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Waste & Resource Efficiency Team
Sustainability Policy
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
Level 1, 8 Nicholson Street,
East Melbourne, VIC 3002

Managing E-Waste in Victoria – Starting the Discussion

Tox Free Australia Pty Ltd (Toxfree) would like to offer the following response in regards to a recent discussion paper released by the Victorian Government titled “Managing e-waste in Victoria – Starting the Conversation”

Toxfree deals with an extensive and diverse array of stakeholders who have utilised one or more instruments to elicit behavioural change. These stakeholders range from regulators and recyclers to commercial customers. One item in common amongst all of these stakeholders is that not one tool alone drives the desired outcome.

We believe the keys to change and adoption of this form of environmental policy would be:

1. Regulatory Instruments - utilised to create a market which is commercially viable for private sector to invest.
2. Infrastructure assistance - to Resource and Recovery industry (via grants or incentives) – this allows the businesses to grow with the adoption of the new regulatory framework.
3. Cooperation - Neighbouring regulatory jurisdictions – policy mirroring, recycling and recovery industry, retailers
4. Product Stewardship – cradle to cradle obligations for manufacturers and suppliers of material which ends up being recycled / recovered
5. Education – A structured marketing campaign such as “Byteback” which is primarily to the retailers of electronic goods will enable a captive audience. The type of waste also lends itself to utilisation of electronic marketing mediums such as *Facebook, YouTube, Instagram* etc
6. Accessibility – in order for the public to adopt the policy change, the collection points will need to be as “common” as a transfer station or landfill (or possibly located at either and/or electronic retailer outlets)

We feel the detrimental environmental impact of e-waste in landfill needs to be further elaborated upon to help bolster the diversion from landfill.

Electronic Waste (e-waste) can contain toxic materials such as lead, mercury, cadmium, hexavalent chromium and brominated fire retardants that are hazardous, difficult to dispose of and potentially damaging to the environment.

Electronic waste is responsible for 70% of the toxic chemicals such as lead, cadmium, and mercury found in landfill. E-waste that ends up at landfill could cause hazardous leachate liquid and if not controlled correctly, there is a risk that this can contaminate nearby groundwater, waterways or dams, potentially creating adverse environmental outcomes.

Toxfree are ardent to assist the Victorian Government in this important policy change regarding e-waste.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Greenwood
Technical Manager
E: a.greenwood@toxfree.com.au
M: 0400 223 185

Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Greenpeace—the e-waste program, E-waste 2010, Sustainability Matters, Planet Green Recycling, Recycle at Work, Mobile Muster and Zero Waste WA.