



*Media Release*

*Embargoed until 7 November 2011*

### **Batteries prove a recycling challenge for households and businesses**

With toxic and valuable resources either polluting the environment or going to waste, National Recycling Week (November 7-13) is a timely reminder that Australians could be doing better.

Over 135,000 car batteries get sent to landfill each year, despite being readily recyclable through hundreds of collection locations nationwide, according to research by The Australian Battery Recycling Initiative (ABRI).

Another 378,000 car batteries are stockpiled in places like the household garages. Without proper storage and processing, the potentially harmful materials inside lead acid batteries, such as sulphuric acid, can leak out and make their way into the land and waterways.

Aussie households buy more than 7.6 million lead acid batteries each year, however more than 6.7 million of these or 81,000 tonnes reach their end of life.

Lead acid batteries include smaller batteries used in things like security alarms and portable tools, as well as car batteries. Weighing in at over 86,000 tonnes, the total weight of all these lead acid batteries is about the same as 195 Boeing 747s.

Batteries in general are the most common form of hazardous waste disposed of by Australian households. By weight, lead acid batteries make up 91% of all the batteries Australians dispose of.

Planet Ark has received over 80 enquires a day about what to do with household batteries over the last 12 months on its [RecyclingNearYou.com.au](http://RecyclingNearYou.com.au) website and hotline.

“We are good recyclers of newspapers, aluminium cans and milk and juice cartons, however, we struggle when it comes to batteries,” says Planet Ark’s Manager of Recycling Programs, Janet Sparrow. “It’s not difficult, it just takes a few minutes to find your nearest collection point. In addition to reducing potential environmental damage, battery recycling also recovers valuable resources.”

Through the recycling process the various components of lead acid batteries are recoverable to 96%. The lead plates are restored back to new battery standards, the hard plastic casing can be melted and extruded to produce plastic pellets and the acid is neutralised and discharged.

The recycling rate of lead acid batteries (car batteries) is as high as 87% because of a well-established infrastructure for the collection and processing of car batteries, driven by the commercial value of lead.

A national network of Battery Recycling Centres has been established by **Century Yuasa** for the environmentally responsible collection and recycling of used lead-acid batteries. In addition, lead acid batteries of all types can be recycled through **Battery World** stores.

Some states and councils provide Household Hazardous Waste or Chemical Collection programs that take used lead acid batteries for recycling.

Planet Ark's own research from *The Battery Buzz II LAB Research Report* released today focused on human behaviour in relation to recycling, and found that 46% of people agreed that individuals have the most responsibility for recycling.

Visit the Battery Buzz page on the RecyclingWeek.PlanetArk.org website or call the **National Recycling Hotline on 1300 733 712** for more details about batteries or further information about any of Planet Ark's National Recycling Week initiatives.

Planet Ark founded National Recycling Week as a community education campaign in 1996, with the aim of bringing a national focus to recycling and minimising waste at home, at work and in the community.

National Recycling Week is kindly supported by Major Sponsor **Tetra Pak** and Supporting Sponsors **The Aluminium Can Group, Battery World, Century Yuasa**, and **'Cartridges 4 Planet Ark'**.

- Ends -

**The Australian Battery Recycling Initiative (ABRI) has been formed by a group of battery manufacturers, recyclers, government bodies and environment groups to promote the collection, recycling and safe disposal of the full range of batteries. In 2010 ABRI published comprehensive research about battery consumption, recycling and disposal in Australia.**

**The Battery Buzz II Lead Acid Battery Research Report, is an independent study commissioned by Planet Ark in partnership with Battery World and Century Yuasa in 2011. It was conducted by Pollinate, a specialist communications research company.**

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