costs [2008, 870KB]

Additional background material can be found at www.boomerangalliance.org.au, the coalition of environment groups of which TEC is a leading member.

Packaging

Plastic Bags



Last Updated on Sunday, 17 February 2013 06:40

Plastic Bags - an endemic problem

Despite repeated efforts to resolve a phase-out plan for free supermarket plastic bags, environment ministers have failed. Voluntary programs have not made a substantial dent in the practice and billions are still handed to Australian shoppers, each year. In 2009 South Australia banned the bag with no adverse impact on shoppers or the supermarkets - why can't the rest of Australia?

Background

Industry has failed to meet agreed targets to:

- reduce the use of lightweight plastic bags by 50%
- increase in-store recycling to 15%
- reduce bag litter by 75% by end-2005.(a, b, c)

This concurs with the recent Environment Victoria survey which shows that 50% of shoppers with one or two items were automatically given a plastic bag; 78% of shoppers didn't bring their own bag; and 58% used a free throw-away plastic bag.(d) Total Environment Centre's report Supermarket Shame: City of Sydney Plastic Bag Survey 2007 also showed industry failure. Nevertheless the Australian Retailers Association seeks a continuation of existing self regulatory measures.

Environment groups believe that the phase-out should occur as soon as possible.

Ban on Lightweights, Levy on Heavyweights

A ban on single-use, lightweight, plastic bags has been proposed by some Ministers and has 81% public support.(e) If applied from mid-2010, a ban would avoid 111 million bags being littered over the next 30 months. (f) Precedents for a ban exist in South Africa, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Eritrea, Papua New Guinea, four Indian States, the cities of Mumbai, Delhi and Hong Kong, and South Australia.

For greater efficacy, however, the ban should be coupled with a significant levy on all replacement bags. This will ensure that retailers do not simply replace single-use lightweight bags with another free alternative, such as paper or heavy-duty plastic, which would merely shift the problem (and litter) to another material. The result will be a quick conversion by the vast majority of the community to long life replacement bags, which are already available and well known.

Fast food outlets, that are restricted to one-way bags due to unavoidable contamination can be an exception to the ban and could either charge cost price for approved bio-degradable bags complying with an Australian Standard and listed in the regulations, or charge an environmental levy.

The technical issue that will need to be resolved by government is the definition of the bags (lightweight v heavyweight). This should not be insurmountable nor a barrier as the ban/levy covers all bases.

(a) Australian Retailers Association, Code of Practice for the Management of Plastic Bags

<http://www.ara.com.au/images/ARABAGCCode.pdf>, 9 October 1993, p. 2.

(b) Group One retailers achieved a mid-year 37.5% reduction but this did not include small retailers that make up 43% of industry. Australian Retailers Association, Code of Practice for the Management of Plastic Bags - June 2005 Interim Report, p. 2.

(c) Estimates a 27.5% reduction by end-2005, Nolan ITU for Department of Environment and Heritage. Plastic Retail Carry Bag Use 2002 – 2005 Consumption, 2005 Mid-year Report, November 2005, p. 5-6.

(d) Environment Victoria, The Great Plastic Bag Checkout, February 2006, p. 2.

(e) Clean Up Australia, Newspill Survey, 29 May 2005.

(f) Based on the Nolan ITU estimate of around 1% of bags sold entering the litter stream every year. Nolan ITU for Environment Australia, Plastic Shopping Bags – Analysis of Levies and Environmental Impacts, Final Report, December 2002, p. 8.

Market Tools

Market Tools for Reducing Waste



Created on Tuesday, 20 December 2005 03:12

TEC has commissioned a report to evaluate the effectiveness of sustainable resource recovery market based instruments. Our Green Capital program is holding forums of business, government and NGO leaders in key states to discuss options. We are also preparing state of waste reports for Western Australia, Queensland and Victoria.

Market Based Instruments and Sustainable Resource Recovery [838KB]

Scenario Development for Market Based Instruments [330KB]

Packaging

Waste Packaging



Last Updated on Sunday, 17 February 2013 06:40



National Packaging Covenant

Australia's poor performance on packaging waste is primarily the result of industry inaction. We have been working to improve the failing National Packaging Covenant (NPC) which was originally a strategy by industry to support their preferred non-regulatory, piecemeal approach.

As a result of the Boomerang Alliance's advocacy in 2004-5, the flawed National Packaging Covenant was strengthened with binding targets on specific material types. If targets are not met, governments have agreed to initiate strong action to ensure better performance; and are currently considering a container deposit system.

TEC was appointed as the community representative to the National Packaging Covenant Council in 2006 and has worked to improve its transparency, governance and objectives. Two major reports were issued on the performance of the NPC - NPC Date Review and Lessons for the Future.

Most recently the next version of the NPC has been developed and this includes a much strengthened commitment to sustainable packaging. This means that the over 600 industry signatories to the NPC must use more recycle in their packaging and minimise packaging. Such a move increases the demand for recovered waste and thus makes recycling more economic; and reduces the environmental footprint of packaging.

Boost Juice

TEC used Boost Juice as an example of 'greenwash' due to its unsubstantiated claims that non-recyclable polystyrene cups were more environmentally friendly than recyclable cardboard cups. Boost Juice also refused to comply with a local council order to use recyclable cups before finally changing their packaging, but only at its Bondi store. In 2005 Boost agreed to investigate alternatives and is now introducing recyclable cardboard cups.

Container Deposit Legislation

TEC is campaigning for the introduction of Container Deposit Legislation to increase recycling of bottles and cans.

see - CD is on the move in Australia

Other Reports

Packaging Waste in Australia - Overview [121KB]

Pathetic Packaging Report [293KB]

Say No to the Waste Club [541KB]

Further Information:

Boomerang Alliance

Latest News

Country megatip for Sydney rejected - one more to go



Created on Saturday, 02 October 1999 10:00

"It was such an ill-conceived and primitive attempt to deal with the waste problem, that it is amazing that it even saw the light of day. There are much more innovative and sustainable ways of dealing with Sydney's waste," said Jeff Angel Director of Total Environment Centre.

"The current Government's inquiry into the alternatives that reports early next year, should set the pace, not one-off megatip plans from the private sector. There is also a scheme for a megatip at Woodlawn, but this too should be rejected - it's the old style approach not suited to a global city like Sydney that is aiming to be clean and green."

"The year 2000 will be crucial in resetting the parameters for waste management in Sydney and megatips should not have any part to play."

