



# BATTERY STEWARDSHIP POLICY



## The solution is in our hands

### Our Policy

This policy confirms that the Australian Battery Recycling Initiative is in full support of actions to ensure that a national product stewardship scheme for batteries is established as a matter of priority.

### Our commitment

We are uniquely situated to transform this problematic waste stream into a success story for this government and for Australia. Now is the time to move from discussion to action on the ground.

Our commitment is to provide pro-active support for a scheme including:

- a scope that covers ALL batteries subject to market failure<sup>1</sup>
- a design that addresses market failures, currently considered to the high cost of collection, sorting, with the acknowledgement that in future commodity pricing may fall below the cost of recovery which may result in new market failures
- a voluntary mechanism to minimise the cost of implementation
- changes to the Product Stewardship Act to require importers of problematic wastes such as batteries either join a voluntary scheme, establish their own, or pay a fee 4 times the voluntary levy amount to the government
- increased employment and economic opportunities that would result from a national scheme
- increased onshore processing to enhance Australia's waste management security and reduce exposure to changes in international willingness to receive waste batteries
- ongoing research in the form of stocks and flows, and best practices for collection, transport, storage, handling, and recycling
- a strong financial base to ensure stability and continuity of rebates
- transparent scheme operation with a strong audit trail to assure industry credibility.

### Responsibilities

ABRI executive and members will support and promote this policy.

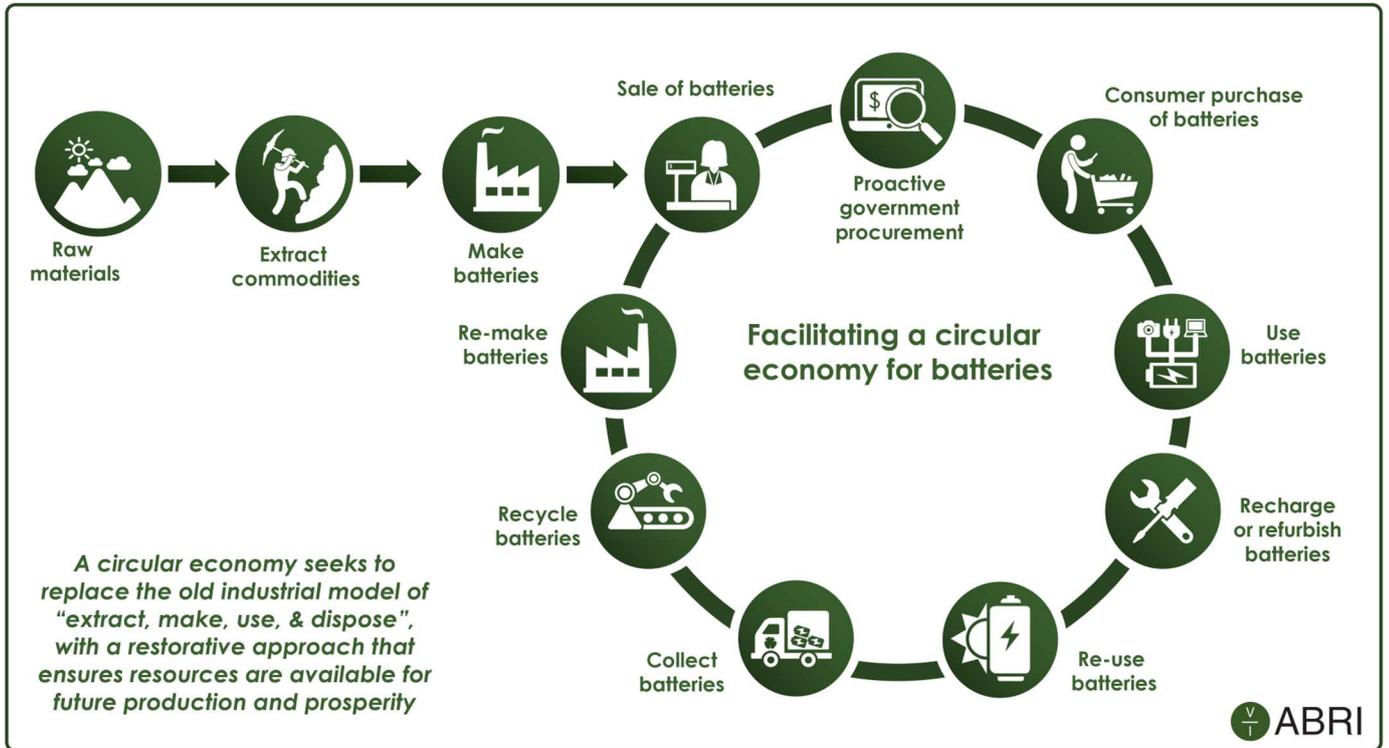
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<sup>1</sup> Lead acid batteries are currently being collected at a very high rate and as such as not proposed for inclusion in a scheme at this time.



