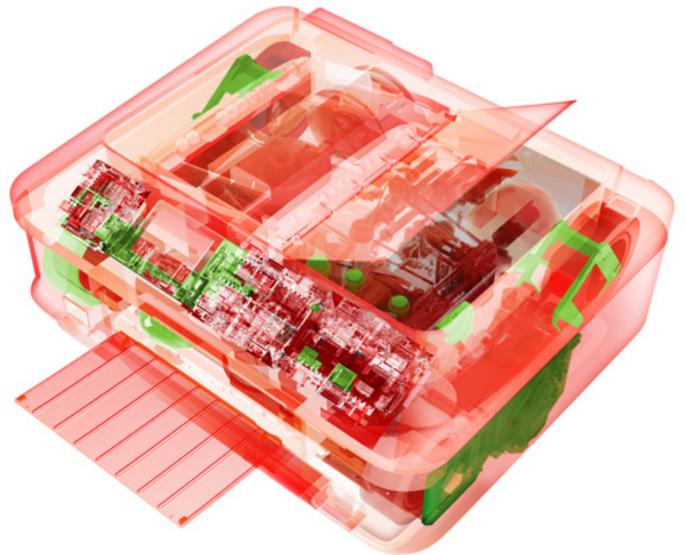# E-WASTE IN YOUR WORKPLACE

A guide to help Victorian workplaces prepare for the ban on sending e-waste to landfill from 1 July 2019.

Introduction

E-waste (electronic waste) is the fastest-growing category of waste worldwide. In Australia, it is growing up to three times faster than general municipal waste.

This problematic form of waste covers a range of items that are regularly discarded from households and businesses including televisions, computers, mobile phones, kitchen appliances and white goods.

In 2014, Victoria generated 106,000 tonnes of e-waste. This is projected to increase to around 256,000 tonnes by 2035.

Landfilling e-waste represents a missed opportunity to recover valuable components and materials in a way that could provide economic benefits and reduce the resource footprint of Victoria's economy. Its presence in landfill can also raise risks to the environment and human health.

To address these problems, the Victorian Government is banning e-waste from Victoria's landfill sites, effective from 1 July 2019.

This ban will require all businesses to assess their processes for handling and managing of e-waste.

As a result, many businesses who currently do not engage the services of a properly accredited e-waste collection or processing partner may need to.

Who is this guide for?

This guide has been developed to help small to medium businesses prepare for the ban on e-waste entering landfill, which will come into effect on 1 July 2019.

E-waste items that might be lying around your workplace

desktop computer	coffee machine
laptop	kettle
computer peripherals (screens, keyboards, cords, mouses etc.)	microwave
	sandwich press
mobile phone	label maker
cables	lamps
radio	batteries
television	fluorescent lights
modem	power tools
headphones	inverter
air conditioner	printer cartridge
electric fan	automatic dispenser (i.e. hand soap dispenser)
large appliances (fridge, washing machine)	

TAKE YOUR E-WASTE TO A BETTER PLACE

Sustainability Victoria

VICTORIA State Government

What is e-waste?

The Victorian Government defines e-waste as 'any end-of-life equipment which is dependent on electric currents or electromagnetic fields in order to work properly.' However, this can be simplified as 'anything with a plug, battery or power cord that is no longer wanted or useful.' Importantly, e-waste also includes batteries, cables and printing cartridges.

Why is managing e-waste important?

When we throw e-waste into landfill not only are we putting hazardous materials into the ground, we are squandering valuable non-renewable resources. If we are to keep doing so at our current rate, it is likely that core materials used in electronic devices like lead, silver and zinc will become extremely scarce as soon as 2030.

The Global E-waste Monitor estimated that the total value of all raw materials present in e-waste in 2016 was approximately AUD$80 billion.

The model of making objects from raw materials and then disposing of them in landfill is not an environmentally sustainable business model.

As materials in e-waste can be recovered for re-use there is no reason why these cannot be used many times over if we make a conscious and collective effort to make a positive change.

Implementing a successful e-waste policy in your workplace

The first step of implementing a successful e-waste disposal policy is understanding the types of e-waste your business or organisation produces, or is likely to produce. Understanding this will help you formulate a plan to dispose of it in a secure and cost-effective manner.

