



MEDIA RELEASE

9 February 2015

ABRI calls for Producer Responsibility regulations for handheld batteries

The Australian Battery Recycling Initiative (ABRI) is calling for producer responsibility legislation for household batteries, declaring that it is no longer acceptable to dispose of used batteries in landfill.

ABRI has worked closely with government and industry representatives over the past two years to develop a voluntary stewardship program for handheld batteries, which would include the 'take-back' and safe recycling of batteries.

Following the failure of the current round of discussions to get the majority of battery manufacturers to agree to a voluntary plan for battery recycling, ABRI has written to The Hon Greg Hunt, Minister for the Environment, asking the government to investigate co-regulation for handheld batteries.

"We are frustrated by the lack of progress to date, but we believe that there is a workable solution that will meet the needs of all parties. Intelligent regulations will eliminate the possibility of competitive disadvantage and ensure industry-wide participation," said ABRI CEO Helen Lewis.

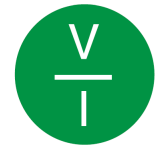
All batteries contain non-renewable resources and are recyclable. Some contain hazardous materials such as lead, cadmium or mercury, which have potential to leach into the natural environment over time and must be removed from general waste.

Community expectations are also demanding that manufacturers and brands take greater responsibility for their products at end-of-life and provide free recycling solutions.

"Within the community, there is significant support for battery recycling, as the success of Aldi's take-back scheme attests," said Brad Gray, Planet Ark's Head of Campaigns. "Through its program, 2.7 million batteries have been recycled since it began just a couple years ago. Last year we had more than 110,000 people use our RecyclingNearYou service to find battery recycling options."

Handheld batteries were included in the Australian Government's product priority list for 2012-13 and again in 2013-14. The Battery Implementation Working Group (BIWG) was established in late 2013 to investigate the feasibility of a voluntary stewardship program.

The BIWG involved key industry stakeholders in productive discussions on the design of a national stewardship scheme and the investigation of alternative models. The group also commissioned research on current levels of battery recycling and disposal and consumer attitudes to battery recycling. In March 2014 the BIWG released a discussion paper on voluntary, industry-led national product stewardship models for Australia.



Response to the discussion paper has been positive, with many stakeholders including some battery brand owners, electronics companies and retailers supporting a voluntary scheme. Others have not supported this approach, expressing concern that without regulation the potential for free-riding is high, resulting in voluntary participants being unfairly charged for program costs.

In the United States, the Corporation for Battery Recycling, representing three of the largest single-use battery manufacturers—Procter & Gamble (Duracell), Energizer, and Panasonic—has collaborated with other industry associations to develop the *Model Consumer Battery Stewardship Act*. This provides the framework for legislation that mandates producer responsibility for battery recycling at a state level. The draft legislation provides a useful model for Australia because it already has widespread battery industry support at a corporate (global) level.

ABRI is calling on Minister Hunt to seriously consider co-regulation for handheld batteries in collaboration with his state and territory Ministerial colleagues.

“Based on the research and consultation undertaken by BIWG and ABRI over the past 18 months, it is clear a voluntary approach is not supported by all industry players” said Dr Lewis. “It is time to deliver much needed policy reform that will enable Australians to access environmentally responsible battery recycling services.”

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About ABRI

The Australian Battery Recycling Initiative (ABRI) is a not-for-profit association of members who seek to maximise resource recovery from batteries. Its members include companies from every sector of the supply chain, including battery manufacturers, consumer electronics suppliers, retailers and recyclers, as well as environmental organisations and government agencies with an interest in product stewardship. More information is available at www.batteryrecycling.org.au.