## Our vision

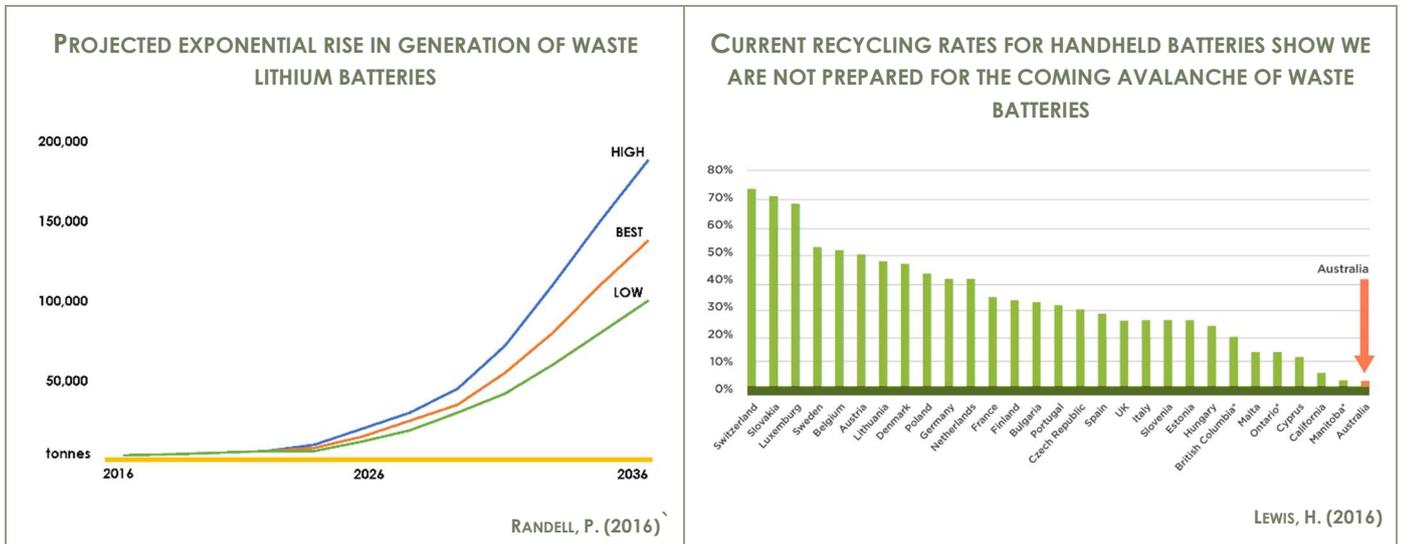
The Australian Battery Recycling Initiative has recently refined its mission to 'facilitate a circular economy for batteries in Australia'. ABRI considers circular economy to be a fundamental tenant of successful battery stewardship in Australia.



## Need for a battery stewardship scheme

Australians are becoming increasingly reliant on batteries in small handheld devices, and for electric vehicles and renewable energy systems. By 2036 it is projected we will generate 137,000 - 186,000 tonnes of waste lithium batteries each year – the weight of the opera house!

In comparison to other OECD countries, our management practices for this waste stream are very poor, with current recycling rate hovering around 3% for handheld batteries. We are poised to have a serious waste issue unless we take a coordinated approach to national stewardship.





## What are the risks?

<p><b>COMMUNITY SAFETY</b></p> <p>Perhaps the biggest risk of the do-nothing option is community safety. Improper disposal of batteries can lead to leaching of toxins and metals into soil, groundwater contamination and release into atmosphere through a high risk of fire.</p> <p>The loss of a home is extremely serious, but the impact of a landfill fire affects many more lives with the release of dioxins and other toxins into the atmosphere.</p>	<p><b>LOSS OF RESOURCES</b></p> <p>Batteries are mostly comprised of metals &amp; plastic.</p> <p>Disposal to landfill means these resources are locked up from further use.</p> <p>In a circular economy, we would see valuable resources used again, capturing metals &amp; reducing the need for extraction of raw materials.</p>	<p><b>EXPORT LIABILITY</b></p> <p>Shipping lines are starting to restrict shipping of batteries due to fire risk.</p> <p>In recent years port fires caused by batteries have raised alarm bells. The trend is to disallow export, reducing access to overseas solutions.</p> <p>Local certainty and investment is needed to secure onshore solutions.</p>
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## What are the opportunities?

