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BEYOND THE BOX: The Cartridge Recycling Story

To mark the occasion of today's Earth Day, Planet Ark is launching the 7th year of its successful 'Cartridges 4 Planet Ark' campaign and is challenging Australians to look beyond the box, into the real story of cartridge recycling.

With more than 9 million cartridges collected and recycled through the program, 'Cartridges 4 Planet Ark' is a genuine recycling success story. Many people have little understanding of the recycling process. So why should we recycle our printer cartridges and what happens once we drop our used cartridges into a 'Cartridges 4 Planet Ark' collection box?

Cartridge recycling is important for many reasons. It keeps cartridges out of landfill, which reduces the size of our rubbish tips, and allows us to recover and reuse the materials that make up the cartridge itself. By recovering materials like steel and aluminium as well as plastics, inks and other materials from cartridges, we use less energy and water than producing these items from scratch. We're also sparing the planet from the greenhouse gasses emitted when sourcing, mining and generating products from raw (rather than recycled) materials. This directly helps to combat climate change.

All of this can be achieved by recycling printer cartridges, and that process starts when you drop your used cartridges into special collection boxes at participating retail outlets. Used cartridges are then collected from these outlets and delivered to Planet Ark's resource recovery partner, Close the Loop®, where they are sorted and separated. Many laser cartridges are returned to the original equipment manufacturers (OEM) for their own remanufacturing or component recovery programs. All other consumables are processed through Close the Loop's patented 'Green Machine'. Through this process, the cartridge is shredded and the raw components separated for recycling. Some plastics, metals and other materials are sent to specific recyclers and any remaining toner, ink and plastics are all combined in a patented process to create a new and unique wood-substitute product called *eWood™*.

The end results are amazing and proof of the success and value of the resource recovery process. Items ranging from park benches, fences, rulers, roller ball pens and the steel in white goods can be made from components collected and recovered through the process of printer cartridge recycling.

To give your used printer cartridges a second life, drop them into a '**Cartridges 4 Planet Ark**' collection box at participating **Australia Post, Officeworks, Harvey Norman, or Dick Smith Electronics and PowerHouse** stores.

This program is an example of an extended producer responsibility program with the participating OEMs, Brother, Canon, Epson, HP, Konica-Minolta and Lexmark, taking end-of-life responsibility for the cartridges they produce.

To find your nearest retail drop off location, visit **Cartridges.PlanetArk.org** or call the '**Cartridges 4 Planet Ark**' hotline on **1800 24 24 73**.

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