



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

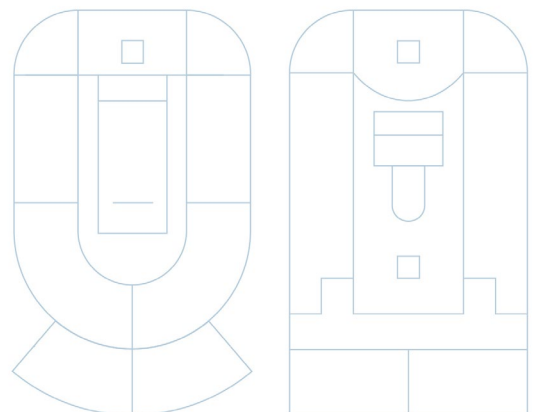
Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety (Staysafe)

Electric and hybrid vehicle batteries

Supplementary questions

Association for the Battery Recycling Industry

1. Every day, thousands of lithium batteries are disposed of in general waste. These batteries have a huge risk of being damaged by compaction or impact. What measures can be put in place to reduce and hopefully eliminate the high number of lithium batteries being improperly disposed of?



Answer to the supplementary question:

All levels of government, the waste and recycling sector, and manufacturers are taking action on this issue. Measures already in place include:

- B-cycle, Australia's battery stewardship scheme for end of life management of small loose, consumer batteries
- Stewardship schemes for some electronic and phone products
- Communications campaigns to advise households about safe disposal of batteries
- Corporate programs to take back electronic and other products containing batteries
- Specialised search engines for households to search for options to safely dispose of end of life battery
- Funding for community recycling centres

However, accelerated and further action is needed to deliver these outcomes:

- safety for everyone
- minimise costs including damage to waste infrastructure
- ease and convenience for households and businesses
- recovery of the materials within the batteries for reuse in new batteries and other products

Accelerated action is needed due to:

- increased fire events and risks and consequent costs to the waste and recycling sector from incorrect battery disposal;
- prevent environmental damage from batteries leaking chemicals into the environment;
 - manage the growing volume of lithium batteries coming to end of life;
- reduce complexity around the multitude of pathways for end of life disposal due to multitude of different lithium battery types and products using these batteries;
- increase consumer awareness around which products have batteries and how to dispose of them safely; and
- limited and lack of convenient options for safe disposal of all loose batteries and products containing batteries especially embedded batteries. That is there are gaps in the collection network infrastructure and it is costly to manage.

It will take a cross government coordinated program of measures to quickly increase diversion rates of consumer (household and commercial) batteries from wastestreams. This needs to happen in collaboration with all sectors across the battery value chain. Measures cannot be implemented in isolation.

For households and commercial businesses focus should include:

- Convenience of drop off locations – Given existing initiatives, identification of the gaps in the collection network should be a high priority and then implementing solutions to address these gaps. This should include making it safe and convenient to dispose of batteries and products with batteries.
- Providing safe and convenient locations for disposal of damaged batteries.
- Ongoing education to support cultural change to improve community practices for safe handling of batteries during their life and at end of life.
- Bans on batteries to landfill. However, as mentioned above this needs to be supported by convenient alternatives for safely recycling their end of life batteries.

- Accelerating adoption of best practice producer responsibility practices such as take back programs and funding of stewardship initiatives.
- Funding for containers to support safe drop off and collection as well as containers for safe end of life button battery collection.

Concurrently, there is an urgent need for upscaling of Australia's lithium battery recycling capability to manage increased lithium battery collection rates. A detailed list of priority actions is available at

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Climate_Change_Energy_Environment_and_Water/Electricvehicles/Submissions.