"The risk to agricultural industries from the Ardlethan was a factor in the rejection of the scheme. This is further demonstration that Sydney should not export environmental problems."

Commissioner Cleland reports that he is "...not persuaded that agricultural risk arising from the Ardlethan Landfill Project would be non-existent or that the requisite degree of biosecurity could be achieved..."

Farmers are concerned that the perception of the area would no longer be "clean and green" and about the impact this could have on markets for their produce.

Latest News

Turning Hunter Rubbish Into Trees



Created on Thursday, 20 January 2000 11:00

Former mine sites and degraded agricultural lands will be transformed into viable hardwood plantations and wildlife corridors. TEC says the annual waste stream from the Hunter, Newcastle and Central Coast will support a 30 year program to rehabilitate land which has been massively degraded over the last 200 years.

Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre, said "This proposal offers a real win-win situation. Diverting waste from landfill to land restoration avoids the need for further megatips and the burning of waste in power stations, enhances biodiversity, improves water catchment quality and creates local jobs."

The proposal has been sent to the Premier, relevant Ministers and Hunter agencies, and the Government's.

It involves 200,000 tonnes of organic waste per annum, diverted from landfill. Total Environment Centre recommends establishing a special taskforce to oversee the programs including funding, new infrastructure and locations for regeneration.

Latest News

Will Sydney rubbish country NSW?



Created on Tuesday, 08 February 2000 11:00

"Such high levels of diversion mean new megatips in country NSW are not necessary and new jobs can be created in a range of new industries and technologies," said Jeff Angel, Director of the Centre.

"Sydney can take the environmentally responsible route on waste management but it will need the support of key stakeholders and regulators. In this regard we are disappointed in the apparent support from high levels within the Environment Protection Authority for more megadumps. This is a dinosaur view of the world."

"The NSW Government inquiry into alternative waste management is due to report in March. The days should be numbered for megatip schemes when we now have alternative technologies and practices."

"Our plan calls for urgent action to be taken in the next 12 months to reset regulatory systems and provide clear strategic direction to set waste management on the path of environmental, social and economic sustainability. Over the next few years while new infrastructure and practices are put into place, we can use existing landfill space in Sydney, rather impose a 50 year megatip on country NSW (eg at Woodlawn or in the Hunter Valley) for Sydney's waste."

Other aspects of the 20 year plan include:

- * Decentralised sites for pre-treatment of wastes for separation and reuse;
- * Ban on green waste to landfill;
- * Enforceable industry waste reduction plans promoting cleaner production;
- * Targets for waste reduction by government departments;
- * Large scale composting facilities.

Latest News

Woodlawn tip - more jobs will be lost



Created on Thursday, 10 February 2000 11:00

"Both government and environment groups have been visited by industry representatives presenting viable and financially backed alternative technologies and practices to landfilling. To tell industry to 'go away' by supporting this short sighted inquiry report is not a signal the Carr Government can environmentally or economically afford," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"The megatip would also contribute dangerous toxins and contaminants to our water supply as Woodlawn is situated on the edge of Sydney's' water catchment."

"After repeated failures to present reports that embrace modern environmental thinking, the Office of Commission of Inquiry does not have a credible environmental reputation. It certainly did not have adequate information or do sufficient investigation into alternatives to megatips," he said.

"The Government should wait until the inquiry into alternative practices and technologies to landfills commissioned by the Minister for Environment, reports. If it doesn't wait, then it will be saying its method of meeting the statutory target of reducing waste to landfill by 60% is to create another hole in the ground!"

"While we have the greatest sympathy for the mine workers whose entitlements were vapourised when the Woodlawn mine closed, revenue from the tip is not a sufficient reason to ignore the many jobs waiting to be created by the non-landfill industry and to adopt the environmentally irresponsible approach of Sydney dumping its rubbish on country NSW," Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Archaic view from Northern Sydney Waste Board



Created on Thursday, 18 May 2000 10:00

The scheme by the Northern Sydney Waste Board to send its garbage to the bush to dump down a disused mine hole does not comply with the State Government's Waste Minimisation Act, which calls for a 60 percent reduction of rubbish going into landfill, environmentalists said today.

"It's embarrassing, unfair to country people and expensive" said the Director of Total Environment Centre and northern Sydney resident, Jeff Angel. "Northern Sydney residents don't want the extra traffic, pollution load and rate increases for rubbish to be moved to Woodlawn if the dump gets the green light".

"The landfill could also come back and bite us, as it is located in Sydney's drinking water catchment"

"Why move Sydney's waste to the country when opportunities exist for sustainable waste processing such as at the North Ryde Porters Creek transfer station i.e. improved green waste processing, concrete crushing and sustainable integrated waste facilities for the surrounding council areas," Mr Angel asked.

Brigid Dowsett President of the Ryde/Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society opposes Woodlawn. Ms Dowsett said "she would like to see Councils and Waste Boards work collaboratively to produce a sound environmental solution for North Sydney's waste problem"

Our choices are a 50 year megatip in the country or a diverse range of alternative technologies and practices which will create much more employment, better use of our waste resources and ecological sustainability.

Latest News

Waste at historic turning point



Created on Thursday, 08 June 2000 10:00

"A new taskforce is essential because the Head of the Environment Protection Authority said last night at the Estimates hearings that he thought Sydney needed a new megatip. The Inquiry clearly found that landfills are least preferred - it is dinosaur technology. The Minister and more enlightened people have to take a direct role in sorting out this crucial environmental issue, the EPA have been left behind " said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"If NSW adopts the type of approaches to managing waste, recommended by the Inquiry, then thousands of jobs will be created. A megadump will employ very few, setting back new waste businesses and employment. We call on the Government to invest in the future not the past," said Mr Angel.

"Sydney has sufficient landfill capacity for at least 11 years according to the Inquiry. There is ample time to put new technologies and practices into place and avoid imposing a super dump on country NSW. Such a dump will destroy Sydney's aim to be a clean and green city," said Kathy Ridge, Executive Officer of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW.

"If the Government approves a new megadump then it is buying all sorts of political problems, from country people to environmentalists. Political, environmental and economic wisdom calls for a new approach," the two groups said.

Latest News

Huge community and industry opposition to megatips



Created on Monday, 12 June 2000 10:00

"The Carr Government is faced with a crucial decision on whether to allow the Woodlawn megadump near Goulburn to take Sydney's waste for the next 50 years. Another superdump is proposed near Singleton, in the Hunter Valley.

