GREEN ACTION NEWS
WORKING TOGETHER PROTECTING VICTORIA’S ENVIRONMENT
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Every little drop counts
Help us give water back to our rivers

PLUS
Victoria – the Green Jobs State
As this edition of Green Action News goes to press, we’ve just been given two very different bits of news.

ON THE ONE HAND, we found out that we’ve finally had a breakthrough on electronic waste, with state and federal environment ministers deciding to introduce a ‘fluro recycling scheme’ and to finalise recycling schemes for tyres, computers and televisions at their next meeting in November.

There’s still more work to do, but we know that industry is with us on this one. We’ll continue to push for concrete decisions by the end of the year. (You can read all about our campaign on electronic waste and what you can do to help on page 12).

On the other hand, the state government has just announced that it is investigating taking even more water out of the Yarra and Thomson rivers.

This is in addition to the billions of litres they’ve already taken out. Our rivers are in a dire situation. Every little drop we take from them counts. Please consider making a donation to help us fight for a future for our rivers. (You can find out more on page 3).

We know from recent experience that when different parts of our community come together, we can and do find a better way forward. We can and have developed a plan to combat climate change and to save our shrinking rivers. We can and have come up with solutions to change the way we produce goods and consume them, so that we use less precious resources and send less waste to landfill. And we’ve got the numbers to show that implementing these solutions will create thousands of new jobs.

We’ve got the answers and together we’ve already achieved remarkable results. A year ago, would you have predicted that we could secure a $100 million investment in a renewable energy plant or billions into public transport? As the state government’s recent announcement on our rivers shows, however, our environment needs us now more than ever.

We’re in a good position to get some real change in the lead-up to the 2010 elections. But we can’t do it alone.

That’s why we’ve made it our goal to get 5 million people – every Victorian – to join our cause. We know that sometimes one person can be easy to ignore, but 5 million people safeguarding our environment is a force to be reckoned with.

You’ll hear more about our new challenge in coming months. Stay tuned!

> Kelly O’Shanassy, Chief Executive Officer
If you’re anything like me, you are passionate about our rivers. Ever since I was a young child, growing up along the banks of the Moorabool River in Maude, I’ve loved rivers.

**MY CHILDHOOD WAS SPENT** playing near or swimming in some of Victoria’s most beautiful rivers. Nowadays, I still spend much of my free time paddling along the Yarra River in Melbourne. It’s a part of my daily life that I couldn’t imagine having to live without.

Many people don’t realise how precious the Yarra River is. My stretch of the river is bordered by incredible cliffs and billabongs. It includes scenery you’d expect to see in a national park, not right in the heart of our capital city. Sadly, the rivers I am closest to, are slowly dying. The Yarra has less than ten per cent of its natural flow left, The rest is extracted for domestic and industrial use. The Moorabool River has suffered algal blooms. As I write, our national river, the Murray, is suffering an 800 kilometre algal bloom from Wodonga to Swan Hill. This bloom is not only devastating for plants and animals that rely on it for survival, but also for those of us who go fishing along its banks, paddle along its waters or live alongside and drink from it.

Despite this time of crisis for our rivers, however, the state government is planning to take even more water from our rivers. Most of our rivers are running on a trickle, but the state government still wants more from them. It may seem like only a small volume of water, but it’s the difference between life or death for our rivers.

I’m wondering when our governments decided that they had the right to give up on our rivers? When did they decide it was OK to drain so much water from them that an 800 kilometre algal bloom could form?

We have worked hard over many years with thousands of Victorians to convince the state government to give our rivers their fair share of water. Environment Victoria won legal protection of water for rivers through the Victorian Water Act in 2005. Now the state government is denying that hard won nourishment to our rivers and ignoring their legal right to water.

The state government is reviewing the Victorian Water Act and we want the management of river water taken out of their hands, once and for all. We want independent management so that our rivers get their fair share. Environment Victoria is developing a blueprint to strengthen the Victorian Water Act and will present this to our political leaders. We will also mobilise thousands of people to stand up to government and tell them that it is definitely not okay to give up on our rivers.

STOP PRESS!!

