

# Product stewardship is getting traction

**With the emerging imperative for organisations to examine all avenues to reduce their environmental impacts, product stewardship schemes are seeing greater uptake – although the ‘how to’ still remains the main challenge in Australia.**

Product stewardship commits organisations (predominantly across a manufacturing network) to develop or re-engineer sustainable life-cycle approaches to product development and disposal. This of course reduces the environmental ‘footprint’ of the organisation with the benefits of minimised waste and toxicity, better resource efficiency and an improved triple bottom line.

The National Packaging Covenant and the National Environment Protection Council’s work on generic, co-regulatory product stewardship frameworks (specifically a National Environment Protection Measure, now evolved into specific co-regulatory arrangements for tyre stewardship) are a good start for Australia, in line with international priorities.

But there are also a number of industry led voluntary schemes, beyond a regulatory ‘safety net’, that are gaining traction: electronics, paint, printer cartridges, oil and metals schemes are some that have profile.

One of the main barriers to faster take-up remains an understanding of how organisations can commence product stewardship provisions. The Product Stewardship Conference, to be held in Melbourne on the 4th and 5th of June, will provide a timely forum for assessing current product stewardship frameworks and some of the practical approaches already being implemented in organisations today.

Lisa Townshend, Project Manager at conference host Liquid Learning Group, said, ‘the success of the National Packaging Covenant illustrates that product stewardship can be more readily adopted by Australian organisations. What is now being requested is more guidance and incentive on its take-up by other industry sectors.’

The event will show how stewardship



**Printer cartridge take-back schemes are an example of product stewardship in action.**

Pattie Cally, iStockphoto

contributes to the production of environmentally sustainable products and positive corporate social responsibility outcomes. It will also canvas where environmental sustainability practices should lead in the future, and how the corporate marketplace should be receiving and supporting product stewardship alongside government help in enforcing such practices in the commercial arena.

## **More information:**

Product Stewardship Conference 2008, 4–5 June, Rendezvous Hotel, Melbourne, [www.liquidlearning.com.au/cal\\_jun08\\_psc0608.php](http://www.liquidlearning.com.au/cal_jun08_psc0608.php)

## Industrial growth.

Through new sustainable thinking, the Rockingham Industry Zone is reinventing what industry looks like.

Existing flora is being respected, through the retention of significant tuarts and the preservation of an area of bushland, into which some 200 grass trees are being transplanted (Around 1,400 were relocated from the Rockingham Industry Zone last year to households and community projects).

Resources are also being respected, especially water. Through the use of Atlantis Infiltration Cells, stormwater is locally infiltrated back into the water table. Also, a rainwater tank to toilet sytem is mandatory for all lots which reduces reliance on scheme water.

And as the environment is cared for, so it will care for the people who work here. The bushland will be accessed by local employees as a place to eat lunch, to escape for a stroll or to kick a footy.

The Rockingham Industry Zone will also deliver the more traditional form of industrial growth: providing expansion opportunities for existing businesses, while also attracting new ones to this dynamic area.

Lot 220 Dixon Road in the Element Precinct is the latest step on the journey. Find out more by visiting [www.rockinghamindustryzone.com.au](http://www.rockinghamindustryzone.com.au)

