eWaste

eWaste recycling in Australia

Electronic waste in Australia is growing at over three times the rate of general municipal waste.

- As of 2008, 37 million computers and 17 million TVs have been sent to landfill in Australia.

- Every year Australians purchase over 4 million new personal computers and less than 10% are recycled.

- Australians purchase three million new televisions each year, with an estimated 1.5 million sets sent to landfill annually.

- Television purchases have dramatically increased with the national switch to digital television after 2013.

- Around 69% of Australia's obsolete computer equipment is held in storage, awaiting disposal.

- 2,179,000 - 8,715,000 used printer cartridges are disposed of each year.

- By 2027 – 2028, the combined weight of TVs and computers coming to the end of their life will be around 181,000 tonnes.

Why recycle eWaste?

- Toxic materials found in electronics include lead, cadmium, mercury, brominated flame retardants, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), chromium, arsenic and beryllium. These materials are dangerous if allowed to leak into the environment.

- If 75% of televisions currently discarded were recycled, 23,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases, 520 megalitres of water, 400,000 gigajoules of energy and $160,000m^3$ of landfill space would be saved.

- The manufacture of one 10-15kg computer and monitor requires at least 240 kilograms of fossil fuels, 22 kilograms of chemicals, and 1,500 kilograms of water.

Did you know?

As of 2008, there were approximately five million printers and two million scanners in use in households and businesses across Australia.

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How is eWaste recycled?

Electronic waste is completely disassembled into a range of material items before being sent to recyclers.
It is processed according to the specific material and made into a range of new products. See the table below:

Material	New Products
Plastic	Melted down and made into vineyard stakes, fence posts and plastic sleepers
Metal	New steel and other metal products
Cathode Ray Tube Glass	New monitors and computer screens
Mercury	Made into dental amalgams. It is also used for separating glass to use in home insulation
Wood	Shredded into mulch or used as an alternative fuel source
Printed Circuit Boards	Processed in specialised smelters to recover non-renewable resources such as copper, gold, silver, palladium and other precious metals
Hard Drives	Processed into aluminium ingots used in the automotive industry
Toner & Ink Cartridges	Made into new cartridges. The remaining material that can't be remanufactured is separated into plastic and metal and used as raw materials
Batteries	Hulled to remove excess plastic, metals are then placed in special smelter pots to recover cobalt, cadmium, nickel and steel for the production of new batteries and stainless steel
CDs & Memory Cards	For security reasons these are shredded before being sent to plastic and metal recyclers

Tips to reduce eWaste

1. If you buy new equipment, ask about reuse and recycling options.

2. Avoid disposable products. Only buy products that are durable, repairable and have a good warranty.

3. Consider leasing equipment that can be returned to the manufacturer when it is no longer needed.

Where to recycle your eWaste

To find an eWaste recycling venue near you, visit www.rethinkwaste.com.au

Did you know?

In 2001 over 12,000km of internal personal computer cabling and 25,000km of input/output cabling was landfilled in Australia.

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