

Recycling e-waste

my business

MICHELLE MORTON

E-CYCLE Recovery was established to deal with the ever-increasing problem of electronic and electrical waste (alias e-waste).

In its first nine months of operation, the South Australian recycling company has collected more than 120 tonnes of old computers, television sets, printers and other electronic equipment.

It was also the recipient of a 2006 City of West Torrens business environment award. I founded the business because I was frustrated seeing electronic items out on the kerb, destined to become landfill.

I knew there must be a better solution.

It was only after further research that I learned these items were full of toxic materials that could leach into surrounding soil and groundwater systems causing health and environmental problems.

I also found that amid all this talk about sustainability, it was madness to be throwing away precious non-renewable resources such as metal, plastic and glass.

All can be recycled into new products.

As an ethical and socially responsible recycler, E-Cycle Recovery strives for the highest possible environmental outcome.

Recycling most things with a plug or circuit board, we are able to offer recycling services, secure destruction, detailed reporting and on-site solutions, such as lockable containers for the collection of data-bearing media.

We recycle up to 97 per cent of each item we receive. This achievement, however, is labour-intensive.

Materials such as glass, mercury, batteries and wood must be forwarded on, at a charge, for environmentally sound recycling. Therefore, to provide this service, a small fee is charged.

E-CYCLE RECOVERY

■ **Formed:** March, 2006.

■ **Role:** An ethical and socially responsible electronic recycler striving for the highest possible environmental outcome.

■ **Awards:** 2006 City of West Torrens business environment award for commitment to electronic waste recovery and recycling.

■ **Industry connections:** First Australian electronic-recycling company to become a member of the International Association of Electronic Recyclers.

Our biggest challenge is educating the marketplace that true recycling costs money. Somebody always pays. If it is not you and can future generations having to bear the expense of cleaning up contaminated land and water.

In Australia, free electronic waste-recycling services generally sell to developing countries where no environmental standards exist.

Alternatively, they only keep the parts that give them a return.

The most toxic and expensive parts to dispose of are usually dumped.

The City of Onkaparinga, in pursuit of its goals to provide responsible leadership and reduce environmental harm, sponsored a free e-waste collection day for its residents. During the two-day event, an astonishing 28,000kg of electronic waste was collected.

With e-waste accounting for three times the amount of regular waste, E-Cycle Recovery is well positioned to continue its growth as a truly ethical e-waste recycler.

□ Michelle Morton is the director of E-Cycle Recovery.



CLEANER WORLD: Michelle Morton with computer parts to recycle. Picture: BEN MACMAHON