

South Australian Government

Submission to the

**Senate Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee Inquiry into the
PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP BILL 2011**

NAME OF ORGANISATION: South Australian Government

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT:

I **do not** want this submission to be treated as **confidential**

Date: April 2011

SUMMARY

The South Australian Government welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee's inquiry into the Product Stewardship Bill 2011.

The Bill gives effect to a key strategy of the National Waste Policy, a landmark collaborative initiative supported by all Australian Governments. South Australia believes that the Bill makes an important contribution to sustainable waste management by providing a flexible legislative framework that facilitates a collaborative approach between governments and industry to dealing with problem wastes. This approach is consistent with the approach taken by the South Australian Government to support product stewardship through a mix of legislation, collaboration, advocacy and incentives.

The Bill provides a framework that would enable industry to share responsibility for managing the impacts of their products at end-of-life. Accordingly, the South Australian Government is highly supportive of the development of national product stewardship legislation and encourages the expeditious passage of this important Bill through the Federal Parliament.

INTRODUCTION

The South Australian Government submission was prepared by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and Zero Waste SA (ZWSA), the two key State Government agencies with an interest in the development and implementation of national product stewardship legislation. The submission highlights the key areas of interest to the South Australian Government, and includes examples of South Australia's commitment to support product stewardship through legislation, collaboration, advocacy and incentives.

Both the EPA and ZWSA are guided in the delivery of their programs, operations and activities by the requirements of the *Environment Protection Act 1993* and *Zero Waste SA Act 2004*, and by South Australia's Strategic Plan, and South Australia's Waste Strategy.

The EPA has a statutory responsibility to manage the environmental impacts of waste in South Australia and minimise adverse effects on human health and the environment. In 2010, the South Australian Government introduced the *Environment Protection (Waste to Resources) Policy 2010*, which includes a provision to prohibit the disposal to landfill of specified waste products. ZWSA's incentive programs and other activities are premised on maximising the useful life of materials through reuse and recycling, and avoiding and reducing waste.

DISCUSSION

The aspects of the Product Stewardship Bill of particular interest to South Australia are:

- Support for a lifecycle approach to waste that includes avoidance, reduction resource recovery, and recycling. This approach is consistent with the waste hierarchy adopted and applied in South Australia.
- Criteria for consistent assessment of the suitability of products for a national product stewardship approach. This would assist in prioritising opportunities for a coordinated approach by distinguishing between products to be best managed through a national scheme and those that can be more effectively dealt with at state or territory level.

Examples of actions taken by South Australia to promote product stewardship in alignment with the Product Stewardship Bill are:

South Australia's Strategic Plan

The SA Strategic Plan includes a target to reduce waste to landfill by 25% within 10 years (by 2014). This target is on track to be achieved and an increase in diversion of waste from landfill through effective product stewardship schemes would enable the target to be revised upwards.

South Australia's Waste Strategy

Efforts under South Australia's *Waste Strategy 2005-2010* have markedly reduced the amount of waste going to landfill in South Australia. The draft South Australia's Waste Strategy 2011-2015 will continue the long term vision to divert waste from landfill to more productive uses, and redirects the focus from recycling to reducing and avoiding waste – towards sustainability.

Zero Waste SA related projects and programs.

In the absence of alternative product stewardship arrangements, ZWSA has supported the responsible recycling of e-waste through a number of incentive programs and activities. Recent examples include:

- *Switchover from analogue to digital television signal – regional South Australia (December 2010 – February 2011)*

Twenty nine regional South Australian councils (and Broken Hill) were affected by the switchover from analogue to digital television signal on 15 December 2010 which equates to about 150,000 households.

ZWSA's Business Plan for 2010 -11 recognised that interim funding support was required to help regional South Australia deal with collection and recycling of unwanted televisions generated by the switchover. A \$475,000 collection and recycling program was developed by ZWSA in conjunction with the Local Government Association of SA (LGA) with funding support from the Australian Government and the NSW Government (for Broken Hill).

The eight week program commenced on 20 December 2010 and has been based around the deployment of 40 foot shipping containers to 19 major regional locations to collect unwanted televisions from households.

As at 31 March 2011, 30 containers have been processed with 13,510 televisions collected and recycled. A further 16 containers are yet to be processed and ZWSA estimates that approximately 20,000 unwanted televisions are likely to be recycled through this program.

- *Metropolitan collection of televisions and computers (September 2010)*

With significant financial support from a major brand owner (Apple Pty Ltd), a free community event was held on 11 and 12 September 2010 and provided thousands of Adelaide householders with an opportunity to clear their homes of unwanted computers, televisions and mobile phones. 515 tonnes of e-waste was collected for recycling, comprising 9878 vehicle loads and a number of 'walk-in' loads. The service was hosted by ZWSA in partnership with the Local Government Association (LGA) and seven Adelaide metropolitan councils.

Apple Pty Ltd's generous offer to fund the recycling costs for a metropolitan-wide collection enabled ZWSA to support an event of a scale that would otherwise have been beyond its budget and organisational capacity. The alliance with Apple Pty Ltd and the LGA, combined with ZWSA's technical expertise and development of a comprehensive community information campaign, provided an outstanding opportunity to engage with the community in an important environmental issue. It is also representative of what can be achieved under the collaborative approach that forms the basis of the Product Stewardship Bill.

- *E-waste collection grants (2009/2010)*

With \$315,000 in ZWSA funding, thirty (30) metropolitan and regional councils received grants to support the collection of e-waste from householders, resulting in over 420 tonnes of e-waste collected and over 10,000 participants.

- *Cathode Ray Tube (CRT) facility in Adelaide (2009)*

Of national significance was the opening on 19 May 2009 in Adelaide of a CRT recycling facility capable of processing cathode ray tubes (CRTs). CRT Recycling received \$292,197 through the ZWSA Metropolitan Recycling Infrastructure grant program for the glass cutting and cleaning system.

There are only 15 companies around the world capable of processing CRT glass from televisions and computer monitors for recycling. CRT Recycling is the first facility in Australia and New Zealand able to prepare CRT glass for recycling.

CRT glass contains hazardous materials including lead (1-4 kilograms per screen), cadmium, phosphor and arsenic. Recycling this glass into new CRT glass diverts these toxic components from landfill and reduces the demand for mined virgin materials.

The presence of this facility in Adelaide is beneficial for current recycling efforts and places South Australia in a strong position for the introduction of a national EPR scheme and landfill bans associated with the Environment Protection (Waste to Resources) Policy.

Environment Protection Act 1993 and Environment Protection (Waste to Resources) Policy 2010

The *Environment Protection Act 1993* promotes the principles of ecologically sustainable development and includes an objective to encourage and assist action by industry to reduce, reuse and recycle materials and natural resources, and to minimise waste. The Act also provides for one of the longest running product stewardship schemes in Australia, the container deposit system, which is well supported by the community and which results in a significantly higher recovery rate and lower litter rate in relation to beverage containers than the national trend.

The *Environment Protection (Waste to Resources) Policy 2010* requires that waste be subject to resource recovery processes before going to landfill. It also prohibits a range of problematic waste products from going to landfill. These provisions will strengthen product stewardship schemes by providing regulatory underpinning at state level.

REFERENCES

Zero Waste SA Act 2004
Environment Protection Act 1993
Environment Protection (Waste to Resources) Policy 2010
Zero Waste Strategy