



# National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme – myths and facts

This fact sheet explains the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders under the scheme and clarifies some common misconceptions.

## **MYTH:**

### **The Australian Government funds e-waste recycling through the scheme**

**FACT:** Scheme recycling is paid for by companies who import television and computer products or manufacture them in Australia. This is a form of product stewardship where producers take responsibility for the whole lifecycle of their products, from creation to disposal.

Companies importing television and computer products are responsible for funding a proportion of television and computer collection and recycling under the scheme, however the scheme supplements rather than replaces e-waste management provided by state, territory and local governments.

Widespread support from the television and computer industries for a co-regulatory scheme was a key factor in the decision to introduce the scheme.

## **MYTH:**

### **Collection and recycling of all the e-waste in Australia is paid for under the scheme**

**FACT:** The scheme target is a proportion of the weight of televisions or computers entering the waste stream each year, starting at 30 per cent in 2012-13 and rising gradually to 80 per cent in 2026-27. The television and computer companies who import products into Australia are taking on increasing responsibility for funding e-waste recycling over time.

State and territory governments retain responsibility for managing waste televisions and computers beyond the scheme's recycling targets as well as all other e-waste.

Scheme targets are increasing to better meet public demand and ensure stability and ongoing capacity in the e-waste recycling industry. For the 2015-16 financial year, the target will be set at 50 per cent. The management of the remaining 50 per cent of waste television and computer recycling remains the responsibility of state, territory and local governments.

## **MYTH:**

### **All e-waste recycling is now free for householders and small businesses across Australia.**

**FACT:** Only scheme recycling, which is paid for by television and computer companies, is provided free of charge to householders and small businesses.

Although co-regulatory arrangements have delivered many more than the minimum number of required collection services, only a proportion of the weight of televisions or computers entering the waste stream in Australia each year is managed under the scheme. Local councils may choose to charge householders and small businesses for waste televisions and computers beyond the scheme's recycling target.

It is important that householders and small businesses continue to dispose of e-waste responsibly when there is no scheme collection service currently available. This reduces waste to landfill, especially the hazardous materials found in e-waste, and increases the recovery of valuable reusable materials.

**MYTH:**  
**All local councils will have a permanent scheme collection service for their residents**

FACT: Collection services can take many forms including permanent and recurring services, regular or one-off event-based collections, postal collections and services run by local councils or by television and computer retailers.

While the scheme has assisted local government to manage e-waste by providing alternative collection services, there is no requirement for a service to be delivered to every local council. State, territory and local governments maintain a role in managing e-waste outside of the scheme as needed.

With over 700 local councils in Australia, there are opportunities for councils to negotiate a permanent industry funded e-waste collection service but no guarantees that a service will be provided. Willingness to share some of the costs associated with collection increases these opportunities. Councils should be aware that scheme services may be provided in their region through non-government organisations, and residents can be directed to these services.

E-waste management activities outside the scheme are still needed to meet public demand, and it is important that local councils budget appropriately for e-waste management.

**MYTH:**  
**Scheme service providers enter contracts with the Australian Government**

FACT: The Australian Government's role is to set outcomes and monitor liable party and co-regulatory arrangement compliance with the regulations.

Day-to-day operation of the scheme, including contracting service providers, is the responsibility of the co-regulatory arrangements and the Australian Government does not have a role in managing contractual disputes.

**MYTH:**  
**There is a list of approved e-waste recyclers who are guaranteed work under the scheme**

FACT: Co-regulatory arrangements approach the market to source their own e-waste recycling providers. E-waste recyclers interested in providing scheme services must operate to a high standard and will need to demonstrate to the co-regulatory arrangement that they can meet work health and safety, environmental performance and material recovery requirements.

The scheme has also created employment opportunities within the recycling sector, but recyclers should be aware that participation in the scheme does not guarantee increasing e-waste feedstocks or business viability.

Businesses operating in the e-waste recycling industry are responsible for their own viability, and must be prepared for the competitive and often unpredictable natures of domestic feedstock supplies, international commodity markets and changing market conditions.

From 1 July 2016, the co-regulatory arrangements must ensure that all scheme recycling is done by e-waste recyclers certified to AS 5377: the Australian Standard for collection, storage, transport and treatment of end-of-life electrical and electronic equipment.

The Australian Government does not regulate the recycling industry. Recyclers must comply with state and territory health and safety and environmental laws.

**MYTH:**  
**Recycling is complete once the most valuable materials are removed from e-waste**

FACT: From 1 July 2014, the co-regulatory arrangements must meet a material recovery target of 90 per cent, meaning that 90 per cent of the weight of recycled materials must be able to be re-used or manufactured into new products. The material recovery target is appropriate because the scheme is now maturing and has capacity to meet this target.

## WANT TO CHECK A FACT? NEED A MYTH BUSTED?

We're here to help.

If you have a question or would like more information on the National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme, visit the Department of the Environment's website at:

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

contact [ewaste@environment.gov.au](mailto:ewaste@environment.gov.au) or

call the Product Stewardship Line on 1800 332 783.

**Factsheet last updated on 01/07/15**

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