But the Government has just received a major waste inquiry report * that labels landfills as the second worst method (incineration is last) of 14 waste technologies available," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"The wide range of opposition to megadumps reflects the extent of concern with Government policies, " he said.

"Business and industry's alternative plans to landfilling will be crippled if a megatip is approved. Industry groups have viable and financially backed alternative technologies and practices ready to be applied to our waste," said Kathy Ridge, Executive Officer of the Nature Conservation Council.

"Northern Sydney Waste Board and Collex's scatterbrain and short sighted proposal to dump Sydney's rubbish into an ex-mine site will employ only 30 people. The Ravensworth dump scheme is also a job killer. In comparison alternative technologies and practices have the potential to create hundreds of jobs, new businesses and conserve our resources across the state," she said.

Latest News

Tumbarumba left behind in the waste stakes!



Created on Wednesday, 14 February 2001 11:00

The scheme should be refused on the basis that no recycling is planned for the site, and alternative approaches have not been properly investigated.

"The EIS mentions full recycling services at the tip site but the Council voted against having recycling. Residents should insist the Council adopts modern, environmentally responsible practices.

Sustainable waste management includes source separation and diversion of all recyclables, composting of all green and household kitchen waste," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"No tender process for alternatives to landfilling has been entered into. Landfills pose serious leachate dangers to water quality."

If recycling and green waste processing were upgraded, a new landfill site would not be required for more than five years.

This will give time for Council to be forward thinking, investigate alternatives using independent and transparent processes which involve the local community and adopt a policy of minimising waste to landfill. "Such approaches are currently being adopted by a number of councils," he said.

"With the current review of the Waste Act (1995), and last years Government Waste Inquiry labelling landfills as the second worst method (incineration is last) of 14 waste technologies available, it is time for a change."

Latest News

How much has the Northern Sydney Waste Board wasted?



Created on Thursday, 08 March 2001 11:00

"Northern Waste Board salaries and operating costs peak at nearly \$1 million while new infrastructure to significantly drive waste from landfill is a low priority" says Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"The community also deserve an explanation why administration costs were triple the budget allocation. Are these 'fat cat' salaries?"

"The Board has been operational since late 96 yet data collection is still being perfected at ludicrous expense."

"There is no allocation of funds for alternative technologies research, a miserable amount allocated for public place and event waste management, and a tokenistic amount for reuse and repair centres."

"This is a particularly lazy Waste Board as it rides on the back of the magnificent recycling efforts of the community, when it has done little to foster that consciousness but puts a big effort into getting a megatip", says Jeff Angel.

Also in the Annual Report, Northern Sydney Waste Board's mission, states that it "is committed to implement sustainable practices which will avoid and minimise the creation of waste, promote reuse and recycling of resources and better manage the residuals for the benefit of its community and protection of the environment". Figures revealed by their annual report depict the opposite.

Latest News

Wood-fired power stations face uphill battle



Created on Monday, 23 April 2001 10:00

"Household consumers will soon be able to choose their electricity supplier and there is a clear need for community watchdog groups to give independent information about the environmental implications of various sources of electricity. In the enthusiasm of members of the electricity industry to portray themselves as green in a competitive electricity market, mistakes will be made. This particularly applies to proposals in four states to burn native forest material to generate electricity," said Norm Crothers for the Australian Consumers Association.

"Power generated from native forests is now being called 'dead koala electricity'. The scale of the demands being made for the wood, herald a new woodchip industry that will cause significant environmental damage. The majority of Australians care about the future of our native forests and I am sure they would not want to plug into this type of power - there are many other alternatives that are much cleaner and greener," said Jeff Angel Director of Total Environment Centre.

A recent national opinion poll commissioned by The Wilderness Society on behalf of state and national peak environment groups found that 88% of people oppose native forest wood-fired power plants and only 6.5% consider such electricity as renewable.

"With this clear verdict against such wood power stations it will be essential to inform the public about which electricity companies are acting responsibly. A range of information methods including surveys of companies and the Internet will be adopted," the two groups said.

Latest News

RATS, LITTER AND TOXIC WASTE: NSW RURAL LANDFILLS IN CRISIS



Created on Monday, 10 February 2003 11:00

"The report identifies that rural landfill sites are failing to control pests, litter, odour and accepting toxic waste," said Ben Cole, Chemicals Campaigner at Total Environment Centre.

"We are also concerned about the apparent relaxed attitude of the EPA - landfill pollution licensing has been in place for five years, it's urgent the problems are fixed."

The findings were disclosed in the EPA's Rural Waste Landfill Facilities Industry Sector- Compliance Performance Report. The report audited 30 of 85 existing landfills licensed outside of Sydney's Metropolitan area. Some of the most startling revelations include;

• 75% of landfills were inadequately covering waste to minimise environmental impacts.

• 70% were not covering waste adequately to reduce pest, vermin and the generation and dissemination of weeds.

• 50% of landfills were not adequately screening waste entering the site.

• 23% were accepting potentially toxic waste (fuel drums, batteries, pesticide bottles) without permission.

"As rainwater moves through and is trapped within a landfill site a highly toxic soup is produced. This soup can contain heavy metals, hazardous organic chemicals and can emit toxic fumes. Yet 20% of rural landfills were making no attempt to capture this toxic soup which can then flow into the groundwater and adjacent waterways."

"This report is a clear message to the state government that current landfilling practices are irreversibly damaging the environment and threatening public health. There is only one solution, they must be phased out," said Ben Cole.

Total Environment Centre is calling on the state government to ensure that all current rural landfilling activities are replaced with recycling facilities, the separation of all organic waste with other materials and the development of extended producer responsibility for all potentially toxic products.

Latest News

2003 Year of Great Waste Debate: Time for Producers to Make Products Cleaner



Created on Thursday, 01 May 2003 10:00

"Poor product design is to blame for the rising mountains of landfill surrounding our cities," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre. "Producers must start thinking about what happens to products after the consumer has used them, and design them to be less toxic and more easily recyclable."

"Products such as computers are toxic cocktails of lead, mercury, arsenic and cadmium," Mr Angel said. "When they go to landfill, they can leach into the environment, posing a threat to the community's health and to ecosystems."

Over 3 million computers enter NSW each year and most end up in landfills, accounting for 2000 - 5000 tonnes of hazardous waste annually. The Environment Protection Authority has put computer producers on notice to take action, threatening to impose regulations if they do nothing to stem the flow.

