

# National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme: Conversion Factors

The Australian Government's *Product Stewardship (Televisions and Computers) Regulations 2011* are now in force. They support a national, industry-led television and computer recycling scheme. Conversion factors have been developed to set and allocate annual recycling targets.

The *Product Stewardship (Televisions and Computers) Regulations 2011* specify annual recycling targets for the Scheme. These targets will be set as a percentage of television and computer waste arising in that year and will increase the recycling rate to 80 per cent by 2021-22.

A share of the annual Scheme targets will be allocated to each co-regulatory arrangement based on the import and manufacture share of its members.

## WHY ARE CONVERSION FACTORS REQUIRED?

As the recycling industry operates and reports in weight, conversion factors are required to translate the quantity of products imported or manufactured in Australia into annual recycling targets by weight.

### Annual Scheme targets

From 2012-13, the department will publish annual Scheme targets, representing the total amount of recycling that must be undertaken under the Scheme in that year. There will be two targets: one for televisions, and one for computers (including printers and computer products).

For the purpose of calculating these targets, waste arising in a given year will be based on the average annual imports and Australian manufacture of

televisions and computers over the preceding three years, adjusted by a scaling factor that accounts for exports and growth. This will be done using data provided by the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (Customs), which shows the number of units that enter the country under the 75 product codes (covering televisions and computers) specified in Schedule 1 of the Regulations.

The conversion factors will translate Customs unit data to a weight amount enabling recycling targets to be expressed in weight terms.

### Targets for co-regulatory arrangements

Conversion factors are also used to share Scheme targets among approved co-regulatory arrangements.

Recycling targets will be allocated to each co-regulatory arrangement based on the import and manufacture share of its members in the previous financial year. For this purpose, the units imported or manufactured by its members will be converted to a single amount in weight for each product class. This will be done by multiplying the number of products imported and manufactured under each Customs product code in the previous financial year by the corresponding conversion factor listed in Schedule 2 of the Regulations.

Using information supplied by all co-regulatory arrangements, the department will calculate and advise the total converted weight of the imports and

manufactures of all liable parties under the Scheme for each product class.

Each co-regulatory arrangement will then be able to determine what proportion of the total converted weight they are responsible for. Their share of the Scheme target is equal to this proportion.

*For example, if the Scheme target for televisions is 25,000 tonnes, and a co-regulatory arrangement has members with a total converted weight of imports equal to 50 per cent of the total converted weight of liable party imports, then its recycling target will be 12,500 tonnes of televisions.*

## HOW WERE THE CONVERSION FACTORS DEVELOPED?

The department gathered data on import quantities and actual unit weights over a three-year period from a range of importers. Based on this information, a weighted average was developed for each Customs product code covered by the Regulations. These average weights have been adopted in the Regulations as conversion factors.

Further analysis considered the robustness of the conversion factors both individually and collectively to determine how they compared to the actual weight of imports.

The report on the analysis found that overall the conversion factors presented a reasonable and consistent proxy for the actual weight of imports. It also recommended that the conversion factors could be applied effectively to import data to determine recycling targets and allocate targets to co-regulatory arrangements.

The full report and recommendations are available at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/wastepolicy/publications/ntcrs-import-conversion-factors.html>.

## WHY NOT ACTUAL WEIGHT?

When compared with the option of using Customs import data, the actual-weight model may lead to a range of administrative and compliance difficulties associated with importers needing to self-report and the department needing to ensure compliance in relation to a large and constantly-changing set of products. Given the constraints on the department's ability to effectively monitor and ensure compliance with such an approach, as well as the availability of Customs import data in Australia, the actual weight model has not been adopted.

## REVIEW OF CONVERSION FACTORS

The Regulations allow the Australian Government to request information from liable parties and this information will be used to undertake periodic reviews of the conversion factors to ensure they remain reliable. New conversion factors may also be required where product definitions change or new product codes are created.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information on the National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme visit the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities website at:

[www.environment.gov.au/ewaste](http://www.environment.gov.au/ewaste).

If you wish to receive updates about the Scheme you can subscribe to the Television and Computer Recycling Scheme e-bulletin at

[www.environment.gov.au/settlements/waste/ewaste/subscribe.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/settlements/waste/ewaste/subscribe.html).

