

A new and positive era of environmental policy has arrived with the passing of the Product Stewardship Bill by both Houses of Parliament in Canberra yesterday.

The Product Stewardship Bill 2011 will provide unprecedented powers to ensure that waste minimisation and recycling are mandated on a national basis. This includes using materials more sustainably across priority product categories, industry sectors, and waste streams.

After many years advocating for 'best practice' regulation and delivering successful pilot projects, the TV and ICT industries welcome the Bill and congratulate the Government and Parliament on this significant policy reform. Industry has been pleased to see strong bipartisan support for the Bill in both Houses.

Together with industry cooperation and funding, the Bill will enable a new approach to using products and materials in a more environmentally sustainable manner.

The first sectors to drive this new age of action on product take-back and recycling are the TV and ICT industries. With funding and implementation to come from TV and computer manufacturers and suppliers, Australia is now well on the path to a national collection, recycling and community education initiative.

Product Stewardship Australia (PSA) and the Australian Information Industry Association (AIIA) have worked tirelessly with Government and the Commonwealth Environment Department to see the Bill developed. The passage of the Bill enables TVs and computers that would otherwise be lost to landfill and illegal dumping to be recycled. The majority of materials in these obsolete products can be recycled and re-processed for use in the manufacture of new goods.

PSA, the peak environmental body representing TV manufacturers has been focused on the need for Commonwealth regulation for several years. It has been a relentless advocate of meaningful environmental policy reform for over a decade. Similarly, the AIIA, which is the nation's peak ICT body, has been a pioneer in trialing computer take-back and recycling initiatives across Victoria. The AIIA also welcomes the Bill.

"The IT sector and AIIA member companies are committed to delivering a national recycling service to households and small business, and ensuring that practical corporate social responsibility remains an industry priority " said AIIA CEO Ian Birks. "Our members have shown what is possible when business and sustainability objectives are addressed as key strategic aims."

"Industry's efforts to collect and recycle obsolete TVs will now be facilitated through the Product Stewardship Bill which will divert thousands of TVs from landfill every year. Community recycling expectations will be met in a user-friendly way across the country" said PSA Executive Director, John Gertsakis. "The Bill represents an exemplar of positive cooperation between industry and Government."

Within the context of the Product Stewardship Bill, a co-regulatory approach will ensure that no manufacturer or supplier of new TV and computer equipment can avoid their collection and recycling obligations. Leading brands from PSA and AIIA welcome this aspect of the Bill because the economic cost of running a permanent national service is equitably shared among all manufacturers, importers and suppliers.

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