<p><b>PROVEN APPROACH</b></p> <p>Product Stewardship in Australia is delivering results for products such as computers and televisions, and mobile phones.</p> <p>Similar schemes have been operating Europe since 1991 and more recently in the US.</p> <p>We can build on the experience of these schemes to create an effective and efficient scheme for batteries.</p>	<p><b>WE HAVE CAPABILITY</b></p> <p>Australia recycles more than 90% of lead acid batteries.</p> <p>This has created expertise &amp; infrastructure we can draw on for other types of batteries.</p> <p>We can also learn from the experience of some retailers, state governments, and councils who provide drop off facilities for batteries.</p>	<p><b>LOCAL INVESTMENT</b></p> <p>Shipping lines are beginning to restrict shipping of batteries due to the fire risk.</p> <p>If this continues as expected, exporting the problem will not be an option.</p> <p>A battery stewardship scheme would see investment in local solutions and green jobs.</p>
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## Importance of a national scheme

<p><b>DELIVERING SAFETY</b></p> <p>Experience in other jurisdictions shows a centralised national scheme is more successful in creating consistent processes necessary for a safe and effective recovery process.</p> <p>It also means recovery is focused not only batteries with a high resource recovery value (lead acid), but also problematic batteries such as lithium.</p>	<p><b>EFFECTIVE &amp; EFFICIENT</b></p> <p>For battery brand owners, a national approach will create a level playing field and will be easier to navigate, report and show success.</p> <p>A well-designed national scheme can also foster industry development in the recycling sector, rather than creating a race to the bottom as has occurred in other jurisdictions.</p>	<p><b>COORDINATED SUCCESS</b></p> <p>A national network with scheme awareness is central to success.</p> <p>A strong single brand and awareness program will create a culture of battery recovery in our day to day habits.</p> <p>Australian's have shown they want to recycle batteries, but they need to know where to take them.</p> <p>A national scheme can deliver successful outcomes.</p>
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## History

Much has been achieved over recent times and particularly in the past year as shown in the timeline below.

<b>2013</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Handheld batteries under 2kgs listed as a priority product under the Product Stewardship Act (PSA)</b></li> </ul>
<b>2014</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Handheld batteries under 5kgs listed as a priority product under the PSA<sup>2</sup></b></li> <li>▪ Industry working group established</li> </ul>
<b>2016</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>All batteries including large storage batteries listed as priority products under the PSA</b></li> <li>▪ Battery collection trials to pilot collection and marketing models</li> </ul>
<b>2017</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ MEMs call for feasibility study of regulatory options</li> <li>▪ <b>All batteries and photovoltaic systems listed as a priority product under the PSA</b></li> <li>▪ Financial Options Study conducted to evaluate scheme costs</li> </ul>
<b>2018</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consultation draft scheme prepared for consultation with the public</li> <li>▪ Battery Stewardship Council established</li> <li>▪ Draft scheme design prepared for consultation with BSC members</li> <li>▪ <b>The Meeting of Environment Ministers (MEMs) call to fast track battery stewardship scheme</b></li> <li>▪ Preliminary feasibility study into regulatory options for a national stewardship scheme</li> <li>▪ A review of stewardship case studies to identify strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>▪ <b>The Meeting of Environment Ministers:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Endorses all batteries in scope</b> and approves funding of the Battery Stewardship Council to refine the scheme design and apply to the Australian Consumer and Competition Commission for authorisation of the scheme</li> <li>▪ Agrees for the Queensland Department of Environment and Science to continue to <b>lead the development</b> of a national voluntary scheme <b>on behalf of all jurisdictions.</b></li> <li>▪ That the scheme proposed by the Battery Stewardship Council is <b>a priority under the National Waste Policy.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Document control

Date	Prepared by	Changes	Approval
<b>5th June 2019</b>	Libby Chaplin	Original	
<b>24th June 2019</b>	Libby Chaplin	Updated with comments to be resolved at the General Meeting	
<b>7 October 2019</b>	Libby Chaplin	Updated with slight amendment to risk profile	General Meeting September 2019
<b>26 March 2020</b>	Libby Chaplin	Updated to include requirement for strong financial basis and transparency.	AGM 2020

<sup>2</sup> PSA = Product Stewardship Act, 2011