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## ABRI urges Environment Ministers to support battery stewardship

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The Australian Battery Recycling Initiative (ABRI) has called on Environment Minister Greg Hunt and all state and territory Ministers to make a strong commitment to battery stewardship when they meet in Melbourne on 15 July. Broad stakeholder support for a national collection and recycling scheme for handheld batteries has reached an all-time high.

The ministers are meeting to consider a recommendation to continue negotiations with industry on a voluntary stewardship scheme for the more than 400 million handheld batteries used in Australia each year.

While ABRI supports continued discussions it also urges Ministers to allow no more than a 6 month period in which to reach agreement. ABRI CEO Helen Lewis says, *“We need to see more engagement and a stronger commitment to battery stewardship from leading manufacturers including Energizer and Duracell. Without that commitment a voluntary program will not succeed and there has been minimal support from these manufacturers to date.”*

With a recycling rate of only 3% for handheld batteries, Australia lags well behind most developed countries. Legislation that requires manufacturers to take responsibility for battery recycling is already in place in the European Union, Japan, Taiwan, several Canadian provinces and many states in the US. In Switzerland the recycling rate is over 70%.

In 2014 Planet Ark’s [RecyclingNearYou](#) website received more than 117,000 queries from the public looking to recycle batteries, an increase of 8% compared to the previous year. Australians are committed recyclers and are looking for a convenient solution for handheld batteries. Manufacturers and brands are perfectly placed to meet growing consumer demand for consumer friendly recycling solutions, including easy-to-find drop-off locations.

*“Under the current situation state governments, councils, some retailers and consumers are taking responsibility for, and covering the cost of, recycling batteries,”* says Lewis. *“The big manufacturers should be playing their part too”.*

Minister Hunt recently announced important changes to the National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme to boost the recycling rate to 50% and to improve environmental and safety standards. *“The logical next step is to introduce an industry-funded national recycling scheme for handheld batteries. This will remove hazardous materials from landfill including lead, cadmium and mercury, and ensure that other valuable materials are reused rather than thrown away,”* says Lewis.

*“With the support of all Environment Ministers, work could commence immediately on the design of a regulatory model that would address industry concerns about potential free-riders. This could be achieved by either extending the scope of the TV and computer scheme to include batteries and other consumer electronics, or through stand-alone regulations.”*

Recycling solutions from the big battery manufacturers will be welcomed and rewarded by consumers, who now expect such companies to be responsible corporate citizens.

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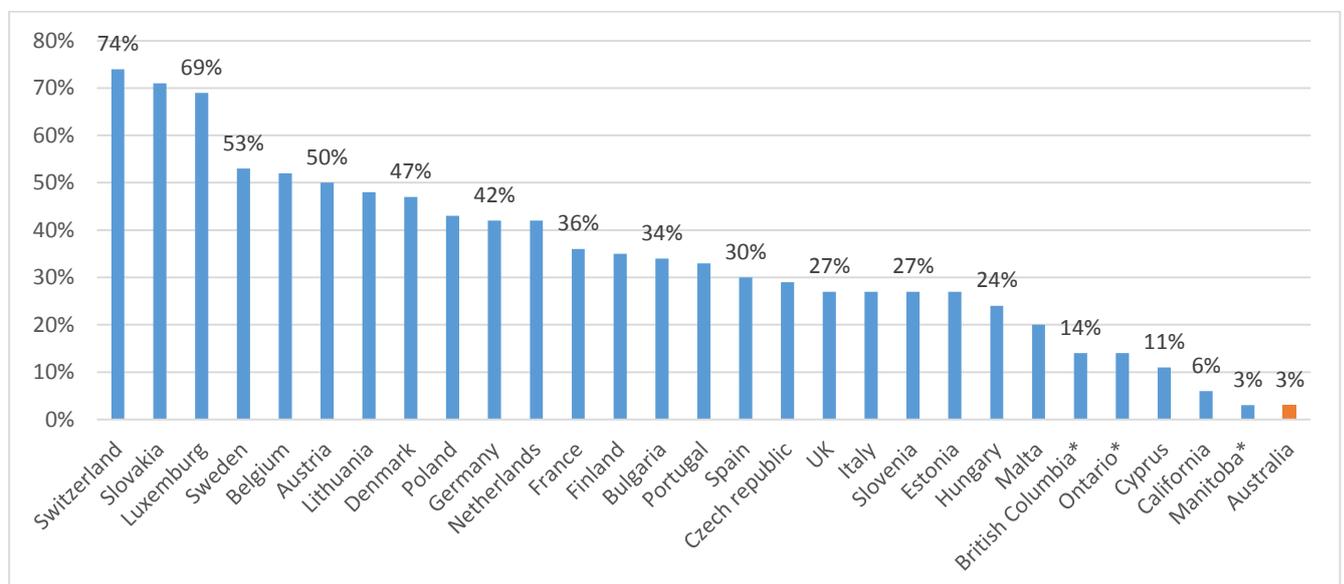


## About ABRI

The Australian Battery Recycling Initiative (ABRI) has been formed by a group of battery manufacturers, recyclers, retailers, government bodies and environment groups to promote the collection, recycling and safe disposal of all batteries. ABRI supports the principle of product stewardship: that responsibility for environmental management of products, including their recovery at end of life, is shared by organisations at every stage of the product life cycle. ABRI members include consumer electronics manufacturers, battery brand owners, distributors, government agencies and environment groups

## International benchmark data

*Recycling rates for handheld batteries in selected countries and provinces, 2011 or 2012*



\* The rate shown for these jurisdictions is for single use batteries only. Note: time periods and methodologies vary between jurisdictions, so data may not be exactly comparable.