

RECYCLERS NOT TO BLAME FOR EXPLODING GAS BOTTLES

The NSW Government needs to regulate safe and accessible ways to dispose of end-of-life gas bottles and LPG tanks by introducing an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme, Australian Council of Recyclers (ACOR) said today.

ACOR President, John Lawson said metal recyclers are regularly dealing with explosive gas bottles, with the potential to cause severe burns, environmental impacts and extensive damage to equipment.

In a recent court case, Sell and Parker Pty Ltd was prosecuted by the NSW Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) over an explosion most likely caused by a gas bottle illegally deposited at its facility, despite the ruling acknowledging the company had taken significant measures to reduce the likelihood of explosion.

“Thankfully no one was seriously injured in this incident, but not having an EPR scheme to safely dispose of gas bottles and LPG tanks is an accident waiting to happen,” Mr Lawson said.

“The lack of an EPR scheme is impacting adversely on metal recyclers who should be supported by the DEC rather than prosecuted.

“EPR schemes are being developed for the disposal of computers, TVs and mobile phones; metal recyclers are calling on the government to develop a similar scheme to protect workers and equipment from the risk of exploding gas bottles.”

Mr Lawson agrees with Jeff Angel of the Total Environment Centre when he said in a recent statement that “The NSW Government is using recyclers as a whipping boy for their own failure to protect the recycling stream.”

ACOR calls on the DEC to:

- Immediately include gas bottles in the list of EPR priority wastes
- Develop and implement a safe disposal scheme
- Educate and motivate the community on the dangers of improper gas cylinder disposal
- Pursue people disposing of cylinders irresponsibly
- Stop making representations in the media blaming the recycling industry for the problem.

-ENDS-

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