

18th July 2008

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts
Department of the Senate
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Parliament House
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Australia
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Dear Sir

I apologise for the informality of our submission. I have only just noted the subject matter of the enquiry's focus and would like to submit a few observations. My particular interest is item (e) of the committee's terms of reference relating to policy priorities for minimizing waste and maximizing recycling.

As a company Fuji Xerox is committed to sustainability principles across our business. In particular, in respect of end of life product we take equipment back and fully recycle it to recover more than 99 % of the resources embodied in the product. We do this both to minimize resource utilization and to achieve the significant green house gas emission reductions such an approach achieves. We also extensively remanufacture equipment componentry at our Eco Manufacturing Centre at Zetland in New South Wales.

For some time we have been actively engaged through the Australian Information Industry Association in an initiative to promote the establishment of a scheme to recycle end of life computers and related ICT equipment in Australia. In that group of some ten global brand companies we have made significant progress towards finding a solution to this problem in Australia. There is universal support around that table for a national scheme to enable the take back and recycling of computers from Australian homes.

At the present time and in partnership with Sustainability Victoria these companies are participating in an extensive computer take back scheme pilot that has the potential to become the model for a national scheme. Much is being learnt from this project that could inform the establishment of a national scheme in the very near future.

The Victorian Scheme called Byteback™ has ten partners who account for something like 50 % of the waste stream being recovered. From analysis of the remaining waste stream a dozen or more other lines of high recognition branded products have been identified that account for about another 25 % of the remaining waste stream. The companies responsible for the import and sale of these brands, all global names have chosen to ignore invitations from Sustainability Victoria to join Byteback™.

We believe there is currently real potential to move this agenda into an accelerated timetable for a solution. We need to see more than 75 % of the industry sitting at the table and willing to pay their way. Then we need to see firm resolve by government to provide an underpinning regulatory framework that ensures that those that do not volunteer to do the right thing bear an equivalent cost (of recycling end of life product) to those that do.

To drive a situation where industry participants willingly volunteer extended producer responsibility we need to see real leadership from government. We need to see government agencies purchasing sustainable solutions and not necessarily the cheapest solution, as is largely their current practice. We need to see government agencies and sustainable corporates vociferously refusing to purchase equipment from those that aren't willing to do the right thing. We need to see government precisely spelling out in tender documents the sustainability criteria they expect each supplier to measure up to, and not just in respect of the goods to be supplied, but having regard to the suppliers attitude across the total marketplace. Most of all we need to see a 'full spirit' application of a clearly stated policy commitment to sustainable purchasing by government.

Whilst the above is the primary policy imperative a second one relates to the willingness to implement a regulatory framework that catches 'free riders'. You cannot expect the well intentioned to bear the cost of doing the right thing where those of a more pragmatic nature ignore the issue and can afford to sell their product for less.

Good progress is apparently being made on settling an appropriate regulatory framework to drive tyre recycling. We are hopeful that this progress will soon translate into a similar resolve to provide an appropriate framework for the IT industry. We are however conscious of the greater complexity of the flow of ICT goods into Australia and believe that it may only be through the control of such goods coming through the customs entry point that a suitably efficient scheme underpinning mechanism might be facilitated.

In closing I would commend the work of Sustainability Victoria in their work in fostering with industry the Byteback™ scheme in Victoria. If the committee had a particular interest in this element of the waste stream I would encourage it to consider having the administrators of the Byteback™ scheme present to the committee on the features of the scheme and the many lessons being learnt as it is rolled out to being a scheme covering most of Victoria.

Yours faithfully,
Fuji Xerox Australia Pty Limited

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ramsay Moodie', written over a circular stamp or mark.

Ramsay Moodie
Director, Corporate Affairs