"Dumping these products is also a huge waste of valuable, non-renewable resources. Rare materials such as gold, platinum and silver are lost forever when they go to landfill. Requiring producers to take back their products sends a long overdue message for them to make their products cleaner and less wasteful," said Mr Angel.

Latest News

U-Turn a Must for One-Way Used Tyres



Created on Wednesday, 07 May 2003 10:00

"The spectacular failure of past voluntary schemes for used tyres makes it clear that regulatory controls and market assistance are now long overdue," said Jeff Angel, TEC Director. "Dumping used tyres is not only a pollution problem but a waste of valuable resources. By banning tyres from landfill and supporting the emerging rubber reprocessing industry, we can both reduce waste and create market opportunities."

Used tyres can have adverse environmental impacts and threaten human health and safety. Chemicals leaching from tyres pollute groundwater, while burning them creates air pollution. Proposals to use tyres to fire power stations for electricity have been discredited as a waste of resources, utilising only 5% of the value that could be gained from recycling them into new products.

"Under new State legislation, tyre producers could be obliged to take responsibility for what has been identified as a 'waste of concern' by the NSW Environment Protection Agency. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes place the onus on the producer to deal with their products in an environmentally friendly way. Recycling rates for scrap tyres in Taiwan increased from 51% in 1991 to 105.64% by 1995 after EPR was introduced," Mr Angel said.

"Economically and environmentally, dumping millions of waste tyres just doesn't make sense. It's time for industry and government to act."

Latest News

Toxic Batteries a Health Threat: Green Group Urges Government to Act



Created on Friday, 16 May 2003 10:00

The government should be regulating producers of toxic products to protect human health, TEC said. "NiCads are one of the main offenders when it comes to environmental toxicity," said TEC Campaigner, Jane Castle.

"Safer alternatives or recycling are available but the market is not delivering them. A strong regulation must come from government to ensure industry takes responsibility for the effect of its products on the environment."

NiCad batteries, one of the government targeted 'wastes of concern', are used to run power tools and can be found in a range of electrical products including laptop computers, mobile phones, cordless phones and camcorders. The cadmium in the batteries is a highly toxic heavy metal which can leach into the environment and cause kidney disease and lung damage. Around 500 tonnes per year end up in NSW landfills.

"Producer responsibility makes both environmental and economic sense," said Ms Castle. "Take-back schemes can create new jobs while maintaining a healthy environment, essential for long term economic sustainability."

"Europe is close to banning NiCads completely, and we should be following their lead by regulating for Extended Producer Responsibility."

Waste & Recycling

Environment Group Targets Toxic TVs as Threat to Human, Environmental Health



Created on Wednesday, 11 June 2003 10:00

"TVs contain lead, cadmium and brominated flame retardants," said TEC Campaigner, Jane Castle. "When they are dumped in landfills, these chemicals can leach into the environment and damage human health."

Televisions are one of the four priority 'wastes of concern' targeted by the Environment Protection Authority for Extended Producer Responsibility. Producers face mandatory government schemes if they fail to manage their products more responsibly.

"Manufacturers must stem the tide of chemicals entering the environment via their products by replacing hazardous materials and by implementing take-back and recycling systems," said Ms Castle. "Industry has made a good start with pilot programs but now it's time for real action. Government regulations must be imposed if industry fails to act."

"Producers have been selling toxic TVs in Australia for over 40 years, leaving a huge legacy of chemicals and heavy metals in the environment. The present push by manufacturers to get consumers to upgrade to wide-screen, flat-screen and digital sets will send millions more to landfill. This will turn an environmental problem into a disaster." said Ms Castle.

"Internationally, governments have banned the use of hazardous materials, implemented mandatory take-back and banned the dumping of TVs in landfills. Australia should be looking to such international best practices to set its standards."

"Failing to divert TVs from landfill also prevents the emergence of a profitable remanufacturing and recycling industry. Televisions contain valuable, non-renewable resources that are wasted when they are discarded."

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Latest News

Green Group Condemns Toxic Vehicles as Dead-End for Environment and Human Health



Created on Wednesday, 18 June 2003 10:00

"Pumping huge amounts of lead, mercury, cadmium and brominated flame retardants into the environment is simply not good enough," said Jane Castle, TEC Campaigner.

"These toxic materials can leach into groundwater and threaten human and environmental health. It's time for vehicle manufacturers to take the back their toxic progeny and deal with them responsibly."

Vehicles are one of the priority 'wastes of concern' targeted by the Environment Protection Authority for Extended Producer Responsibility. Producers face mandatory government schemes if they fail to manage their products more responsibly. Over 500,000 vehicles are discarded every year in Australia and only a proportion of them are recycled.

"At present, no requirements ensure vehicle recycling or disassembly to ensure that toxic components such as lead batteries, toxic plastics or fluids are removed."

"In Europe 'shredder flock' is classified as a hazardous waste and manufacturers must recycle 95% of vehicles they manufacture. This is where we should be looking to set our standards, instead of relying on out-dated, bad habits."

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Latest News

Environment Group Backs Local Councils in Move to Shift Burden of Product Waste to Manufacturers



Created on Wednesday, 25 June 2003 10:00

"Councils and rate-payers across Australia currently subsidise recycling by \$100 million per year," said Jane Castle, TEC Campaigner. "This burden is inappropriate as councils have no control over what products are made of or how to best recycle them. Producers should be taking back their products after the consumer has used them because they are best placed to design them for recycling."

Whitegoods have been targeted by the NSW Environment Protection Authority for Extended Producer Responsibility schemes. Producers face government regulations if they fail to develop their own systems to manage their post-consumer products more responsibly.

"Councils and rate-payers should not be held responsible for dealing with this hazardous product waste," said Ms Castle. "Large appliances are made with toxic CFCs, PCBs, mercury and lead and are only partly recycled. When they are landfilled or shredded, these materials can leach into the ecosystem and damage human health."

"No regulations presently exist to guarantee that toxic substances, including ozone depleting CFCs, are treated responsibly prior to landfilling, shredding or disassembly. Many countries in Europe now treat this waste as hazardous and have mandated producer take-back. Without Extended Producer Responsibility in Australia, we are lagging far behind."

"Wasted resources are also an issue, with 550,000 tonnes of steel, 20,000 tonnes of copper and 20,000 tonnes of aluminium set to enter the waste stream via major appliances in the next 5 years."