As this edition of Green Action News goes to press, we’ve just been given the heads-up that the state government is investigating taking more water out of the Yarra and Thompson Rivers. We urgently need the funds to continue the fight to protect our rivers’ rights to water. Join us today by donating now, using the form at the back of this newsletter. Please don’t delay. Our beloved rivers are in trouble and it’s up to us to save them.
**SAFE CLIMATE**

**MATT SCOTT**

**Rudd still captive to the big polluters**

> Victoria McKenzie-McHarg, Safe Climate Campaigner

On 6 May 2009, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd announced a number of key changes to his government’s Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS): their central policy on climate change. While the increase to the target range is welcome, the policy has gone from bad to worse.

Environment Victoria welcomes this increase. It means that the Australian Government can now engage more constructively in the global negotiations. We were extremely disappointed, however, that this improvement came at the expense of a further weakening of the CPRS, with even more compensation and carve-outs for our big polluters. With these changes in place, Australia’s biggest and dirtiest polluters will pay only 50 cents per tonne of pollution in the first year of the scheme. That’s less than the cost of a postage stamp.

Despite community concern, the non-negotiable reduction target of 5 per cent still remains if the global community cannot reach a strong agreement in Copenhagen. The target led many of us to protest the CPRS earlier this year outside the offices of federal MPs right across the country. Environment Victoria held a community protest together with the local Maroondah climate action group outside the office of Mr Mike Symon in the federal electorate of Deakin.

More than 40 community members attended and footage of the protest can be seen at www.environmentvictoria.org.au. We will continue to campaign for improvements to the CPRS or, failing that, to have it dumped in the Senate. You can help us make a real impact by lending us your voice or writing a letter to your local MP.

**Standing strong for our solar future**

Environment Victoria continued the campaign for a real solar feed-in tariff for Victoria last month with a rally on the steps of Parliament House.

ALMOST ONE YEAR to the day since the Brumby Government first announced their dud scheme, we joined forces with the Alternative Technology Association, the Moreland Energy Foundation and Friends of the Earth, to call on the Opposition and minor parties to fix the feed-in tariff in Parliament.

The rally was an outstanding success, with more than 250 people joining us and politicians from across the political spectrum on the steps of Parliament to show broad community support for improvements to the bill. We couldn’t have done it without you. Your actions are having an effect. Almost 600 people have used Environment Victoria’s online cyber-action form to send a letter to Ted Baillieu, leader of the opposition, calling on him to support Environment Victoria’s amendments to the solar feed-in tariff. The Opposition now knows the community wants real action on this issue, so we know the letters are working. If you haven’t already done so, make sure you visit us at www.environmentvictoria.org.au today and show your support for a real solar feed-in tariff. Thank you to all of you who attended the rally and who have been supportive of our campaign so far.

Contact Victoria McKenzie-McHarg at victoria@envict.org.au or 9341 8112 to find out more about how you can get involved in our Safe Climate campaign.
Show me the money

> Mark Wakeham, Campaigns Director

May was budget month, with both the state and federal governments delivering their budgets for the year ahead. Environment Victoria’s Campaigns Director, Mark Wakeham takes a close look at how John Lenders and Wayne Swan performed for the environment.

John Lender’s Retro Budget Lets the State Down
Seemingly written in 1989 rather than 2009, the state budget was a real ‘retro budget’. There is no substantial new funding to tackle climate change, and they’ve really missed the opportunity to deliver a green stimulus package. In its defence, the state government has argued that the climate change programs will be funded as part of a ‘green jobs’ package to be announced in June and a Climate Change White Paper to be delivered at the end of the year. But spending $42 billion with no substantial new funding for climate change, no new funding for energy efficiency programs and just $1 million for renewable energy projects means we’re left with little choice but to criticise this budget. Rivers were also neglected, with no substantial funding to improve the lot of our struggling waterways.

On a more positive note, transport funding has been skewed heavily towards public transport for the first time. We had a victory with the decision to fund the extension of the Epping railway line to South Morang – a campaign that past and present Environment Victoria staff and supporters have fought hard for. The budget has also provided funding for the establishment of the River Red Gum and Point Nepean National Parks.

Overall, as our CEO Kelly O’Shanassy said: “the Brumby Government has a lot of work to do on climate change, rivers protection and delivering a positive environmental legacy between now and the 2010 state election.” We’re very disappointed by this budget but we’re hoping the Green Jobs and Economy Plan, the Climate Change White Paper and the 2010 state budget will reverse a decade of under-expenditure and environmental decline.

