

Australia leads the world in newspaper recycling

Australia remains the world leader in newspaper recycling, reaching a new peak of 75.4 per cent recovery of all newsprint consumed in 2005, according to statistics released by the Publishers National Environment Bureau (PNEB) today.

By comparison, the 2005 newspaper recovery rate for the United States of America, produced by the US Paper Industry Association Council, whose members include the American Forests and Paper Association and the Newspaper Association of America was 69.9 per cent.

The Australian statistics are prepared for the PNEB by the News Limited Environmental Secretariat which has been tracking newspaper recovery rates for the bureau since 1990.

Recovery of old newspapers rose by three per cent over 2004 (574,976 to 592,485 tonnes), outstripping consumption of newsprint which rose 1.8 per cent (785,938 tonnes in 2005).

Frank Kelett, PNEB Executive Director, said “This is an outstanding result for Australian local kerbside recycling systems which are the world’s best in terms of participation and yield, backed by publishers making sure that all press waste and returns goes to recycling instead of landfill.”

“Australia’s newsprint producer, Norske Skog Australasia, supports the market for old newspapers by purchasing 100,000 tonnes of old newspaper, as well as 60,000 tonnes of old magazines, for de-inking to go into news newsprint,” Mr Kelett said. “The company has just finished a \$130 million upgrade to its paper making mill at Albury and this included the expansion of the de-inking plant to accept another 20,000 tonnes giving a total capacity of 185,000 tonnes of old newspapers and magazines each year.

“This means Australian-made newsprint contains an average of 30 per cent recycled fibre mixed with raw wood pulp made from excess materials after plantations have been harvested for the timber and construction industry. Forests are not ‘destroyed’ to make newsprint.

“Research tells us that almost seven percent of newspaper is lost to recycling through use in fire lighting, in weed mats, paint drop sheets and archiving so the actual amount recycled is more than 80 per cent.”

The State figures show Victoria again at the top with 80.8 per cent recovered newspaper followed closely by NSW on 79.4 then South Australia on 71.5 per cent.

See full statistics