

BAN E-WASTE in Landfill



Support legislation for extended producer responsibility



FACT SHEET 1 Electronic waste in Australia – A growing problem

Electronic waste in Australia is currently growing at over **three times** the rate of general municipal waste.ⁱ Computers and televisions are a growing component of this problem.

Computers

- 37 million computers were either already in landfill or sent to landfill sites in Australia in 2008.ⁱⁱ
- Every year Australians purchase over 2.4 million new personal computers.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Currently, only around 1.5% of computers are recycled.^{iv}
- Around 69% of Australia's obsolete computer equipment is held in storage, awaiting disposal.^v With only 1.5% of computers currently being recycled, there is a strong probability that most of this obsolete equipment will end up in landfill.

Table – Estimates of personal computers disposed of in Australia^{vi}

| Disposal option | 2001 | 2006 | 2011 |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Recycled | 281,700 | 494,000 | 509,600 |
| Landfilled | 926,500 | 1,632,800 | 1,694,700 |
| Sent to storage | 1,331,000 | 1,792,800 | 1,839,800 |
| Already in storage | 3,618,200 | 5,260,400 | 5,479,700 |

Televisions

- A staggering 17 million televisions were either in landfill or sent to landfill in 2008.^{vii}
- 99% of Australian households have at least one television set, while 55% have a second set.^{viii}
- In 2008, three million televisions were imported into Australia – double the level in 2002.^{ix}
- Australians purchase around one million new televisions each year, with an estimated 1.5 million sets sent to landfill each year.^x
- This number is set to dramatically increase with the national switch to digital television by 2013.^{xi}

- Product Stewardship Australia predicts that many consumers will use the switch to digital broadcasting as a reason to replace their analogue televisions with new digital sets – despite the fact that analogue cathode-ray tube (CRT) televisions can receive digital broadcasts with a set-top box. As a consequence, it is predicted that large numbers of CRT televisions will be discarded.^{xii}

Peripherals

- The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that there are around five million printers and two million scanners in use in households and businesses across Australia.^{xiii}
- This equipment has a short lifespan, meaning that most will be disposed of within two years or stockpiled for later disposal.^{xiv}

Printer Cartridges

- Between 2,179,000 and 8,715,000 printer cartridges are disposed of each year.^{xv}

Cabling

- It is estimated that in 2001 alone, over 12,000 km of internal personal computer cabling and more than 25,000 km of input/output cables entered the waste stream.
- This is in addition to over 18,000 km of internal and more than 36,000 km of input/output cabling potentially in storage.^{xvi}

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ⁱ Department of the Environment and Heritage, 2004, *Electronic Scrap – A hazardous waste*, <http://www.environment.gov.au/settlements/chemicals/hazardous-waste/publications/pubs/electronic-scrap-fs.pdf>, last viewed 05/06/2009.

ⁱⁱ *Ibid*, DEH, 2004.

ⁱⁱⁱ Australia's Environment: Issues and Trends, 2006. p. 19. Australian Bureau of Statistics.

^{iv} Meinhardt Infrastructure and Environment, *Computer and Peripherals Material Project*, October 2001, p. ES2.

^v *Ibid*, Meinhardt 2006.

^{vi} *Ibid*, Meinhardt 2006, Table ES1.

^{vii} *Ibid*, Meinhardt 2006.

^{viii} Australian Broadcasting Authority, <http://www.aba.gov.au>, cited in Total Environment Centre (TEC), *Tipping Point: Australia's E-Waste Crisis*. December 2008.

^{ix} Product Stewardship Australia, *A National TV Recycling Program – Practical Product Stewardship Funded by Industry*, p. 4. April 2009.

^x Australia's Environment: Issues and Trends, 2006. p. 19. Australian Bureau of Statistics.

^{xi} Product Stewardship Australia, *A National TV Recycling Program – Practical Product Stewardship Funded by Industry*, p. 4. April 2009.

^{xii} *Ibid*, PSA 2009, p. 5.

^{xiii} Australia's Environment: Issues and Trends, 2006. p. 19. Australian Bureau of Statistics.

^{xiv} *Ibid*, ABS 2006.

^{xv} Meinhardt Infrastructure and Environment, *Computer and Peripherals Material Project*, October 2001, p. 28.

^{xvi} *Ibid*, Meinhardt 2001.



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