Wayne Swan does a little better
By comparison, the federal budget did a little better, with some substantial new funding for climate change programs, including a new $1.5 billion scale solar program and $450 million for a new renewable energy fund. The coal industry wasn’t left out however – it never is – with another $2 billion for carbon capture and storage to add to the billions already granted by state and federal governments. Again, there was substantial investment in public transport, including funding for a new railway line through the western suburbs of Melbourne to separate regional and urban trains. Overall, the federal budget gave a nod to green jobs, but still fell short of the green stimulus packages delivered in the US, UK, China, South Korea and elsewhere.
ENVIRONMENT GROUPS HAVE always sought to develop green industries. For years we’ve been advocating for renewable energy, recycling, water and energy efficiency and public transport industries and jobs. With rising unemployment and recession, however, smart policy-makers around the world are realising that we now have a unique opportunity to address climate change and economic slowdown by developing green stimulus packages.

Until very recently, much of the talk about green jobs and green stimulus packages has been nebulous and intangible. Everyone likes the idea of green jobs, but what does it actually mean and what do you have to do to get them? That’s why we decided to hold a summit in April to explore in depth the green job opportunities and challenges before us in Victoria. We organised the summit jointly with the Brotherhood of St Laurence for several reasons. Firstly, we wanted to build our relationships with the social sector. Perhaps most importantly, though, we share the social sector’s vision that a green jobs plan can deliver not only for the environment and the economy but also for disadvantaged people. There are two main ways it can do this. Environment policies like energy and water efficiency programs can actually reduce the cost of living for poor people, who spend a disproportionate amount of their income on energy and water. A green jobs package could also deliver thousands of jobs for those currently unemployed. There are win-win situations everywhere in the green jobs space.

More than 170 leaders from all parts of the Victorian community attended the Green Jobs summit. They came from businesses and industry, government agencies and political parties, unions and academia, the community, social sector and environment movement. As part of the summit, we undertook a substantial piece of research: a report entitled ‘Victoria, the Green Jobs State – Seizing the Opportunities’ [summarised on pages 8-9]. We’ve never had a response quite like the positive feedback and demand that we’ve received for this report. It’s currently being downloaded over 1000 times a week from the Environment Victoria website.

And we’re hoping all of this work pays off when it comes to influencing state and federal policy and expenditure. Importantly, the Brumby Government has committed to developing a Green Jobs plan and a Green Economies plan at the start of the year. We’re expecting the Green Jobs plan to be released in June. We’re hoping the plan will lead to a step-change in support of new green jobs and industries and that 2009 will, in the future, be viewed as a turning point for the state’s environment, economy and society.

You can help us by lending us your voice. Politicians listen to voters. You can help us by downloading the Green Jobs report at www.environmentvictoria.org.au and then getting in touch with your local MP to demand that they adopt a green vision for Victoria’s economy. Please also consider making a donation to help us continue to push for a greener and more equitable future for Victorians. Together we can make a difference.

Want to talk Green Jobs? Contact Mark Wakeham on (03) 9341 8127 or at mark.wakeham@envict.org.au
Speaking at Environment Victoria’s Green Jobs Summit, Evan Thornley, CEO of Better Place Australia, argued that a failure to invest in green jobs, was “a failure of business leadership and a failure of creative leadership to sense opportunity.”

I DON’T KNOW about the rest of you, but I’m bored to death with the brown versus green war. It’s a false construct. It doesn’t do anything that helps the debate at all and it diverts energy away from solutions.

This forum, and the organisations that have supported it, clearly believe there is a better way and we’re here today to talk about things that are positive in terms of their impact on carbon and water, positive in terms of their impact on jobs and positive in terms of their impact on poverty.

Most of the environmental challenges we have are caused by waste. And reducing waste tends to create value for businesses. Doing the work to do that tends to create jobs, [and] it enables lower prices, which helps everybody and most particularly those in need.

The simple framework I want to put out there for you is that by making capital investments in various forms – to change equipment, and I’ll give you simple examples of what I mean – what you do is reduce ongoing running costs. And so long as the impact of the ongoing running costs is higher than the cost of the capital required to make the investment, you’re in front.

