

Take your E-Waste to a better place

Loddon Mallee Waste and Resource Recovery Group

E-waste (electronic waste) is growing three times faster than the rate of standard municipal waste from kerbside rubbish bins. It contains many potentially hazardous and valuable materials, which don't belong in landfill.

To help protect our environment and recover more precious resources, the Victorian Government has banned all e-waste from going to landfill.

But what is e-waste: E-waste is any item with a plug, battery, or power cord that is no longer working or wanted. It covers a whole range of items from phones and refrigerators to fluorescent light tubes and hair dryers. Cutting cords off these items or removing batteries doesn't change what they are, as it's the electrical components inside these products that pose a risk to the environment and can no longer be landfilled or put in kerbside rubbish bins.

All e-waste can contain hazardous materials. These can range from heavy metals such as lead, mercury and cadmium to ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and flame retardants.

Even in small amounts, these dangerous chemicals can cause environmental contamination. But when you multiply it by millions of e-waste items being left in landfills or stored inappropriately, the situation becomes much more serious.

These substances can leach into soil and groundwater, or release into the air, creating long term environmental issues. Many of these substances are particularly dangerous because they do not break down easily, meaning they stay in the environment for a very long time.

E-waste also contain a whole range of precious materials, including tin, nickel, zinc, aluminium, copper, silver and gold. Just in case you were wondering if you can extract those precious metals yourself... No, and it would be very dangerous to try. Many of the precious metals in e-waste need to be specially treated to separate and remove them safely.

Since many of these materials are non-renewable, once they're gone, they're gone. However, if e-waste is properly recycled, these materials and parts can be recycled and used again and again.

To learn more about e-waste and find your nearest e-waste drop-off point go to ewaste.vic.gov.au, visit your local council website or download the free Loddon Mallee Waste Info App.

Caring for our environment by reducing waste to landfill.

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