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Latest News

Government Action Urgent to Address Rising Mountains of Packaging Waste



Created on Wednesday, 02 July 2003 10:00

"Over 1 million tonnes of paper, plastic and glass are sent to Sydney landfills every year and rising," said Jane Castle, TEC Campaigner.

"The National Packaging Covenant has been an exercise in green-wash and has failed to produce results. It's time for governments to declare the used-by date on voluntary schemes well and truly expired and to mandate producer funded collection and recycling targets."

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has targeted packaging waste under new NSW laws. Producers face mandatory Extended Producer Responsibility schemes if they continue environmentally unsustainable practices.

"The community is doing its part by participating enthusiastically in kerbside recycling. Now it's up to industry to make packaging less toxic, more recyclable and more resource efficient," Ms Castle said.

"In Germany, packaging consumption fell by 1.5 million tonnes after the implementation of the German Packaging Ordinance. Recycling levels for plastic packaging in Germany where producer responsibility is mandatory are 93% compared to 27% in Australia where schemes are voluntary."

"The National Packaging Covenant, a voluntary industry scheme, has no enforceable targets and is hampered by a lack of transparency. It is just one more in a long line of spectacular failures."

"If government fails to act we'll also miss out on opportunities to get in on the booming international market for recycling and sorting technologies. In Germany, exports per capita of recycling technologies are surging ahead of US rates where recycling is still only voluntary. Our current failure to cash in on this hi-tech export market signals short-sighted economic policy."

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Latest News

Industry, Community Leaders Call for Swift Action on Producer Responsibility



Created on Tuesday, 30 December 2003 11:00

The Framework for EPR calls for clear and substantial targets linked to timelines which trigger mandatory schemes if not met.

"The overwhelming support for this initiative serves as a timely reminder for the government that it must quickly address the rising mountains of landfills overflowing with used products," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre (TEC). "Unless the Government implements producer take-back schemes, millions of tonnes of valuable materials will continue to be wasted."

Industry and community leaders supporting the Framework include Siemens, Theiss Services, Collex, the Australian Cartridge Remanufacturing Association, Stratum Australia, the Australian Consumers Association, NSW Council for Social Services, Clean Up Australia and a broad range of local councils.

"Producers are best placed to take responsibility for post-consumer waste because they design it in the first place and can make it more recyclable," said Mr Angel "Voluntary schemes have been unable to stop millions of toxic products going to landfill. They are also unfair to the leading companies that are responsible about the waste they create."

Mobile phones, batteries, TVs, computers, tyres, CCA treated timber and packaging have been targeted as 'wastes of concern' by the Environment Protection Agency and are liable for regulation under new NSW laws. Such programs are already in place across Europe, Asia and the US where producers must take back their products, improve collection and recycling rates, and cease using toxic chemicals.

"When products go to landfill, poisonous materials can leach into the environment and threaten the ecosystem and human health. Requiring producers to take back their products sends a long overdue message to them to make them cleaner and less wasteful," said Mr Angel.

CURRENT SIGNATORIES

Australian Cartridge Remanufacturing Association
Australian Cartridge Resellers
Burwood Computer Services
CartCollect
Collex
Greenchill Technologies Australia
Microseconds
PC Graveyard
Schiavello
Siemens
Stratum Australia
Theiss Systems
Tyche Digital
Wright Corporate Strategy
Australian Chemical Trauma Alliance
Australian Conservation Foundation
Australian Consumers Association
The Bower
Clean Up Australia

Ecodesign Foundation
Environmental Defenders Office
Friends of the Earth
Greenpeace
Lead Advisory Service Australia
Minerals Policy Institute
National Toxics Network
NSW Council of Social Services
Public Health Association of Australia
Reverse Garbage
Total Environment Centre
WorldWide Fund for Nature
The Wilderness Society
Berrigan Shire Council
Bingara Shire Council
Blacktown City Council
Bland Shire Council
Botany Bay Council
Cessnock City Council
Council of the Municipality of Kiama
Eurobodalla Shire Council
Fairfield City Council
Gosford City Council
Gunnedah Shire Council
Hornsby Shire Council
Hurstville City Council
Kogarah Council
Lake Macquarie City Council
Lismore City Council
Mulwarree Shire Council
North Sydney Council
Shellharbour City Council
Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils
Tumbarumba Shire Council
Tweed Shire Council
Warringah Council
Willoughby City Council
Wingecarribee Shire Council
Wollongong Council
Centre for Waste and Water Technology, UNSW
Urban Frontiers Programme, UWS

THE FRAMEWORK FOR EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY

The following guidelines represent the views of a coalition of supporters of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), who share a common goal that the existing NSW legislation is implemented in good faith to its fullest extent, with the minimum delay, and to the maximum benefit of the community, environment and industry.

Benefits of EPR:

- * Stimulate resource recovery and recycling industries.
- * Improve resource efficiency through better product design.
- * Reduce waste management costs.
- * Reduce the environmental impact of product waste.

REWARDING BEST PRACTICE

- * EPR schemes should be supported by significant financial incentives and rewards for companies whose performance exceeds the prescribed targets.

CREATING A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

* While commercial advantage needs to be respected, minimum standards for the successful recovery of resources by all relevant players in an industry, including importers, should be established. A level playing field is critical - failure to comply with standards should attract significant financial penalties and public exposure. Repeat offenders should attract even greater penalties.

* Clear and substantial targets must be set and linked to specific timelines with interim milestones where industry schemes are considered. Failure to meet these targets within the timelines must trigger mandatory schemes without the opportunity to extend the (failed) scheme. Legitimate delays accompanied by early warnings, however, should be able to trigger interim solutions.

* Mandatory schemes in NSW (possibly in concert with Victoria) should be the preferred option over voluntary schemes in order to eliminate free-riders and reward best practice.

REPORTING

* Reporting on the meeting of targets must be mandatory and transparent. A system of independent verification and public reporting must underpin reporting on recovery rates.

* The extent and complexity of compliance regimes must allow for the size of operation and should recognise that SMEs generally have less impact. There should be a flexible approach to reducing administrative burdens (such as reporting) for organisations with limited resources.

CONSULTATION

* A Technical Reference Group should be formed to assist government to implement Extended Producer Responsibility schemes. The constitution of this group should represent the entire spectrum of the community and must not be dominated by special interest industry groups. Its operations must be fully transparent, with full public disclosure of meetings, agendas and other operational information relating to consultation.