If you were an investment manager and you said, okay, so I can get my entire investment back in a couple of years and then everything after that’s gravy, you’d say that was a no-brainer investment opportunity.

Now I’m a passionate believer in the need for a carbon price and the need to price externalities properly so that we capture the full costs of what we do... but what I’m saying is there is a bit of a sense in the public debate that until we solve the carbon price issue nothing can be done about climate change. And I think that’s absolute nonsense and in particular it demonstrates a profound lack of business leadership if there aren’t people out there who think there are opportunities to create value, to delivery more than satisfactory returns on the capital they’ve raised and to create jobs.

Want to watch Evan’s full presentation and hear him talk about the exciting future of the electric car industry in Australia? Visit www.environmentvictoria.org.au for this and other presentations from the summit.
Five industries, 26,000 jobs.

Green jobs protect the Earth. That’s why Environment Victoria cares about them. In our new Green Jobs Report, we looked at five industries that have the capacity to not only deliver thousands of new Victorian jobs, but also achieve real wins for our precious Victorian environment.

CASE STUDY 1: SOLAR HOT WATER – 1590 jobs

Currently in Victoria, only 3 per cent of homes have a solar hot water supply. The industry supports about 700 jobs and generates $78 million a year. Boosting installations to 30 per cent of Victorian houses by 2020, would treble the size of the industry, reduce emissions by 1.8 million tonnes per annum and create 1,500 jobs directly and a further 90 full-time plumbing roles. The most commonly linked jobs with solar hot water are in plumbing, but jobs will also be created in administration, sales and marketing. The Green Jobs Report lists several policy options to assist growth in this key area. These include introduction of cash support, through rebates or tax incentives, compulsory phase-out of electric hot water systems and minimum building efficiency standards. The need to train ‘green plumbers’ is also fast growing traction within the industry and would form a crucial foundation to its growth.

CASE STUDY 2: RAIL – 9150 jobs

In the 1980s Victoria’s manufacturing industry used to contribute nearly 35 per cent to the state’s gross domestic product. Now, it sits at just 12 per cent. Compounding the problem, NSW and Victoria recently awarded almost $3.8 billion worth of rail contracts to overseas manufacturers. About 1,000 people are currently employed by major rolling-stock manufacturers. Another 5,000 to 10,000 are employed in supply chains. The Green Jobs Report demonstrates that this trend can be turned around. Victoria’s transport plan commits $3.6 billion in new rail rolling stock over the next four years. Manufacturing just half of this in Victoria could create 2,250 full-time jobs and another 5,400 to 6,300 full-time jobs indirectly through the supply chain. By strengthening local content requirements and agreeing to buy 40 trams a year for 10 years, Victoria could create a further 150 full-time positions and provide work for 450 extra employees through the supply chain.

CASE STUDY 3: WIND – 4000 jobs

Wind-power is the most advanced renewable energy technology in Australia. Internationally, however, Australia lags behind the rest of the world. The Australian wind industry currently employs about 2,000 people nation-wide, almost double those working in the sector in 2005. It constitutes 1,300 megawatts, a big increase from 100 megawatts in 2000. The main driver for this growth has been the federal government’s mandatory renewable energy target (MRET) scheme, which requires electricity retailers to source 20 per cent of their power from renewable energy resources by 2020. The target will increase wind power fivefold over the next seven years and generate $4 billion in investment and an extra 4,000 jobs for the industry. The longevity of these jobs is threatened, however, by MRET legislation, which will see renewable energy peak at 45,000 gigawatt hours in 2024 and taper off to 23,000 by 2030. The result will be a rush to develop wind projects, with investment coming to a halt by about 2016. Victoria currently has 1,650 megawatts of wind projects approved and a further 2,513 megawatts proposed. For projected growth rates to occur, we’ll need skilled wind-farm developers, manufacturing operations and maintenance staff.
CASE STUDY 4: ENERGY AND WATER EFFICIENCY – 9050 jobs

