

Handheld Battery Product Stewardship Project

Project communique – Update 2

March 2014

Battery Reference Group forum

Around 25 people covering a range of sectors including retailers, recyclers, manufacturers, collectors, transporters, environment groups and government attended a Battery Reference Group (BRG) forum in Canberra on Wednesday 19 February 2014.

With most of the Battery Implementation Working Group members in attendance, the Chair guided attendees through the key issues under consideration for the pending discussion paper that has been prepared by the Battery Implementation Working Group (BIWG).

This forum provided the first of several opportunities for stakeholders to comment on the proposed scheme as it is being developed.

The forum elicited constructive comments and discussion and highlighted areas of agreement in addition to identifying where more information is needed to develop a robust and efficient scheme.

Key issues raised in the BRG forum included:

- Scheme scope – the views of the BRG attendees were that a scheme wouldn't work if it differentiates between battery types – particularly between rechargeable and non-rechargeable. This is because consumers are unlikely to distinguish between battery types.
- Scheme design - the scheme must encourage consumer participation so it has to be simple, easy and convenient to use.
- Free riders –the level at which free-riders become a problem needs to be understood. There were several comments to the effect that just because there are some free-riders doesn't necessarily make them a problem.
- Effectiveness of a voluntary scheme – a number of comments supported getting a scheme in place, then sorting out the most effective mechanism. Several people also commented that business-as-usual (continuing with the individual collections that are already in place) does not mean that there will not be costs; retailers participating in the collections and state and local governments currently funding collections will continue to bear the costs.
- Different collection arrangements in different locations could help to manage different battery types. There was some discussion that one-size collections are not going to suit all locations. For example, lead acid batteries cannot be collected at supermarkets. Attendees noted the potential to design a scheme that allows, for example, power tool batteries to be collected through hardware stores and small batteries to be collected through supermarkets and other retailers. Collections could be designed to optimise the collection of the main type of battery sold in a given location. Branding and messaging would still need to be consistent but tailored to the location and battery type targeted.

Attendees agreed that a meeting of battery manufacturers, retailers and Original Equipment Manufacturers should be held as soon as possible to discuss some of the issues around the development of the scheme and to gauge initial industry support for the proposed voluntary industry-led approach.

Battery Implementation Working Group News

The BIWG met on 20 February 2014 to consider feedback from the BRG forum on 19 February, further develop key areas of the discussion paper and consider the results of recent Batteryback program data and a consumer survey on battery recycling and disposal habits.

Battery materials flow study

Sustainable Resource Use (SRU), with sub-contractor Percharads SagisEPR, has been selected through a competitive tender and evaluation process to undertake work on a battery stocks and flows and market share analysis.

The material flow analysis covers standalone primary and secondary handheld batteries weighing less than 5kg. Embedded batteries will also be quantified. A breakdown by product category and brand owner/manufacturer will be provided, along with a fate analysis at end-of-life.

A commencement meeting was held on 25 February and the BIWG will consider the final report and findings at their June 2014 meeting.

Newly available data

The BIWG commissioned an independent survey on battery ownership and recycling practices by consumers in conjunction with AMTA's annual mobile phone ownership and use survey.

The online survey was conducted by independent research firm IPSOS from late January to early February 2014 and involved 1,029 interviews of respondents 16 years or older that own a mobile phone. Results were presented to the BIWG on 20 February. Questions were asked to gather information on battery use and disposal in the last 12 months, including:

- how many batteries on average were purchased (primary and secondary)
- how many non-working batteries are stored in households (primary and secondary)
- how many and which types of products containing batteries had been purchased
- how the batteries are generally disposed of
- awareness about what can be done with batteries
- where people currently recycle their batteries
- where people think batteries should be collected for recycling.

A summary of the results will be included in the discussion paper.

The BIWG also considered collection data from a December 2013 audit of the Sustainability Victoria Batteryback program. A summary of these results will also be included in the discussion paper.

Battery Implementation Working Group meeting

The main focus of the 20 February BIWG meeting was to discuss the feedback from the BRG forum and further refine the draft discussion paper as a result of the discussions.

It should be noted that the contents of the discussion paper are the proposals of the BIWG and are not a finalised position. The information provided in the discussion paper does not pre-empt any discussions or outcomes of subsequent industry meetings and further discussions.

The BIWG is seeking comments on the discussion paper by Monday 31 March.

The discussion paper can be obtained from:

http://www.globalpsc.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Battery_IWG_Discussion_Paper_03144.pdf.

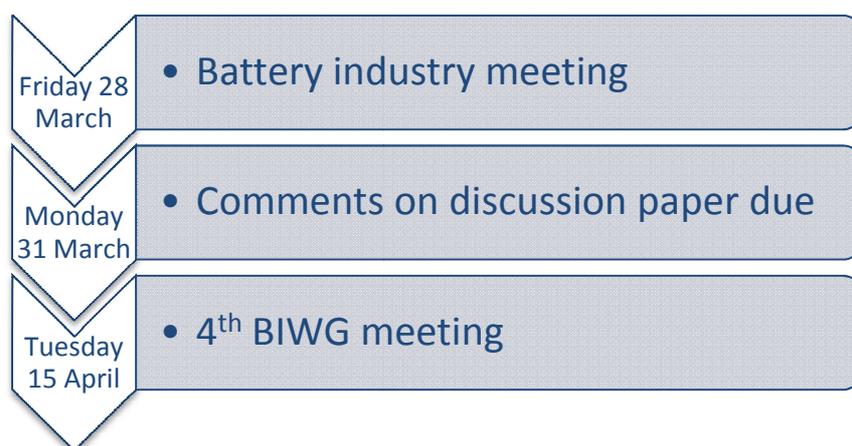
Changes to BIWG membership

At its November 2013 meeting the BIWG agreed to expand membership to include individual retailer and brand owner representation. Each peak body on the BIWG has nominated a brand owner member to participate on the BIWG. The BIWG would like to welcome representatives from Officeworks, Canon, Samsung, Energizer, Proctor and Gamble and Panasonic. The Australian Industry Group also has a new representative.

Other consultation processes

The BIWG has commenced discussions on the public consultation process on the proposed scheme and discussion paper. A significant part of the project involves consultation sessions in each capital city in order to engage a broad range of stakeholders and interested parties. Plenary forums and bilateral meetings (by registration) are proposed. Further details will be provided in subsequent updates.

Key dates and upcoming meetings



Secretariat contact details

Any enquiries or requests in relation to the Handheld Battery Product Stewardship project can be made to Kylie Hughes, Project Manager on kylie.hughes@ehp.qld.gov.au.