

## Let's get PST together!

**Workshop presented by the Product Stewardship Team, Ministry for the Environment, on the management of special wastes, product stewardship, and extended producer responsibility. WasteMINZ Conference, 3 - 4.30 pm, Wednesday 10 November 2004.**

**Product Stewardship Team:** Paddy Gresham, Alison Handley, Simon Wilkinson, Kim Morgan and Paul McHardy, Sustainable Industry Group, Ministry for the Environment, Chair: Jim Bradley

The Ministry for the Environment has expanded its work on product stewardship. The Product Stewardship Team brings together the work done on problematic, or special, wastes and the development of a coherent product stewardship strategy.

The workshop reports on the two strands of work:

1. Development of a Product Stewardship framework under which particular waste or product streams might be managed in future;
2. Progress on the individual product streams that have become work priorities over the past twelve months.

The workshop also seeks participant feedback on key questions relating to the Product Stewardship framework.

### **Product Stewardship framework**

Presenter: Paddy Gresham

The product stewardship framework consolidates Ministry for the Environment thinking on extended producer responsibility, as outlined in the 2002 Waste Strategy, and on the need for legislation to underpin work on particular special wastes.

Under the proposed framework, the government would:

- Identify product streams that need special end-of-life management because of hazardousness, bulk, and/or difficulty of management in landfills.
- Invite producers (manufacturers or importers) to set up product stewardship schemes of an approved standard, agree or sign off on the schemes, and monitor to ensure compliance;
- Regulate to prevent “free riders” so companies taking part in product stewardship programmes are not disadvantaged in relation to competitors who do not take part. (The government may also need to regulate to establish regimes for priority products, if relevant industry group fail or refuse to develop their own)

Priority products are likely to include end-of-life tyres, used oil, personal computers, televisions, end-of-life vehicles, and agricultural chemicals in the first instance. Industry groups wanting stewardship schemes for products not included in the priority list would be encouraged, but the Ministry would invest less time and financial resources on those product streams.

The Product Stewardship proposal retains the underlying principle stated in the 2002 Waste Strategy, that producers take responsibility for the life cycle impact of products they put on the market. The principle implies that producers face incentives to improve design so that end-of-life management is easier, and that the costs of management are shifted back from ratepayers to producers and users of products.

Proposals for a product stewardship policy backed up by legislation will be outlined in a public discussion paper expected to be published before Christmas.

A more detailed update is provided at the workshop.

## **Current work on product streams**

### **1. Tracking on: a new initiative to manage old tyres**

Presenters: Alison Handley and Paul McHardy

Tyre Track is an on-line and free phone based system that links tyre dealers with registered transporters and appropriate disposal/recycling points for end-of-life tyres. The work leading up to Tyre Track and a basic description are provided on the Ministry's website. <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/waste/special/tyres/index.html> Tyre Track is managed by the Motor Trade Association (MTA) on behalf of the tyre industry, and is being funded by the Ministry for the Environment for two years.

Tyre Track was launched on 22 June 2004 and went live on 1 July 2004. Even before its official "due date" it had attracted several registrations, and it had delivered its first successful tender. Since then, activity has been somewhat slower than we might have hoped but we have seen continued growth in membership.

By the end of September there were over 300 tyre suppliers and 35 tyre collectors registered with Tyre Track. The major tyre manufacturers have registered their company-owned retail outlets as tyre suppliers, and many of the major players in the end-of-life tyre processing industry are registered as collectors.

Some lessons have become apparent since the website and phone line became operational:

- Tyre Track systems need to take into account that small business managers are likely to be on the shop floor rather than in-front of the screen
- Despite reassurances about confidentiality, there is some concern that information submitted to Tyre Track will be misused or passed on to competitors
- Dealers still need to be reassured that charging disposal fees will not disadvantage them in relation to competitors
- Ongoing communication through MTA, tyre company networks, and through Tyre Track will be crucial to the success of Tyre Track.

The workshop provides an update of progress, reflects on lessons learned, and reports on adjustments made to date.

## **2. E-waste: A New Priority**

Presenter: Simon Wilkinson

Electronic waste, or e-waste, is a new priority in the Ministry's Product Stewardship programme in 2004/05. E-waste is growing in quantity and many products contain hazardous components. The Ministry has been exploring with the electronics industry how current product takeback initiatives can be expanded and how a more comprehensive product stewardship approach to personal computers, televisions, and mobile phones might work in New Zealand.



The workshop will set out the Ministry's approach to e-waste, give an update on progress, and highlight some of the challenges that are being faced with e-waste management in New Zealand.

The Ministry of Economic Development will also present information regarding the restrictions on the international movement of e-waste.

## **3. Agri-chems**

Presenter: Kim Morgan

The agrichemicals collection programme, commenced in 2003/04 and targets the historical legacy of unwanted and banned agricultural chemicals in rural NZ. The programme is working towards New Zealand's compliance with the recently ratified Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pesticides (POPs).

We present a brief update on current work achievements and future direction for the programme. Implications of the recently ratified Stockholm Convention will also be addressed.