In 2002, the energy efficiency industry was worth $3.8 billion and employed 11,200 people. Water efficiency was valued at $3.5 billion and employed 25,000 people. With ambitious environmental policies, our Green Jobs report argues that the energy efficiency sector could grow to $190 billion and water efficiency to $35 billion by 2030. About half of Victoria’s homes currently do not have efficient shower-heads and 40 per cent of homes more than 30 years old, still have at least one single-flush toilet. About 1.2 million Victorian homes built before 2004 still have energy ratings of 2-stars or less. The potential for green jobs in these industries is enormous. We propose that a million homes be retrofitted for energy and water efficiency over the next five years. The retrofit, which will cost about $2,800 for each home, would create between 3,100 and 6,900 jobs and save more than 3 million tonnes of greenhouse gas and 32.5 billion litres of water each year. While 40 per cent of these jobs will only require semi-skilled labour, training would be essential. The Victorian plumbing industry estimates it already needs up to 4,000 new plumbers, while existing federal government policies will require at least 500 more. A rainwater harvesting program could also generate an extra 2,150 direct and indirect jobs.

CASE STUDY 5: RECYCLING – 8185 jobs

Twenty years ago, recycling barely existed. Now, Victorians recycle more than 60 per cent of their waste. Despite this growth, however, 3.9 million tonnes of waste still ends up in landfill each year. The recycling industry currently employs more than 6,500 Victorians and generates $3.6 billion of economic activity. Kerbside recycling in particular has really grown, employing nearly 1,900 people in transportation and 2060 in sorting. About 2,600 people are employed to reprocess materials. The EPA in the United States estimates that for every one job in landfill, six jobs are created if the same material is recycled. Based on these figures, we could create more than 925 new jobs in sorting if Victorians increased their recycling to 80 per cent. A further 1,175 would be created in reprocessing. And we believe these estimates are conservative. An increase in recycling would also mean that new materials such as computers and other e-waste would be recycled in greater numbers. Another 210 jobs could be created if Victoria’s e-waste recycling rate grew at the same rate as the Irish e-waste recycling program. A further 5,875 indirect jobs could also be created.

Want to know more? Download the full report from our website at www.environmentvictoria.org.au.

KEPPEL PRINCE ENGINEERING: A WIND POWER SUCCESS STORY

Keppel Prince Engineering was set up in 1979 with five employees. Initially the company was set up to undertake construction work and maintenance for the Alcoa aluminium smelter. Then, in 2000, the company had an opportunity to grow their business by manufacturing wind towers and offering tower installation services to the wind industry. Keppel Prince invested $15 million to expand and retool, and now have five factories in Portland. They employ 430 people, including 200 working on wind. Their annual turnover is $110 million, with 60 per cent of that in wind energy business.

“Keppel Prince’s wind related business could expand to 450 people and $150 million annually with the forecast growth in wind power,” says general manager Steve Garner. “If there were good policies in place to sustain that growth, we would expand further to manufacture other wind components. But that’s a big capital investment. We can’t do it if wind is going to continue with boom and bust.”

Want to know more? Download the full report from our website at www.environmentvictoria.org.au.
Care workers hop on board green jobs train

> Katelyn Fryer, Sustainable Living Project Manager

More than 420 Home and Community Care (HACC) workers from Geelong, Colac and the Surf Coast have hopped on board the green jobs train with Environment Victoria’s Home Carer Sustainability Training.

WITH BOTH ENERGY and water bills set to nearly double in the next few years, the program comes just in time for cash strapped elderly residents on a budget. The HACC workers, who are set to complete their training this month, will help seniors and their families identify ways to reduce their energy and water use, and reduce their waste by performing an audit of their homes.

“Home and community care workers traditionally support the elderly and disabled living in their own homes, helping them maintain their independence and wellbeing,” one care worker explained. “This new training will enable us now to help our clients live more sustainably and comfortably, and reduce their energy and water bills at the same time.”

The trained carers will now be able to perform basic home energy, water and waste audits in clients’ homes. Recommendations from the audits will be relayed to local councils, the clients and their families. HACC workers will recommend simple and practical steps to take, from small changes in behaviour through to retrofitting appliances in clients’ homes.

Mandatory Living Director, Annette Salkeld, said the workers would visit an estimated 5,000 clients in the three regions every year. She said the program was designed to build their skills and help them pass on their new knowledge to their clients. “Many seniors don’t have access to this kind of information, so this is another way to make sure they are getting the support they need to look after the environment,” Annette said. “It’s a double win for our seniors who are given the information they need, and for carers who have an additional work skill to add to their toolkit. And it’s a great win for the environment.”

