

WASTE DISPOSAL, GOVERNMENT POLICY

412. Hon Jim Scott to the Minister for Housing and Works representing the Minister for the Environment and Heritage

- (1) What arrangements does the Government have in place to deal with the disposal of discarded personal computers?
- (2) What arrangements does the Government have in place to deal with the disposal of unwanted white goods such as refrigerators and washing machines?
- (3) What arrangements does the Government have in place to deal with the disposal of lead acid batteries and dry cells?
- (4) Does the Government have a policy in place for the disposal of construction and demolition waste?
- (5) If yes, where is it available?

Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:

Department of Conservation and Land Management

- (1)-(5) Public property is disposed of in accordance with methods set out in the State Supply Commission (SSC) Policies and Guidelines Manual. This Policy authorises the Executive Director as Accountable Officer for the Department to determine the manner of disposal.

The Department has developed policies and procedures for the disposal of public property based on SSC Policy. These policies and procedures are available to staff of the Department on its internal web site.

Prior to the disposal of public property, it is determined if another Departmental region, district or branch has a use for the property. Public property surplus to requirements of the Department is disposed of by transfer to another Public Authority, by inviting competitive offers, by public auction, by trade-in or by other means as approved by the Executive Director.

For personal computers, preference is given to transfer to government schools.

Lead acid batteries are delivered to licensed marine dealers and other organisations for recycling.

At times, the Department may need to dispose of other hazardous or recyclable materials such as refrigerators, other white goods, dry cells and construction and demolition waste. The nature of the operations of the Department makes disposal of such items a rare occurrence. Department policy recommends that staff should obtain advice on waste management and related environmental considerations from the Department of Environmental Protection prior to disposal.

Department of Environmental Protection and Water and Rivers Commission

- (1) The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Water and Rivers Commission (WRC) promotes the recycling of unwanted computer components through its Waste Wise website (www.wastewise.wa.gov.au) to schools, householders, local councils, Government and industry. Four local computer-recycling companies are listed on the website. Some old computers are repaired or rebuilt by charity organisations that then donate them to the needy. The majority of computers collected by these groups are disassembled for recycling.

The DEP and WRC also promotes the recycling of unwanted computers internally, through its draft 'Eco-office Program – a guide to achieving environmentally friendly office practices and a reduction in resource consumption within the DEP and WRC.' The recycling of unwanted computer components is currently being included for adoption within this program.

- (2) The DEP promotes the recycling of unwanted white goods through its Waste Wise website (www.wastewise.wa.gov.au) to schools, householders, Government, and industry. Some community and charity groups usually accept white goods in reasonable working condition. Local councils provide advice on best disposal options for unwanted white goods within their local area.

The DEP and WRC also promotes the recycling of unwanted white goods internally, through its draft 'Eco-office Program – a guide to achieving environmentally friendly office practices and a reduction in resource consumption within the DEP and WRC.' The recycling of unwanted white goods is currently being included for adoption within this program.

The State is liaising with other jurisdictions to develop an effective, national approach to product stewardship. The national Environment Protection and Heritage Council Ministers are working to

ensure that major industry associations progress their commitment to develop an Electrical and Electronic Product Stewardship Strategy. It is recognised that industry has a shared responsibility, along with other participants in the product life cycle, to manage the environmental impacts of their product from design to disposal.

- (3) The DEP promotes the recycling of lead acid batteries through its Waste Wise website (www.wastewise.wa.gov.au) to householders, government and industry. Lead acid batteries are usually accepted by scrap metal merchants and at garages (when new batteries are installed). Local councils provide advice on best disposal options for lead acid batteries within their local area.

The DEP and WRC also promotes the recycling of lead acid batteries internally, through its draft 'Eco-office Program – a guide to achieving environmentally friendly office practices and a reduction in resource consumption within the DEP and WRC.' The recycling of lead acid batteries is currently being included for adoption within this program.

It is anticipated that over 80% of lead acid batteries are collected for recycling in Western Australia. Most local council kerbside recycling collection programs accept car batteries for recycling. Batteries collected are emptied of the lead acid and then exported to overseas markets. Under the Motor Trades Association's 'Green Stamp' program, garages are obliged to recycle old car batteries.

- (4) No. A Construction and Demolition Working Group has been formed by the DEP. The working group comprises of representatives from the demolition industry, construction industry, waste management industry, and relevant Government departments. Its objective is to develop a strategy to implement a vision outlined in Towards Zero Waste: Actions for the Construction and Demolition Sector. A draft document is currently in preparation. The Department has also provided advice to the Department of Housing and Works to encourage recycling of construction and demolition waste on demolition contracts and recently identifying possible uses of these recovered materials in design and construction of new building contracts.

- (5) Not Applicable.

Office of Water Regulation

- (1) The Water and Rivers Commission undertakes disposal of discarded Office of Water Regulation personal computers through a service level agreement. Disposal is carried out in accordance with Water and Rivers Commission Disposal of Assets Policy No. CFI 101.02 which states:

"Assets which are surplus, obsolete, beyond repair, refurbishment or at the end of economic life, may be sold by Public Tender, Auction, Trade in, Private Treaty, by consignment, at scrap value or discarded as rubbish."

- (2)-(5) Not applicable.

Heritage Council of Western Australia

- (1) Obsolete computers are transferred to the Education Department (Primary Schools)
- (2) Obsolete white goods would normally be traded in on replacement purchases.
- (3) Lead acid batteries are not subject to disposal by the Heritage Council.
Dry cells are disposed with general rubbish.
- (4) Construction and demolition waste is not subject to disposal by the Heritage Council.
No Policy is in place.
- (5) Not applicable.

Perth Zoo

- (1) Discarded personal computers are recycled for working parts and reused. Non-functioning parts are disposed of as normal waste materials.
- (2) Goods no longer required that are in working order are tendered for sale.
- (3) Lead acid batteries are delivered to "Battery World" for recycling/recovery of lead.
- (4) Perth Zoo has an internal practice that all metals are recycled. No other specific arrangements for demolition/construction waste. No written policy available.
- (5) No applicable.

Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority

- (1) Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority (BGPA) wipes the hard disks in discarded PCs and then donates the hardware to charities and schools after going through appropriate asset disposal processes.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) BGPA disposes batteries via Western Metropolitan Regional Council recycling facility (Brockway Road)
- (4) BGPA construction and demolition work is done by public tender, and the successful tenderer is required to dispose of any waste off site. There is no specific BGPA policy.
- (5) Not applicable.

National Trust of Western Australia

- (1)-(5) Not applicable

AqWest Bunbury Water Board

- (1) Discarded PCs are disposed of by sale through public tender.
- (2) All unwanted goods would be disposed of by sale through public tender in the first instance and disposed as rubbish if not sold.
- (3) Batteries are disposed of as rubbish in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government for the area.
- (4) AQWEST has no specific policy but is required to comply with the Local Government directions.
- (5) Not applicable.

Busselton Water Board

- (1) All computers used within the Busselton Water Board network are currently leased and not owned. When a lease expires, the computer is returned to the leasing company.
- (2) Should the Board decide to dispose of any owned white goods (e.g. refrigerator) they would be either traded on the new model or disposed of by public tender.
- (3) Lead acid batteries/dry cells are sold as “unwanted scrap”.
- (4) No – but all waste items are disposed of by removal to the Shire of Busselton rubbish depot.
- (5) Not applicable.