* Meaningful, ongoing negotiation with environment groups, local government, industry and the wider community should be carried out on an equal basis to manufacturers. Small recyclers, resellers, remanufacturers, reprocessors, sustainable manufacturers, retailers, and insurance, finance and transport groups will be directly effected by Extended Producer Responsibility schemes and must be actively engaged in the consultative process. It is critical that special interest groups within the manufacturing and waste management industries do not dominate the consultative process.

STATE LEADERSHIP

* NSW should continue its leadership on this issue, recognising the ongoing value of this approach to our large state market and in the evolution of inter-state and national action.

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Latest News

GREEN GROUP HAILS PLASTIC BAG BAN



Created on Friday, 05 March 2004 11:00

The move to a ban is long overdue and reflects the spectacular failure of the industry and joint government to respond to community calls for the phase out of the deadly bags.

"The Premier's announcement shows once again that self-regulation by industry simply doesn't work," said Jeff Angel, TEC Director. "Last year's industry/government deal that rejected a levy in favour of an industry plan, failed to listen to the community's call for a cleaner environment."

"Public patience is running out, with the senseless waste of 6 billion plastic bags going to landfill or polluting the environment, every year. It's wasteful consumption of the worst kind."

"We believe, a ban on plastic bags would be far more effective than a levy that would allow the well-off to continue their bad habits. If we want to see the end of plastic bags, a ban makes the most sense."

Communities around Australia have been imposing their own bans in the absence of State or Federal leadership. Last year Coles Bay in Tasmania and Huskisson in NSW banned plastic bags from being sold in retail outlets.

"Plastic bags should be just the beginning of a new attitude to waste, that includes product take-back by industry. The community expects the Government to act on other problematic wastes, including toxic electronics and tyres and to require industry to take-back products for recycling or reuse. The NSW Government is expected to announce a policy on these in the near future," Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Crunch-time Arrives for Wasteful Industries



Created on Wednesday, 17 March 2004 11:00

The Statement, targeting problem wastes such as computers, tyres and plastic bags, gives producers 12 months to take responsibility for their products after consumers have used them.

"It's crunch-time for industry, which must now match its words with actions," said Jeff Angel, TEC Director. "If resource recovery targets aren't met within 12 months, producers will have no reason to complain when strict regulations are imposed."

"The spotlight has now shifted from feel-good statements to actual performance on the take-back of troublesome post-consumer products. It's no longer acceptable for industry to pay lip service to sustainability while pushing wasteful, toxic products onto consumers. The decades of failed voluntary schemes can now come to an end."

"The community now recognises that producers are best placed to take responsibility for post-consumer waste because they design products in the first place and can make them more recyclable," said Mr Angel. "Voluntary schemes have been unable to stop millions of toxic products going to landfill. They are also unfair to the leading companies that are responsible about the waste they create."

"We now have a way to tackle the growing mountains of landfills at its very source. The Government can now make good on its waste reduction targets that have not been met."

"We expect the Government to hold to this commitment to get tough on these polluting industries. To back away from mandatory regulations if targets are unmet would be to short-change the community on environmental protection."

Computers, TVs, NiCad batteries, tyres and plastic bags have been targeted for take-back regulations if producers fail to deliver within 12 months. Arsenic treated timber, mobile phones and whitegoods have also been put on notice for future action if industry schemes fail to deliver.

Extended Producer Responsibility programs are already in place across Europe, Asia and the US where producers must take back their products, improve collection and recycling rates, and cease using toxic chemicals.

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Latest News

Green Groups Demand Action on Packaging Waste



Created on Wednesday, 14 April 2004 10:00

The Environment Protection and Heritage Council, which includes all State and Federal Environment Ministers, will meet tomorrow to decide the future of the voluntary National Packaging Covenant which is due to expire in August.

"The National Packaging Covenant has been around for five years now - it's a national disgrace that no-one can show what it's done to help the environment." says Suzie Brown, Environment Victoria's Sustainable Consumption campaigner.

"We want to see industry-wide targets to ensure all parts of industry - packaging manufacturers, brandowners and retailers - are working towards the same environmental goals: reducing litter and landfill waste and increasing recycling."

Targets should include reduction in packaging waste to landfill, increase in recyclability of packaging, reduction in packaging litter, lightweighting of packaging, and recycling targets for specific materials such as plastics, aluminium, steel or paper.

While the aim of the original Packaging Covenant was to reduce the environmental impact of consumer packaging, no specific objectives were set, leaving industry signatories to decide their own goals.

"The Federal Government has set no direction for industry to solve the environmental problems of packaging - the Covenant has just been a tick-the-box exercise for many companies' who signed on," said Jeff Angel, Total Environment Centre's Executive Director.

"This is the last chance. If it can't be quickly made effective, then it should be dumped."
Many European countries have targets for reducing packaging waste, for example France has a target of 75% recovery of packaging by 2003.

In Australia packaging makes up around 25% of household waste, while it is estimated that 75% of litter is consumer packaging such as plastic bags, beverage containers and food wrappers.

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Latest News

Green Groups Back Industry Call for TV Take-Back Regulation



Created on Wednesday, 14 April 2004 10:00

"TV manufacturers have taken an important first step by proposing a scheme to collect end-of-life TVs for recycling," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre. "We call on Federal and State Environment Ministers to improve on the scheme by ensuring all brands join the scheme to stop TVs poisoning the environment and wasting resources."

The Environment Protection and Heritage Council, which includes all State and Federal Environment Ministers, will meet in Adelaide tomorrow to discuss the future of the scheme. Electronics manufacturers such as Sony, Sharp, NEC, Samsung and Panasonic support the scheme in which the collection and recycling of used TVs would be funded by a small recycling fee charged at the point of sale of new TVs.

"Ministers should commit to national regulations to ensure all importers and local producers of TVs take part in the scheme, not just the proactive companies," said Suzie Brown, Environment Victoria's Sustainable Consumption Campaigner.

"The electronics industry should be congratulated for initiating this badly-needed TV recycling scheme. Thousands of televisions go into Australia's landfills every year which includes tonnes of heavy metals which can leach into the environment."

"We have no doubt the scheme with a small recycling fee will be supported by the community," said Mr Angel. "A pro-active move now at the Federal level would improve the scheme, strengthen industry confidence and demonstrate the Government's commitment to sustainability. However, whether or not the Ministers support the scheme, manufacturers must abide by new NSW regulations which require a producer responsibility scheme within 12 months."

TVs have been targeted as a 'waste of concern' by the Department of Environment and Conservation in NSW. The Department has given industry 12 months to develop an effective take-back scheme or be liable for mandatory regulations.

