

## QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE BY DIRECTOR GENERAL

### Question

Chair (regarding computer recycling): "...tonnages going to landfill or tonnages directed away from landfill and perhaps in what way are they reused, recycled and suchlike?" (p. 20)

### Answer

Based on the best available information, the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) estimates that around 1 million computers reach their end of life in NSW each year. Of these, around 75 per cent are disposed of to landfill (accounting for approximately 15,000 tonnes), with the remainder either sold overseas for re-use (18 per cent) or recycled locally (7 per cent).

The three major computer recycling companies currently operating in NSW state that they recycle up to 97 per cent of the materials from the equipment they recycle. These materials are then used in Australia and overseas as inputs into a range of industrial processes.

Government departments are contributing to the recycling rate in NSW. In 2005, 122 agencies reported a recycling recovery rate for computers of 70 per cent, an increase from 2003 when the recycling recovery rate was 51 per cent. The Department of Commerce is working with a number of non-profit organisations to redirect unwanted government computing equipment to disadvantaged groups and individuals. This scheme is called ReConnect. Approximately 1,400 computers and related equipment have been processed under this scheme since 2003.

DEC is also leading negotiations with the computer sector to develop a computer recycling scheme on behalf of the Environment Protection and Heritage Council. The intention is to provide permanent collection sites and cover all types and brands of computers, including orphan and historic, which would be aggregated and sent for recycling.

### Question

Ms Hale (regarding ALCOA): "Are you aware of any monitoring devices out there that can be independently examined?" (p. 37)

### Answer

Licensees are required by DEC to undertake monitoring of emissions through conditions on their licences. Where we require a licensee to submit monitoring data through a licence condition the DEC will release that data on request. DEC carries out audits of licensees which can include independent testing.

DEC requires ALCOA to report any licence condition non-compliances in its Annual Return submission. If there are non-compliances, DEC requests clarification by ALCOA , including supplying raw monitoring data. This data may also be requested during the year by DEC where there is concern, such as in response to complaints, after a routine or other inspection or an event that causes concern. This data is reviewed and assessed by independent DEC technical air experts to determine if further action is required. ALCOA is also subject to Load Based Licensing limits and is required to submit data on the actual loads annually. This information is also assessed by independent DEC experts for compliance. The monitoring data is also made available to the ALCOA community consultation committee.