The training is part of Environment Victoria’s Eco-Wise Action regional program and is supported by the City of Greater Geelong, the Colac Otway Shire and the Surf Coast Shire. The program is funded through the Department of Sustainability and the Environment.

WE’RE GOING TO GIPPSLAND NEXT!

Interested in taking part?
Contact Program Manager Katelyn Fryer at katelyn.fryer@envict.org.au or on (03) 9341 8102.
Multicultural leader brings love of nature to manufacturing

> Sophie Montcrieff, Program Manager, Multicultural Leaders in Sustainability

When Sophal Chim came to Australia from Cambodia as a refugee, he brought with him a love of the natural environment, work experience in environmental education and a degree in ecotourism. His journey to reclaim them has turned him into Environment Victoria’s latest environmental ambassador.

SOPHAL’S FAMILY WERE rice farmers in Cambodia. After seeing the erosion and land degradation caused by farmers cutting down trees, Sophal and his family planted trees around their home and farm. The experience shaped his concern for the environment and his burgeoning career in manufacturing here in Australia. Settling in Australia, however, hasn’t always been easy, and Sophal was disappointed to realise that his degree and work in environmental education would not be formally recognised here. His journey to set up a new career for himself in his adopted land eventually led him to Environment Victoria’s Multicultural Leaders in Sustainability (MLS) program.

After completing his English studies, Sophal started a vocational training program in manufacturing at the Adult Migrant Education Centre, and Environment Victoria’s MLS program. When he graduates in June, Sophal will take with him a greater understanding of energy, water and waste conservation issues, leadership skills and greater confidence in public speaking.

Sophal said continuing his education was an important way for him to demonstrate what he was capable of. “I have to start again and this will show I am a good team person, I am reliable and can do a good project.”

As with most participants in the program, MLS has become a crucial launching pad on the pathway to higher education and employment. Sophal is now completing a Certificate I in Active Volunteering and hopes to pass on his new knowledge to future employers.

Sophal’s long-term dream is to one day own a factory himself and implement environmental best practice standards. “I want to show future employers all the things I learnt from MLS,” Sophal said. “To show them how to do it the right way, to do good for the environment. After MLS I am confident to speak out for the environment.”

DON’T LET RENTING GET YOU DOWN

Are renters legally able to change their showerheads? How can you make your toilet waste less water if you don’t have dual flush? What do you do when your rented house has no curtains and you’re on a tight budget? Environment Victoria has the answers.

OUR NEW VICTORIAN Green Renters Guide has the answers to all these questions and more. With sections on everything from heating to fridges to getting around, it’s designed to help renters make a big dint on their environmental impact. Most of the suggestions in the guide can be implemented on a shoestring budget.

Information is also included on government rebates for renters and landlords willing to spend a little bit extra for things like insulation and solar hot water. The guide includes a checklist for people looking for a new place to rent, to make it easy to find a property which has the least environmental impact and the lowest bills. The guide, developed with help from the Tenants Union of Victoria, includes an explanation of renting law in Victoria.

So don’t let renting get you down.

DOWNLOAD YOUR GUIDE FROM www.envict.org.au/rentersguide

IT’S FREE!
Industry leaders push for green

With over 15 years professional interest in ecodesign and take-back measures, John Gertsakis can be excused for getting a little impatient at the speed with which government has embraced e-waste recycling. But, as the Executive Director of Product Stewardship Australia (PSA) will tell you, tomorrow’s consumer electronics companies are committed to a sustainable future.

GAN: What was the impetus for the formation of the PSA?
JOHN: Product Stewardship Australia was created by the Consumer Electronics Suppliers’ Association (CESA) as the implementation body for any future national electronics collection, recycling and community education scheme. [W]e represent the majority of consumer electronics suppliers in Australia and [our] activities have focused on the design, development and costing of permanent schemes that would be offered in all capital cities as well as rural and regional areas.

