



Queensland Murray-Darling Committee Inc.'s Submission on Product Stewardship (Television and Computer) Regulations 2011

10 October 2011

Submission to:

Product Stewardship Legislation Team
Waste Policy Branch
Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
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This submission is presented by the Chief Executive Officer, Geoff Penton, on behalf of the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee Inc. (QMDC). QMDC is a regional natural resource management (NRM) group that supports communities in the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin (QMDB) to sustainably manage their natural resources.

1.0 Background

QMDC and the communities we work closely with have identified waste management as an important NRM issue. Waste in its many forms (domestic, rural, industrial etc) provides not only challenges to the region's natural resources and assets but also opportunities for better NRM practices and strategies. Waste management in the region is therefore integral to QMDC'S role as a regional NRM body.

QMDC's *Strategic Plan* and the *Regional NRM Plan* continue to promote a strong guide for our 2011/2012 activities with our overall focus being the implementation of the Regional NRM Plan. Waste management is identified as a key issue in the Regional NRM Plan and QMDC sees the need to update and align the Regional NRM Plan with both the Queensland Waste Strategy 2010-2020 and the National Waste Policy (NWP).

QMDC recognises that a range of actions is needed to ensure the efficacy of the NWP. These include:

- Coordinated and collaborative large scale waste minimisation and waste recovery projects with local government, industry and DERM;
- Community education with schools, landholders, the wider community, industry and business clusters; and
- Brokerage of investment into waste avoidance and recovery technology.

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2.0 General comments

QMDC supports the objectives of the *Product Stewardship Act 2011* and the national collection and recycling scheme for televisions and computers (the Scheme).

QMDC commends the integration of education, resource recovery, waste minimisation, governance and reporting requirements integral to the design parameters of the Scheme.

Design parameters that need further refinement in QMDC's opinion are:

- Threshold and obligations of small business to recycle and recover
- The provision of reasonable access to collection services
- Recycling infrastructure, stockpiling & environmental and health impacts
- The recycling target pathway

3.0 Threshold and obligations of small business to recycle and recover

QMDC is concerned that all businesses need to be accountable for environmental best practices and be included in the Scheme. QMDC recommends that another method should be included in the Scheme for small businesses so that their sustainability is not jeopardised, for example:

- tax incentives for recycling and resource recovery;
- easy access to a collections service similar to "drum muster".

4.0 The provision of reasonable access to collection services

Reasonable access to collection services needs to take into consideration the strategic timing of these services to coordinate the services with the most likely times that communities are upgrading technology for newer items and also include a strategic educational and awareness component to these services.

5.0 Recycling infrastructure, stockpiling or exporting for processing overseas & environmental and health impacts

QMDC recommends that planning for the recycling infrastructure needs to give more serious consideration to the environmental and health impacts of stockpiling and whether overseas processing meets stringent best practices. Preventing environmental and health issues for workers and environments in other countries should be integral to television and computer product stewardship.

6.0 The recycling target pathway

QMDC recommends that a solution should be readily available to address the demand for recycling and Australia's capacity to recycle products. Balancing the technical capacity to recover resources against the viable use or reuse of resources is essential.