



13 June 2005

S05.33

### **Submission to the New Zealand Ecolabelling Trust on Ecolabelling for Toner cartridges**

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella organisation representing 40 nationally organised societies. It has 33 branches throughout the country attended by representatives of those societies and some 150 other societies. The Council's function is to serve women, the family and the community at local, national and international levels through research, study, discussion and action.

Ten specialist Standing Committees study issues relating to their particular subjects and, with input where possible from the general membership, prepare submissions on legislation and discussion documents. The Parliamentary Watch Committee monitors changes to legislation and makes oral submissions before the Select Committees of Parliament.

Following receipt of the discussion document on toner cartridges, questions were put to our members via e-mail. Responses were received from a few branches and individuals, and this response was prepared by the Consumer Affairs Standing Committee, as this is an important environmental issue.

The Committee has studied the document and consider it to be a very thorough analysis of the problems and offers positive solutions to those problems.

#### **Heavy metals**

The membership agreed with the proposals to identify heavy metals that should not be used as constituent parts of the toner (s5.2) and photoreceptors (s6.1). Concerns were expressed that some countries are exporting toner cartridges that contain cadmium.

#### **Recovery and re-use**

Several members commented that there should be as much re-use as possible, and indicated that a deposit system with return to original outlet would work best for them. One respondent provided detail of how re-use did not work for her and that it was essential for the recycled toner cartridges to be fit for use.

City members are aware of the refilling facilities available to them in their cities, and some Territorial Authorities provide an opportunity once or twice a year for the disposal of hazardous waste.

Some concerns have been expressed by rural members of our organization concerning "recycling" or refilling of cartridges. The Consumer Affairs Standing Committee hopes that the rural community will be given consideration, as many of them are high users of computers.





Where the members had made use of refilling facilities, the services were praised as being of high standard. In the instance of the failure, the firm honoured their offer of a money-back guarantee, and even sourced a new cartridge (as it was of unusual specification). Several members agreed that a deposit system with return to original outlet would work best for them.

Recycled toner cartridges can be problematic and perhaps more attention might be paid to how to safely dispose of them. Many users of computers express surprise that the toner cartridges should be treated as hazardous waste. It was of concern that there is no regulatory legislation in relation to hazardous waste and recycling, with different practices permitted by individual Territorial Authorities.

### **Labelling (7.3)**

There was general agreement with the need for labelling to include the company's brand or company name, contact details, and whether the product is re-filled or re-manufactured. Products should be accompanied by a warranty providing for the replacement, repair or refund of the purchase price of defective cartridges. Warranties should also provide for the repair or replacement of the device in which the cartridge is used, should the re-filled or remanufactured cartridge damage the device.

This information however needs to be in a reasonable-sized print, in the English language. A positive approach was suggested, using a term such as 'heavy metal free'.

NCWNZ has presented strong views about the labelling of environmentally friendly goods through submissions that reflect the concerns of the membership. We are pleased that progress continues to be made on this issue. NCWNZ thanks you again for the opportunity to comment on this issue, and will continue to maintain its interest in the topic.

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**National President**

Eileen Imlach  
**Convener, Consumer Affairs Standing Committee**