Start by asking:

» What kind of e-waste do you produce?
» How much do you produce, per month, per quarter, per year?
» Where is your e-waste located?
» What asset management plans do you have in place?
» Do you have someone in the business responsible for managing e-waste?
» What e-waste services do you currently use?

Once you understand the types of e-waste you produce and will need to dispose of, it is time to start identifying suitable options.

Utilising free e-waste services

There are many industry supported schemes that businesses can take advantage of to correctly dispose of their e-waste.

The National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme
The National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme (NTCRS) provides Australian households and small businesses with access to free industry-funded collection services for televisions and computers – including printers, computer parts and peripherals.

Four organisations have been approved to deliver these services under the NTCRS. For more information, including details of the collection services and drop-off points they provide, visit their websites:

Techcollect (Australia New Zealand Recycling Platform) **techcollect.com.au**	Electronics Product Stewardship Australasia **epsaewaste.com.au**
E-Cycle Solutions **ecyclesolutions.net.au**	Drop Zone (MRI e-cycle solutions) **dropzone.org.au**

MobileMuster
MobileMuster provides a free mobile phone collection program for all businesses and individuals. The program accepts all brands and types of mobile phones, plus their batteries, chargers and accessories. The MobileMuster collection network provides 3,500 public drop-off points across the country along with a free post back option.

Batteryback
Batteryback is a retail collection program for used handheld batteries. It collects all batteries that can be found in mobile phones, video cameras, digital cameras, hearing aids, cordless phones, power tools and many other products. Drop-off points in Melbourne include local council facilities, and all Battery World and ALDI stores.

Cartridges 4 Planet Ark
Cartridges 4 Planet Ark is a program that collects and returns printer cartridges for remanufacturing - therefore keeping them out of landfill.

To find out more details on the NTCRS, Mobile Muster, Batteryback, Cartridges for Planet Ark and to locate drop-off points go to **ewaste.vic.gov.au**

Can I take my business e-waste to a council transfer station?

While some councils do allow small businesses to drop off e-waste at their transfer stations, some don't. Please check with your local council to see if they accept e-waste from small businesses and what types of e-waste they accept.

Disposing of other forms of e-waste

If your business generates e-waste that cannot be managed through one of the free recycling schemes, check with your current waste removal provider to see if they can collect it. If not, you may need to contact a specialist e-waste collection business.

To ensure you enlist a reputable operator that will transfer your e-waste to a fully-accredited reprocessor, it is worth checking what certifications the reprocessor has.

Externally audited certifications to look out for include:

EPA Licence – Issued by the Environment Protection Agency Victoria for businesses that reprocess more than 500 tonnes of e-waste.

AS/NZS 5377:2013 – The Australian and New Zealand Standard for the collection, storage, transport and treatment of end-of-life electrical and electronic equipment.

Responsible Recycling (R2: 2013) standard – Issued by the American National Standards Institute.

Minimising e-waste: Leasing equipment and vendor takeback

While recovering e-waste has important environmental and economic benefits to best address the issue of e-waste, it is important we minimise the amount we create in the first place.

Another scheme businesses can use to minimise their e-waste is vendor takeback. This is where the supplier who sold you the piece of equipment collects it after it has reached the end of its useful life or when you no longer need it (even if you are buying equipment from a new supplier, it is worth enquiring if they can collect your old items and take them away). For both schemes, companies collecting computing equipment should be able to ensure that all data has been wiped from all devices. Questions you may want to ask your equipment collector on this topic can be found in the following section **Data destruction and security**.

How to store e-waste

You need to take care when storing e-waste.

Best practice is to ensure your e-waste is:

» stored in a way that avoids breakage
» fully protected from the weather
» stored on an impermeable surface

Data destruction and security

Data security is a key concern for many businesses when managing their e-waste. Any e-waste partner your organisation engages should be able to provide you with detailed options in relation to how data on your devices can be destroyed.

If you engage a company to delete data on your devices, you should consider the following:

» Can they come to you and erase the data at your premises? (important if data is especially sensitive)
» What wiping procedures (or software) do they use to erase data?
» If they shred the device, do they do it on their premises or elsewhere?
» Can they certify that all data has been destroyed?

