

MEDIA RELEASE

New National Recycling Agreement

7 July 2000. Participants in the Australian publishing industry today announced a new landmark agreement on recycling.

Agreement has been reached between the publishing industry and Federal and State Governments, under the auspices of the Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council (ANZECC), for an extension to the Industry Waste Reduction Agreement for publication paper recycling.

This means a third term for this highly successful voluntary agreement between Industry and Government and clearly demonstrates that voluntary agreements between stakeholders can deliver better outcomes than legislated solutions.

The new Agreement runs from January 2001 to December 2005 and targets a 74% recycling rate for old newspapers by the end of the plan period. The industry partners in the Agreement will themselves take 250,000 tonnes of old newspapers out of the waste stream each year.

The industry partners in the Agreement are the Publishers National Environment Bureau (PNEB) and Fletcher Challenge Paper, the major newsprint producer in Australasia.

Chairman of the PNEB, Mr Walter Kommer, expressed his delight with the new Agreement and noted that things have come a long way since the first voluntary agreement was signed in 1991.

"We started with a recycling rate of 28% at the beginning of 1990. In 1999 we achieved a rate of almost 70%, which is a truly world class performance.

"This excellent result could not have been achieved without the commitment of all stakeholders to the recycling process and the construction of a major recycling facility at Albury by Fletcher Challenge Paper.

"The community has embraced the concept of recycling and this is reflected in the support offered by local councils through their paper collection systems. Indeed there has been an open and frank dialogue with all spheres of Government and their respective environmental divisions or agencies.

"Above all, we must thank all Australians. Without their commitment and support such an outstanding result would not have been possible", Mr Kommer said.

Concurrent with the signing of the new Agreement is the release of the Waste Report for 1999. The Report shows that improved recycling performance in most States boosted newsprint recovery nationally from 64.2% in 1998 to 69.8% in 1999. With this performance Australia has surpassed the recycling rate of the USA for the first time, a remarkable achievement.

"Australia has hit the front because of the tremendous co-operation between Government, publishers, Fletcher Challenge Paper and most importantly the practical support at the kerbside from the community", said PNEB Director, Dick Parrott.

"There has been a significant capital investment by industry and Local Government in new wastepaper collection, transport and processing facilities. This investment will help maintain and enhance our performance into the future".

While delighted with the new high level performance, Mr Parrott said a maturing market for wastepaper, and in particular newsprint, meant that a concerted and committed effort by all parties was still needed to keep the national newsprint recovery rate above 70%.

"It has taken a concerted effort by all stakeholders to achieve the results so far and this effort and commitment must continue. For our part, Australia's publishers are committed to doing all that we can to ensure the continuing success of paper recycling", Mr Parrott said

Copies of both the new ANZECC Agreement and the 1999 Waste Report can be obtained from the PNEB by calling 02 9262 1164.

Further Information

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