



**Submission on “A National Waste Policy: Managing Waste to 2020  
Consultation Paper”  
May 2009**

1800EWASTE is Australia's largest ewaste removal company. All the ewaste products we collect are recycled at accredited recycling stations and 98% of the product by weight is diverted from landfill.

The company has been in operation for about 18 months however it is a subsidiary of 1300RUBBISH which has been operating for 15 years and recognised the need in the ewaste market. 1800Ewaste currently services Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth, Newcastle and the Gold Coast. In that time we have diverted 2% of Australia's ewaste from landfill.

*3. Do the current waste management frameworks across jurisdictions:*

- *Deliver an effective regulatory framework?*
- *Provide an appropriate suite of approaches to address waste and resource recovery issues?*
- *Work effectively in conjunction with planning and other environmental legislation?*
- *Provide the right incentives to manage materials, products and waste sustainably and holistically?*
- *Need improving, and if so, how could this be done?*

In answer to the above question in particular the first bullet point, the regulatory frameworks and jurisdictions for electronic waste are ineffective. The main reason is that there is little or no legislation in much of Australia across all levels of government. Currently the ACT is the only state which prohibits the dumping of electronic waste into landfill

As a whole it would be of great benefit financially and environmentally to the government and the Australian public if electronic waste was classed as hazardous waste and legislated appropriately, better yet banned from landfill altogether.

The environmental impact of electronic waste that is currently being dumped in landfill is yet to be measured. In “**Table 5: Key materials in electrical and electronic waste**” substances of concern have been identified and yet they are still allowed to be placed in landfill. These substances such as mercury and lead can leech from our soils into our waterways damaging delicate ecosystems which in turn can impact on the surrounding flora and fauna. The poisoning of clean drinking water as a result of this leeching poses serious health risks to humans and with the water shortages we are already facing every effort should be made to prevent this process.

*7. What waste issues would most benefit from a national approach? What strategies could be considered and how could the need for local solutions be integrated with a national approach?*

There is an ever growing need for a national approach to the collection and recycling of electronic waste and electrical items. With an estimated average of 22 electronic items per Australian household needing to be replaced or upgraded every 2 years the volume of ewaste is increasing at an exponential rate.

The cost of recycling and lack of regulation should be considered while developing a national approach to ewaste issues. It should encompass all levels of government with an emphasis on subsidisation for the recycling process and introducing tough legislation classing electronic waste as “hazardous” to prevent it from being dumped in landfill.

The key objective is to reduce the volume of electronic waste being dumped in landfill and to reduce the amount of obsolete electronic equipment being stored. This objective can be achieved by providing house hold rebates for residential collections similar to the water tank rebate or having council rates adjusted to include an annual or bi-annual curb side collection. The collection could be incorporated into regional areas involving local councils and shires by having central drop off locations.

Business and education is responsible for a large proportion of computer waste and by providing tax incentives such as rebates and deductions there would be no reason for these industries to be excluded from the scheme.

“Above ground mining” meaning in part, the harvesting of resources from waste or unwanted items including electronic goods has only a fraction of the environmental impact as conventional mining. By introducing laws prohibiting electronic waste being dumped in land fill and imposing heavy fines for doing so, recycling companies can reach the economies of scale needed to make the recycling process viable.

It is important to realise that while there may be short term costs involved with initiating the processes and strategies listed above the long term costs are unknown and will not only be financial but environmental as well.

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