Collecting office e-waste

As part of wider efforts to increase the amount of e-waste collected, Sustainability Victoria encourages all workplaces to provide collection points for their staff to dispose of workplace e-waste. You will need to properly manage this e-waste or organise a collection service to dispose of it. The below posters can be downloaded from www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/campaign-resources

For information on e-waste collection options for your business, visit ewaste.vic.gov.au

The human cost of illegal dumping

According to UN Environment research, a staggering 60-90 per cent of e-waste is illegally traded or dumped, often with the involvement of transnational criminal gangs.

Illegally traded e-waste often ends up in developing countries in Asia and Africa where people use strong leaching acids or simply burn items to try and extract rare earth metals. The health problems that can result from exposure to these dangerous practices can be life-threatening.

The best way to ensure that your e-waste is being disposed of correctly is to engage a reliable e-waste disposal company.

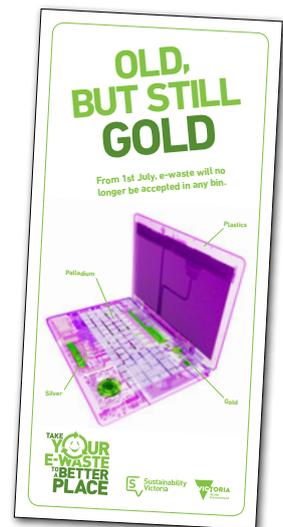## Join the campaign to reduce e-waste

Sustainability Victoria is currently running the 'Take your e-waste to a better place' campaign. The campaign is designed to educate Victorians on what e-waste is, where they can take it and that from 1st July 2019 it will be banned from entering landfill.

It's all part of encouraging Victorians to be more sustainable in their everyday life, and to help protect our planet for the next generation.

Your business can be involved in the campaign to reduce and recover e-waste.

Sustainability Victoria has produced an e-waste campaign toolkit that contains social media tiles and videos, posters, sticker templates, and a brochure. These can be downloaded from www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/campaign-resources

By displaying these materials in your workplace, and by sharing Sustainability Victoria's social media posts, you will be helping promote this important campaign.

E-waste collection checklist for your business

Follow this checklist to assist your business in being prepared for the ban on e-waste entering landfill.

☐ Identify all forms of e-waste in your workplace

☐ Notify staff of the ban on e-waste entering landfill (use Sustainability Victoria's posters)

☐ Set up collection points in your workplace (use Sustainability Victoria's signage)

☐ Identify reputable e-waste collectors, including free collection services

☐ Ask to be provided with a Certificate of Destruction after your e-waste is destroyed

☐ Review your purchasing processes and speak with your suppliers about vendor take-back or leasing.

Workplace e-waste assessment tool

This document is designed to help Victorian businesses and workplaces assess the amount of e-waste they produce and implement a plan for its safe disposal.

What kind of e-waste does your workplace produce?

- desktop computer
- laptop
- computer peripherals (screens, keyboards, cords, mouses etc.)
- mobile phone
- cables
- radio

- printer
- television
- modem
- headphones
- air conditioner
- electric fan

- large appliances (fridge, washing machine etc.)
- coffee machine
- kettle
- microwave
- sandwich press
- label maker

- lamps
- batteries
- fluorescent lights
- power tools
- inverter
- printer cartridge
- automatic dispenser (i.e. hand soap dispenser)

Approximately how much?

Kilograms/month =

Kilograms/year =

Do you have signed e-waste collection points in your workplace?

Do you have a designated space to store your collected e-waste?

Do you have an employee responsible for managing your e-waste?

Does your current waste removal provider collect e-waste?

Is your e-waste collected/accepted by any of the following free e-waste services?

- The National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme
- Mobile Muster
- Batteryback
- Cartridges 4 Planet Ark

(see business guide for further information on these services)

Do you need to contact a specialist e-waste collection group?

Yes   No

For information on e-waste collection options for your business or about the ban on sending e-waste to landfill, please visit ewaste.vic.gov.au or contact your local council.