Up to 15,000 tonnes of TVs are dumped in unlined, NSW landfills every year. TVs contain hazardous materials such as lead, mercury, cadmium and chromates which can leach into the environment and damage human and environmental health.

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Latest News

Cut to the Chase, Cut the Red Tape - Ban on Plastic Bags Way to Go



Created on Thursday, 15 April 2004 10:00

"The spectacular failure of retailers to significantly reduce plastic bag use makes it imperative that half measures are avoided," said Jeff Angel, TEC Director. "A ban on light-weight, single-use bags would reduce costs for retailers who could sell heavy duty, reusable bags to customers."

"A levy on plastic bags comes with high administrative costs and slows down progress towards the goal, which is the reduction of plastic bag use. Under either scheme, consumers would still have the choice of buying heavy duty, reusable bags. The ban would just speed up the process and reduce costs."

The Environment Protection and Heritage Council, which includes all State and Federal Environment Ministers, will meet in tomorrow to discuss the plastic bag issue. Last year a voluntary Code of Practice for retailers was introduced to reduce plastic bag consumption and to increase recycling. Environment Ministers set targets of 25% reduction by the end of 2004 but so far plastic bag use has reduced by only 3%.

"The Environment Ministers should avoid falling for the same empty promises from retailers. The reality is that plastic bag usage has only gone down by about 3%. This is simply unacceptable and a ban should be agreed to."

"Each day that the Federal Government stalls, another 19 million plastic bags go into our waterways, parks and landfills. We need some decisive action from the Federal Environment Minister, rather than continuing to allow the retailers to set the agenda."

Latest News

Councils Rubbish Waste Targets



Created on Tuesday, 31 August 2004 10:00

Councils from the Western, Southern and Northern Sydney regions (listed below) have applied to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) for approval to put out joint tenders for waste management, but have failed to require the target of 66% diversion from landfill by 2014.

"These Councils are saying yes to more landfills, more waste and more broken promises," said Jeff Angel, TEC Director. "They must be required to comply with resource recovery targets to ensure a sustainable future."

"Residents are doing their part by recycling. Now it's up to Councils pull their weight. New technologies can recover up to 75% of waste for recycling and compost, but it'll be 0% if Councils lock-in waste to landfill."

"The Northern Sydney councils made no mention of the target in the ACCC submission and were clearly seeking to undermine it. The Western Councils made no commitment, while the Southern Councils were very vague about their intentions. All wanted to landfill hundreds of thousands of tonnes of waste every year, into the next decade."

Total Environment Centre has written to the 22 Councils seeking assurance that tenders will stipulate resource recovery targets that comply with the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy. The Strategy, developed in consultation with the Councils and the community, requires resource recovery of 66% of municipal waste by 2014. TEC made submissions to the ACCC opposing the Councils' proposals.

Sydney disposes 4 million tonnes per annum to landfill. If no action is taken to divert more waste, this figure will climb to 8.5 million tpa by 2020.

Councils seeking permission for joint tenders, but lacking resource recovery targets:

Botany Bay Council
Council of Camden
Campbelltown City Council
Canterbury City Council
Hornsby Shire Council
Hunters Hill Municipal Council
Kogarah Council Lane Cove Council
Marrickville Council
Mosman Municipal Council
North Sydney Council
Randwick City Council
Rockdale City Council
City of Ryde
Sutherland Shire Council
Waverly Council Warringah Council
Willoughby City Council
Wingecarribee Shire Council
Wollondilly Shire Council
Woollahra Council

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Latest News

New Report Slams Packaging Waste Industry



Created on Thursday, 02 December 2004 11:00

The report, - produced by the alliance of environment groups, also suggests that glass recovery rates reported by industry are overstated and there are no plans to avoid land filling of 50% of all packaging waste.

"The National Packaging Covenant is a recipe for inaction and the new version of the NPC to be considered by the Ministers is more of the same. Over 2.5 million tonnes of packaging waste are landfilled now. The problem will get worse unless the Ministers adopt a new approach," said Jane Castle, TEC Campaigner. "A 20% recycling rate for packaging after 5 years is simply appalling. The new Covenant hides this figure and has no program to improve it."

"Australians are good at recycling, so why is only 20% of our packaging waste being recycled?" asked ACF campaigner, Suzie Brown. "It is the fault of brand-owners who continue to use non-recyclable packaging, and lack of government leadership to ensure recycling and recyclability is the norm right across Australia . Those of us who put our recycling bin out each week should be angry that so much waste is slipping through the net."

Information also released today by the Boomerang Alliance shows a comprehensive failure by industry and government representatives on the NPC Council to adopt proposals by community groups and local government, despite a NPC agreement to seek consensus.

"We will face a litter nightmare if Ministers fail to crack down on industry," said Environment Victoria Zero Waste Campaigner Jenny Henty. "The NPC has so far failed to curb our massive appetite for waste. We can expect rubbish levels to reach suffocating proportions if industry gets off scot free."

"The National Packaging Covenant Council must go back to the drawing board and begin real consultation with local government and NGOs. A new Covenant must include binding targets, a plan to achieve them, new economic tools to increase recovery rates, strict compliance and independent assessment."

Report's key findings on the National Packaging Covenant Mk 1:

• Only 18% of packaging is recycled

• Glass container recycling decreased from 53% in 1997 to 38% in 2002

• Kerbside recycling (the key NPC tool) only contributes 13-39% to a range of types of packaging waste

• The packaging industry contributes only 1% towards the costs of kerbside collection

• Kerbside recycling costs rate-payers \$295 million pa

Report's key findings on the National Packaging Covenant Mk 2:

• Claims of success of kerbside recycling for packaging exaggerated

• No plan for 50% of all beverage containers - those consumed 'away from home'

• No targets for improved collection and recycling

• 16 widely supported stakeholder recommendations ignored

The Environment Protection and Heritage Council, which includes all State and Federal Environment Ministers, meets on Friday 3 December to decide on the fate of the revised National Packaging Covenant.

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Latest News

Ministers Avert Waste Crisis



Created on Friday, 03 December 2004 11:00

The Boomerang Alliance said the agreement was a welcome first step in ending the waste crisis. "For too long the community has been cleaning up, picking up and paying for damage from packaging that clogs our waterways and litters our parks, beaches and roadsides. It's well overdue that governments make those responsible for packaging waste work with us in dealing with the problem," said Ian Kiernan AO, Chairman, Clean Up Australia.

