



National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme – Operation of the Scheme

This fact sheet provides information about the regulatory framework and operation of the National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme.

PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP

Product stewardship is an approach to managing the impacts of different products and materials. It acknowledges that those involved in producing, selling, using and disposing of products have a shared responsibility to ensure those products or materials are managed throughout their lifecycle in a way that reduces their impact on the environment and on human health and safety.

Product stewardship takes many forms. For example, when people recycle packaging or companies re-design their product to reduce hazardous substances, they are being good product stewards. Product stewardship is one of the key strategies of the National Waste Policy. Televisions and computers are the first products to be regulated, using a co-regulatory approach, under Australian product stewardship legislation.

A co-regulatory approach involves a combination of government regulation and industry action, where government sets the outcomes to be met, and industry funds and implements the scheme. Industry has flexibility in determining how outcomes are achieved.

PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP ACT

The Product Stewardship Act 2011 (the Act) came into effect in August 2011. The Act addresses the environmental, health and safety impacts of products by providing a framework for mandatory, co regulatory and voluntary product stewardship.

The purpose of the Act is to reduce the impact products have on the environment, by reducing hazardous substances in these products, avoiding and reducing waste, and increasing recycling and resource recovery.

NATIONAL TELEVISION AND COMPUTER RECYCLING SCHEME

The Product Stewardship (Televisions and Computers) Regulations 2011 (the Regulations) came into effect in November 2011. The Regulations support a co-regulatory recycling scheme for televisions, computers, printers and computer products.

The objectives of the scheme are to:

- Reduce waste to landfill, especially the hazardous materials found in e-waste;
- Increase recovery of reusable materials in a safe, scientific and environmentally sound manner; and
- Provide access for households and small businesses Australia wide to an industry-funded recycling service.

Following a review of the scheme the Australian Government has introduced changes to improve the operation of the scheme and ensure its ongoing success. These changes are outlined below.

WHAT PRODUCTS ARE COVERED?

The Regulations apply to televisions, computers, printers and computer products. Computer products include both internal parts of computers (e.g. motherboards) and peripherals (e.g. keyboards).

Schedule 1 C and D of the Regulations set out the items captured by the scheme. They are identified by the working tariff codes used by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection.

In order to ensure these codes continue to operate in an effective and equitable manner, from 1 July 2015, product codes for televisions will become weight-based rather than screen size-based. Some product codes will be split to reduce weight variation of products within a code, and other product codes will be added or removed to reflect changes in technology.

To ensure the timely and efficient management of target data, the settlement date for target data to be finalised will be set at 31 October of each financial year from 1 July 2015.

WHO IS REGULATED?

The Regulation applies to two key groups: liable parties and administrators of co-regulatory arrangements.

Liable parties are corporations that imported or manufactured products covered by the Regulations in the previous financial year.

Thresholds apply to limit the impact of the scheme on small businesses by exempting companies that import or manufacture fewer than 15,001 computer parts or peripherals or 5,001 televisions, computers or printers.

Liable parties must be a member of an approved co-regulatory arrangement which organises collection and recycling of e-waste on their behalf. All arrangements have an administrator, which is the body corporate responsible for administering the arrangement on behalf of members, and must ensure all reasonable steps are taken to meet outcomes specified in the Regulations.

Arrangements can have one liable party member or multiple liable parties participating. Substantial civil penalties apply to a liable party that fails to become a member of an approved co-regulatory arrangement.

SETTING THE STANDARD

The aim of the scheme is to reduce the impact of television and computer e-waste products on the environment and to reduce the impact that substances contained in these products have on the health and safety of human beings.

As the rate of e-waste recycling increases nationally, it is essential that all stakeholders commit to best-practice health and safety and environmental processes.

From 1 July 2016, the Australian Government will require co-regulatory arrangements to only contract with recycling service providers that are certified to AS 5377: the Australian Standard for the collection, storage, transport and treatment of end-of-life electrical and electronic equipment. This will ensure a consistent industry standard for recycling scheme providers and ensure positive work health and safety outcomes. This start date will allow adequate transition time for industry.

OUTCOMES

The Regulations specify three key outcomes to be achieved by approved co-regulatory arrangements:

- the provision of reasonable access to collection services in metropolitan, regional and remote areas;
- annual recycling targets; and
- a material recovery target.

Reasonable access

The Regulations require each approved arrangement to provide reasonable access to collection services:

- For each metropolitan area, the number of collection services available in each financial year must at least equal the population of that area divided by 250,000
- For inner regional areas, at least one service must be provided within 100km of every town of 10,000 people or more in each financial year
- For outer regional areas, at least one service must be provided within 150km of every town of 4,000 people or more in each financial year
- For remote areas, at least one service must be provided within 200km of every town of 2,000 people or more, once every two financial years.

These requirements provide around 98 per cent of the population with reasonable access to collection services.

Consistent with the co-regulatory nature of the scheme and to provide flexibility to suit local circumstances, a collection service can take a number of forms, including a permanent collection site at a local waste transfer station or retail outlet, or through one-off events.

Recycling targets

The Regulations set annual targets for recycling.

From 1 July 2015, scheme recycling 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 and will rise to 80 per cent in 2026-27. This target will enable the scheme to deal with legacy waste sooner.

Changes will also apply to the waste arising scaling factors used in the calculation of recycling targets. From 1 July 2015 a waste arising scaling factor of 0.8 per cent will apply to computers, reflecting higher exports of these products. For printers, computer parts and peripherals which are less frequently exported than computers, the waste arising scaling factor will be 0.88 per cent. The waste arising scaling factor for televisions will remain at 0.9 per cent, reflecting no change in the export trends for this product type.

Co-regulatory arrangements are responsible for achieving their member's share of the scheme's targets, which is based on the amount of products their members imported or manufactured in the previous financial year.

The cost of managing the remaining 50 per cent of available e-waste continues to be the responsibility of state, territory and local government.

Material recovery target

The Regulations include a material recovery target of 90 per cent, which came into effect on 1 July 2014.

This target requires each co-regulatory arrangement to ensure that at least 90 per cent of the weight of material they recycle in the financial year is sent for further processing into useable materials. This is consistent with the estimated average material recovery rate currently being reported by Australian recyclers of televisions and computers.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme visit the Department of the Environment website at: www.environment.gov.au/ewaste or contact ewaste@environment.gov.au or call the Product Stewardship Line on 1800 332 783.

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