GAN: Why does industry consider this issue important?
JOHN: We’re eager to fulfill our corporate social and environmental responsibilities, yet also provide a take-back and recycling service to the community. The federal environment department invited CESA/PSA to develop an industry scheme in 2001, however it’s failed to deliver the enabling regulation that would allow our industry to invest millions in creating a national scheme. It’s a sad situation that government has acted so slowly, when there is clear community desire and industry commitment.

GAN: What would you like to see happen in relation to recycling e-waste in Australia?
JOHN: The single most important response I’d like to see in Australia is the development of intelligent regulation that ensures effective and efficient industry-wide involvement in take-back and recycling schemes for all electrical and electronic goods. Pilot projects, trials, and limited term collection events are chiefly PR activities that result in negligible environmental benefit and minimal product recovery. There is no doubt in my mind that smart regulation is the key to achieving permanent national e-waste recycling that is accessible to all Australians.

GAN: What is the PSA’s position on this?
JOHN: We have an unmatched situation in Australia where the consumer electronics industry acknowledges its environmental obligations and is keen to work with other stakeholders to deliver a solution. That’s why PSA has proactively collaborated with Environment Victoria, NSW Total Environment Centre, local government peak bodies, and several other stakeholders as part of designing its proposed national TV recycling scheme. A sustainable future for Australia has no place for old-fashioned industry versus environment type argument. These are yesterday’s scenarios and belong to yesterday’s companies.

GAN: What can ordinary consumers do to help the PSA achieve its aims?
JOHN: Ordinary consumers can do extra-ordinary things to bring about change. People can write to the Federal Environment Minister - the Hon Peter Garrett MP, and ask him to fast track the necessary regulation that will enable the TV industry to invest in a national TV take-back and recycling scheme. They can also write to the Victorian Environment Minister - the Hon Gavin Jennings, and ask him to be much more proactive in supporting federal regulation and a permanent national solution. At a practical level, consumers can check with their local council and see whether there is an e-waste service in their municipality. They can also quiz retailers about what recycling services they provide when new TVs are purchased. Also check with major e-waste recyclers such as Sims, MRI and the TIC Group as to what fee for service e-waste recycling they can offer.
THE WEBSITE, ‘REBORN: The Afterlife for E-Waste’, and our accompanying blog is stacked with information about e-waste and what you can do to help us stop it from going to landfill. With your help, we’re filling up the inboxes of Peter Garrett and the state environment ministers and letting them know that the community wants their electronic waste recycled. Currently, less than 5 per cent of our old televisions, computers and other electronic equipment are recycled in Australia. It’s been estimated that we’ve sent over 168 million items of e-waste to landfill. Not only is e-waste full of toxins that have no place being in the ground, but it’s also full of embodied energy, water and other resources that we really need. These should be recycled to help us reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and lighten our ecological footprint. Industry is already on board with this one, so the only hurdle in the way of a national e-waste recycling scheme is the government. Product Stewardship Australia (PSA), who represent brands such as Sony, Panasonic, Sharp and Sanyo, have been calling for regulations for a long time to make sure that all our electronics companies are environmentally responsible. (You can read more about them in our interview with Executive Director, John Gertzakis on page 11). And they’ve been joined by the Australian Information Industry Association (AIIA), the major representative body for the IT industry, who signed a compact agreeing that the responsibility for managing e-waste should lie primarily with manufacturers. In our recent report, Victoria, the Green Jobs State (see pages 8-9), we estimate that over 210 new jobs could be created if an e-waste recycling scheme was introduced. Environment ministers at their meeting in Hobart in late May resolved to release a consultation paper and consider a final proposal when they next meet in November 2009. Speaking afterwards, Peter Garret said that is was his expectation that “we will have good, positive and final actions to be taken by the end of the year on computers, televisions and the like.” We welcome these moves and look forward to some concrete decisions later in the year. In the meantime, we’ll continue campaigning on the issue and remind ministers that industry is on side, the community is on side and there are jobs in it.” Visit www.reborn.org.au today and help us convince them that this one is a ‘no-brainer’.

Environment Victoria has partnered with the Total Environment Centre in NSW, on a national online campaign to get e-waste recycling introduced in Australia.

