



Turning the Toxic Tide



Humans heart smart phones! We also like laptops, tablets, TVs and toys that beep. But there's no question that this stuff is seriously toxic in the manufacturing and disposal stages - so how can we protect our planet from our technology?

NZs Fastest Growing Waste Stream

Electronics manufacturing is the world's fastest growing industry - and e-waste is the fastest growing and most toxic waste stream in New Zealand - and globally.

Electronic consumer products are made with highly dangerous materials including lead, mercury, arsenic, and bromide flame retardants, to name but a few. In the landfill, these toxins leach into the soil and water, contaminating our environment, ourselves, and many future generations of humans and wildlife.

In New Zealand, we generate around 80,000 tonnes of e-waste every year - and around the world the volume of electronic waste is predicted to increase by 100% in only 10 years, so we need to get our disposal methods sorted, now.



Old phones being collected for recycling.

Getting Greener

A few brands are making commendable steps towards reducing or eliminating some toxins but, so far, only from specific models. We can make a stand for the environment, and people working in the manufacturing and disposal sectors, by buying greener products when we upgrade at home and at work.

Read Greenpeace's guide to greener electronics here:

<http://tiny.cc/ntpdex>



What's In Your Gadget?

Circuit boards	Switches & flat screens	Printed circuit boards & plastic cables	Batteries	Mobile phones	Old computer and TVs
Lead, cadmium	Mercury	Brominated flame-retardants	Lithium, cadmium, lead, cobalt, nickle	Arsenic, copper, beryllium, lead, zinc, gold	Lead oxide, barium



A child working at the world's largest e-waste dump, in Ghana.

Online Resources

The animated story of consumer electronics

<http://storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of-electronics/>

Info on New Zealand's e-waste recycling

www.e-cycle.co.nz/recycling/how-we-recycle/

Photo-essays on the world's worst e-waste dumps

<http://tiny.cc/038bex>

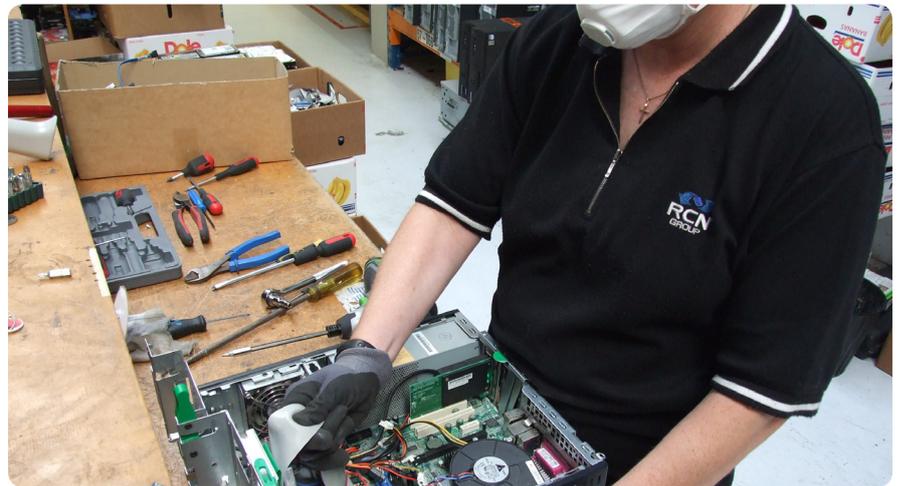
<http://tiny.cc/998bex>

Powerful doco on the effect of bromide in electronics

<http://tiny.cc/rw8bex>

How is NZ's E-waste Recycled?

Accredited New Zealand recyclers separate e-waste into its component parts. Some glass and metals are processed here, but most materials are exported under a government permit to sophisticated recycling plants in Singapore, Japan and Australia. International demand for recovered materials affects how easily they can be recycled. Currently, there is no demand for bromide-treated plastics so, despite their toxicity, they are being landfilled. For current information on what can be recycled, contact our Sustainability Advisors.



RCN Recyclers in Seaview, NZ

Five Ideas for Greener Electronics

Recycling e-waste should be a last resort. Before buying new (and dispensing with old), consider whether you really need that particular product. It's often possible to replace a part, install more memory, or even make your own repairs. Donate old computers or other working goods to organisations that can pass them on to charities. Write the final email on your old phone or computer to its manufacturer, urging them to take full responsibility for the life cycle of their products! When your products are beyond help, make sure they're recycled by an accredited company. Use Greenpeace's guide to help you support better manufacturing practices.

Places to Recycle and Repair Your Electronics

Sustainability Trust	Drop off point for e-waste recycling	www.sustaintrust.org.nz/e-cycle
RCN	E-waste recycler	www.e-cycle.co.nz
PB Electronics	Parts and repairs	www.pbtech.co.nz
DonateNZ	Donate used equipment	www.donatenz.co.nz
Freecycle	Give & receive things for free, online.	www.nz.freecycle.org

www.sustaintrust.org.nz

Phone: 0508 78 78 24 Fax: 04 385 0501 Email: advice@sustaintrust.org.nz

2 Forresters Lane, Te Aro, Wellington 6011



TIP
 Improve your computer speed with more memory and a newer hard drive.
 It's cheap, easy, and effective!