



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

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RECYCLING SCHEME FOR MERCURY-CONTAINING LAMPS

The Australian Government today initiated a scheme to establish partnerships with industry to increase recycling of mercury containing lamps.

“I am pleased to announce this project in addition to the raft of product stewardship measures supported today by the Environment Protection and Heritage Council,” said Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, Peter Garrett. “With ministers’ commitment to a new national waste policy by the end of the year, we are making real progress in tackling this national challenge.

“The Fluoro-cycle scheme addresses one of the outstanding issues relating to the use of energy-saving fluorescent lamps, namely how to dispose of them safely at the end of their lifespan.

“It is now commonly understood that the fluorescent lamps contain a small amount of mercury, and while this amounts to no more than a pen tip per lamp, it is important that we look at ways to dispose of it responsibly, particularly at the commercial level.

“This new scheme targets this end of the spectrum – the commercial, high-use sector. More than 90% of all lighting waste is sourced from commercial and public lighting. It is here that increased recycling activity will have the most impact from both an environmental as well as economic point of view. It will build on considerable existing infrastructure as well as some individual but fragmented activities by companies to recycle their waste lamps.”

With federal funding of up to \$500,000, the scheme will be delivered jointly by the Australian Government and the Lighting Council Australia in collaboration with the Property Council of Australia, the Facility Management Association of Australia, the Australian Council of Recyclers, the Australian Local Government Association and other key bodies.

The voluntary scheme will target key generators of waste lamps through an outreach program to recruit them to the scheme and establish suitable recycling arrangements.

It is anticipated that this scheme will be extended to compact fluorescent lamps from households, subject to the outcomes of this commercial trial.