ACF Sustainability Campaigner Suzie Brown said: "We are pleased to see that State and Federal environment ministers have shown leadership and supported the need to set high targets."

Environment Victoria Zero Waste Campaign Director Jenny Henty said a Newspoll survey released today showed 91% of respondents thought governments should make those responsible for packaging waste deal with the mess. "Consumers are faced with an ever-growing avalanche of waste and today's agreement ensures industry will be held to account. Ministers Debus and Thwaites are to be commended," said Ms Henty.

Total Environment Centre Campaigner Jane Castle welcomed the news that the ineffective National Packaging Covenant (NPC) will be boosted with targets. "We welcome the recognition by State and Federal ministers that targets are required. These must be ambitious and address all materials individually," said Ms Castle.

The Boomerang Alliance said the next step must be for the NPC Council and industry members to negotiate with green groups and local government.

"What we need are practical mechanisms such as landfill bans, deposits, refillables and advanced disposal fees, to tackle packaging waste. Targets will be meaningless if there are no programs in place to reach them," said Ms Castle.

The Boomerang Alliance is a coalition of major environment groups committed to eliminating packaging waste.

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Latest News

The Great Mobile Phone Hoax - Government Must Mandate National Take-Back Scheme



Created on Thursday, 09 December 2004 11:00

"The great mobile phone recovery hoax has finally hit rock-bottom," said Jane Castle, TEC Campaigner.

"The Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA) has sucked millions of dollars from consumers via an industry levy on the false promise of collection and recycling. It has lost credibility. It's time for government to mandate refundable deposits."

The ABC's 7.30 Report last night also revealed that AMTA has been making false claims that the plastic from collected phones is being made into furniture. Instead, plastics are going to landfill.

"Government must mandate a regulated take-back scheme based on refundable deposits. A deposit of \$10 on each phone will encourage consumers to bring back their old ones, which can go towards their new handset. It's hardly rocket-science."

The mobile phone recycling scheme has collected less than 1/2% of mobile phones in circulation, leaving over 30 million unaccounted for.

"Four years of indifference and inefficiency is enough. The scheme is being used as a cynical cover for industry to stall on real action."

Around 12 million Australians own mobile phones and exchange them on average every 18-24 months. Over 95% of these are unaccounted for, and could end up in landfills.

Mobile phones contain toxic cocktails of arsenic, cadmium, lead and heavy metals which have been linked to cancer and a range of reproductive, neurological and developmental disorders.

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Latest News

Boost Breach Tip of Iceberg for Poor Packaging



Created on Monday, 21 February 2005 11:00

TEC has called on consumers to boycott juice retailers that fail to use reusable or recyclable cups and for all councils to demand better performance on packaging waste.

"The Boost Juice image of health and vitality is a sham when it comes to the environment," said Jane Castle, TEC campaigner.

"The company continues to take the cheap and dirty option despite community concerns. Retail juice bars must clean up their act by switching to reusable cups and recyclable paper cups."

Polystyrene cups cannot be recycled in Australia. They are hazardous as litter and they deplete resources. Reusable cups can be used hundreds of times, and paper cups can be recycled. Boost Juice has also made misleading claims on its website that polystyrene cups have minimal environmental impact. An appeal to the Australian Consumer and Competition Commission is being considered.

"Boost Juice and other retail juice outlets should set the record straight on the environmental impact of their cups. They should offer customers a discount for using reusable cups and a refundable deposit when they bring back their paper cups."

"This is just another example of the poor performance of the National Packaging Covenant to bring about real improvements, particularly in the retail food sector. The Covenant must be scrapped unless it can be radically overhauled."

State and Federal Ministers have recently ordered the National Packaging Covenant Council to negotiate with environment groups to come up with binding targets to reduce packaging.

"State and Federal governments should mandate reusable and recyclable packaging across the nation. The Boost Juice issue is just the tip of the iceberg."

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Latest News

Finally, Boost Juice Will Do The Right Thing (but only in Bondi)



Created on Friday, 04 March 2005 11:00

TEC has also called on other councils to introduce the same conditions of consent.

Councillor George Newhouse said, "If McDonalds is able to replace polystyrene foam with recyclable paper cups then so should Boost Juice. Paper packaging is much better for the environment because it decomposes in landfill. Foam can last for centuries."

In February 2005 Waverley council issued orders on the Boost Juice franchise on Campbell Parade, Bondi Beach to honour its commitment - as part of its original consent - to use recyclable packaging.

"Once they start using the paper cups in all their stores Boost Juice will be doing the right thing by the environment and I hope other councils around Australia ensure that they stop using these polystyrene foam cups in their areas."

Jeff Angel, Executive Director of TEC said, "Why stop at Bondi? Boost Juice should have paper cups in all its outlets, and other take-away food and juice companies should do the same. The bar has now been set by Waverly Council. Local and state governments should require reusable and recyclable packaging as the minimum, not just for the leaders."

"Given the strong public reaction against inappropriate packaging, those companies that persist with polystyrene are on the road to reputational ruin."

In October 2003, Waverley Council granted approval to Boost Juice to operate at Campbell Parade Bondi on the condition it use recyclable and biodegradable packaging, due to environmental concerns and the outlet's proximity to the ocean. Boost Juice never met this requirement.

Waverley Council has received many formal complaints on the use of Boost polystyrene cups from the community. Polystyrene cups take 100s of years to decompose and end up in the waste stream and in waterways.

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Latest News

Toxic Batteries a Health Threat: Green Group Urges Government to Act



Created on Friday, 16 May 2003 10:00

The government should be regulating producers of toxic products to protect human health, TEC said.

"NiCads are one of the main offenders when it comes to environmental toxicity," said TEC Campaigner, Jane Castle.

"Safer alternatives or recycling are available but the market is not delivering them. A strong regulation must come from government to ensure industry takes responsibility for the effect of its products on the environment."

NiCad batteries, one of the government targeted 'wastes of concern', are used to run power tools and can be found in a range of electrical products including laptop computers, mobile phones, cordless phones and camcorders. The cadmium in the batteries is a highly toxic heavy metal which can leach into the environment and cause kidney disease and lung damage. Around 500 tonnes per year end up in NSW landfills.

"Producer responsibility makes both environmental and economic sense," said Ms Castle. "Take-back schemes can create new jobs while maintaining a healthy environment, essential for long term economic sustainability."

"Europe is close to banning NiCads completely, and we should be following their lead by regulating for Extended Producer Responsibility."