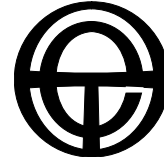


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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Tuesday, 27 February 2007

### **Government Scapegoats Recyclers for Exploding Gas Bottles**

Dangerous end-of-life gas bottles should be taken back by producers instead of crippling recyclers with explosions and fines, Total Environment Centre (TEC) said today. The NSW Department of Environment (DEC) successfully prosecuted metal recycler, Sell and Parker, on Friday for an explosion in 2005 despite failing in its own duty to require manufacturers to take back and recycle these hazardous products.

“The NSW Government is using recyclers as a whipping boy for their own failure to protect the recycling stream,” said Jeff Angel, TEC Director. “DEC should require producers to take back and recycle gas bottles and other problem products.”

In a decision handed down on Friday, the NSW Land and Environment Court fined Sell and Parker \$8,400 plus the DEC’s costs. This is despite the company spending \$2.75 million installing equipment specifically designed to prevent the explosion of hidden gas bottles.

“Recyclers should be supported, not left to the mercy of dangerous and toxic products. DEC needs to take a long, hard look at itself.”

NSW’s Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001 enables the Minister for Environment to implement regulated extended producer responsibility schemes for problem products. This would require manufacturers to take-back and recycle problem products, instead of allowing them to hamper recycling operations and clog landfills. However, despite NSW’s rising waste volumes the Government has failed to act.

“The NSW Government should be prosecuting itself for failing to deliver producer take-back regulation. Problem wastes should be dealt with at their source, not thrown into the too-hard basket. Gas bottles should be re-used; or failing that, gas bottle producers need to be made to safely drain them of the left-over gases before they go to recyclers.”

#### **Further information:**

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