

Australia's e-waste issues escalate after Christmas

Technology-mad Australians are creating a mountain of e-waste as they discard their old computers with brand new ones after Christmas.

Reports from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that e-waste (discarded electronic goods such as games consoles, televisions and computers) is the fastest form of municipal waste, growing at least three times faster than regular waste as Australians spend up on the latest technology.

Managing Director Alvin Piadasa of TES-AMM, Australia's only electronic waste recycler with a hazardous e-waste export permit, is urging Australians to think about how they will discard their old electronic items after they have purchased new ones this Christmas.

"Whilst it is desirable to have the latest and greatest technology, we are asking Australians to consider and commit to recycling or disposing of their gadgets and equipment in the right way when making their next purchase," Mr Piadasa said.

"Massive amounts of energy and resources go into manufacturing electronics like the Nintendo DS or the Xbox, however, energy equals pollution; equals carbon emissions; equals loss of natural resources."

The ABS reports state that almost a quarter (23%) of electronic equipment and more than half (51%) of household appliances disposed of in the 12 months to March 2009 were put out with non-recycled garbage for kerb-side collection. E-waste experts believe this only leads to a growing issue for the people tasked with the job of collecting the e-waste and also for the environment.

"Maybe we should ask ourselves why we need to discard these valuable items and at the same time, teach our children more sustainable consumer behaviour for the benefit of generations to come," Mr Piadasa said.

According to Mr Piadasa, TES-AMM is supportive of a new commitment by government and industry to establish product stewardship regulations in the coming year.

"The responsibility should not just be with the manufacturers or government," Mr Piadasa said. "Consumers are the ultimate end user and can help shape policy, product design, placement and promotion of goods and services through purchasing decisions."

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