> Fraser Brindley, Production & Consumption Campaigner

STICK IT ON THE NATURE STRIP

Are you sick of seeing old TVs, computers and other e-waste dumped on the nature strip? We’ve designed a sticker to help you spread the word. Send your address to oldtv@envict.org.au and we’ll post out some stickers for you to plaster that e-waste with.
Regional Programs

Next stop: Gippsland

> Annette Salkeld, Sustainable Living Director

One of Environment Victoria’s flagship programs, the Regional Sustainable Living program is about to enter its fourth and final year.

After a successful year working in the Corangamite and Geelong region, we’re picking up and moving over to central Gippsland. It’s an exciting move and one that will see our program working closely with the community, local councils and community organisations, and the Australian Conservation Foundation, our program partner. We’ll continue to focus on programs that engage the community in ways to live more sustainably in the home, in their community and in the workplace. We’ll also be drawing on the community’s expertise for relevant and inspiring ways to do this.

Our experience shows that working together with the community fosters significant reductions in the use of energy, water and the production of waste. It also saves money and builds workplace skills. And, as with previous programs, we’ll be focusing on families, senior citizens and young people.

We’ll launch our central Gippsland program at a public meeting in early July 2009 (check our website for the date). We are inviting members of local environment and sustainability groups, community organisations, local and state government representatives, business and members of the community to come along. Out of this broader group, we’ll be recruiting a steering committee to shape how the program unfolds. Already, we’ve seen a real interest from people in the region and we look forward to building a great community program.

The Regional Sustainable Living program is supported by the Department of Sustainability and Environment. If you want to find out more about how you can get involved, contact Annette Salkeld at annette.salkeld@envict.org.au or on (03) 9341 8118.

Event

GKP Storylines DVD launched

> Verity McLucas, Healthy Rivers Campaign

What could a farmer, forester, conservationist, saw miller, indigenous elder, art teacher, apiarist, university student and pilot have in common?

They’ve all taken part in Environment Victoria’s Gunbower-Koondrook-Perricoota (GKP) Storylines project. Following the successful Hattah Lakes Storylines project, GKP Storylines is an initiative of our Healthy River’s campaign, made possible with funding from the Murray-Darling Basin Authority. The project brought together a diverse group of people for a four-day workshop at Bendigo TAFE, to record the stories of their personal connection to the iconic Murray River wetland forests of GKP.

Together, these ten digital stories testify to the rich social and cultural values of the site and present compelling arguments for why it must be protected and restored.

The DVD of the stories will be screening locally at the Barham RSL on Tuesday, 23 June 2009 at 6.00pm. The screenings will be followed by a cocktail function and are free and open to all. RSVP is essential, however, so get in quickly.

Contact Verity McLucas at verity.mclucas@envict.org.au or on (03) 9341 8109 to book your spot.

Watch our Hattah Lakes storylines online at www.environmentvictoria.org.au.
WE URGENTLY NEED YOUR HELP!

The state government has just announced that it is investigating taking even more water from the Yarra and Thomson Rivers! Please join us today in the fight for our rivers. Please don’t delay. Our beloved rivers are in trouble and it’s up to us to protect them.

YES! I WANT TO HELP ENVIRONMENT VICTORIA PROTECT OUR PRECIOUS RIVERS! HERE IS MY TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION OF:

☐ $50  ☐ $100  ☐ $200  ☐ My own amount $ ________________

Please find enclosed a: ☐ Cheque or ☐ Money Order (payable to Environment Victoria INC.)

Or please debit this card: ☐ Visa  ☐ Mastercard  ☐ Amex

Cardholder’s name: _____________________________________________ Expiry date: __ __ / __ __

Signature: _____________________________________________________

Card number: __ | __ | __ | __ | __ | __ | __ | __ | __ | __ | __ | __ | __ | __ | __ | __ | __ | __ | __ |

YOUR NAME: __________________________________________________

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(AH)

☐ I’d like to receive Green Action News by email
You've cared about the environment all your life.

Protect the things that are important to you with a bequest to Environment Victoria.

By leaving a gift to Environment Victoria in your will, you can make sure that Victoria’s natural environment is protected well beyond your lifetime and that your voice is heard on the issues most important to you. Your precious gift will help Environment Victoria protect our natural world on your behalf and take a strong stance on behalf of the environment.

For more information on how you can leave a bequest to Environment Victoria, please contact Kelly O'Shanassy on (03) 9341 8119 or visit us at www.environmentvictoria.org.au.