



Media release

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Thanks Australia! 13,500 printer cartridges recycled every working day

Responsible industry waste management hits record high

Over the last 12 months Australians have made history by recycling a record 13,500 used printer cartridges every working day, making it the biggest year ever since the launch of the 'Cartridges 4 Planet Ark' program.

In total, over 3.5 million cartridges were returned for recycling or remanufacture, which is equivalent to 386 bathtubs of cartridges returned every working day, or 6 backyard swimming pools every week!

Ryan Collins, Recycling Programs Manager at Planet Ark, says a key factor in this success is the industry's willingness to participate in this voluntary product stewardship scheme, which ensures the environmental impact of their products is responsibly managed at the end of their useful life.

"The success of 'Cartridges 4 Planet Ark' is a direct result of the commitment demonstrated by our program partners. With their participation the program has been able to build an extensive collection and processing infrastructure that makes it easy for households and workplaces to recycle their cartridges, which is clearly reflected in the previous year's results," Collins said.

Collectively the participating cartridge manufacturers Brother, Canon, Epson, HP, Konica Minolta and Kyocera have helped Australians divert 34 million cartridges from landfill, which is equivalent to over 14,500 tonnes of materials, since the program began in 2003.

"Working within a closed loop or circular process, like the 'Cartridges 4 Planet Ark' program, which allows us to recover and reuse valuable materials and keep them circulating, is essential. It doesn't make good business sense to send useful and valuable materials to landfill, when they can be salvaged and directed back into the economy. We're particularly proud of the fact that the program has consistently achieved zero waste to landfill every year," Collins said.

Printer cartridges can take between 450 and 1,000 years to break down in landfill, and e-waste is the fastest-growing form of waste. Rapid innovation, decrease in product lifespan and declining prices of both electronics and raw materials have led to more and more items being discarded. So it's vital, for the environment and a viable manufacturing industry, that the concept of a closed loop production cycle is embraced.

Overall, Australian consumers are supportive of responsible waste management and recycling. In a recent study, 82% of participants stated that they will recycle even if it takes more effort¹.

Once they are collected, used printer cartridges are sorted and, depending on their type, returned to the manufacturer for remanufacturing, or dismantled, with plastics, metals, toner and ink collected for recycling by resource recovery partner Close the Loop®. Even the packaging, which includes cable ties and plastic bags, is recycled.





Aluminium, steel and up to six different types of plastic can be retrieved from used printer cartridges to make a variety of new products including cartridges, pens, rulers, eWood which is used to make park benches, fencing and garden beds, and TonerPave™, an asphalt additive that improves the performance and longevity of roads.

Innovation in this area is continuing, with the recent launch of a new product, Tonerseal™, a world-first spray seal binder for roads which contains over 20% recycled waste toner and used tyre rubber. To date approximately 900 kms of Australian roads have been surfaced with TonerPave™ or Tonerseal™ which is longer than driving from Melbourne to Sydney, or almost going from Sydney to Brisbane. Recently Australia Zoo also chose to lay 250 tonnes of TonerPave™ as part of a commitment to reduce its carbon footprint.

Manufacturers are also implementing a range of other changes to their cartridges and equipment to reduce waste. These include using recycled plastic in their production, adding extra-large print tanks to extend their life and developing technology to monitor and balance usage across all colours. Changes to toner chemistry also allow for quality printing with lower energy use.

Consumers and workplaces can access a free network of 4,000 'Cartridges 4 Planet Ark' public recycling collection boxes around the country, located at all Officeworks stores and participating Australia Post, Harvey Norman, JB Hi-Fi, The Good Guys and Office National outlets. Workplaces may also be eligible for a free collection box.

More workplaces than ever before signed up for a collection last year, so to register for a free box or to find your nearest retail drop-off location visit www.cartridges.planetark.org or call 1300 763 768.

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i [Waste Less, Recycle More Initiative Community Benchmark Study](#), NSW EPA August 2015

About Planet Ark

Planet Ark Environmental Foundation is an Australian not-for-profit organisation with a vision of a world where people live in balance with nature. Established in 1992, we are one of Australia's leading environmental behaviour change organisations with a focus on working collaboratively and positively. We promote and create simple, positive environmental actions – for everyone.

For more information, to schedule an interview or to arrange a photo opportunity at your nearest participating 'Cartridges 4 Planet Ark' outlet, please contact:

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