

# Negative on battery 'tax'

## Duracell and Energizer oppose government recycling levy plan

**EXCLUSIVE**

**JOHN ROLFE**  
NATIONAL POLITICAL EDITOR

AUSTRALIA'S two biggest battery brands are privately opposing a federal government plan to dramatically increase recycling rates.

Duracell wants to put an "eco tax" on batteries while Energizer is against plans to divert more than 720 million AAs that currently go into landfill in Australia each year.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison's "circular economy" rev-

olution plans to introduce a battery stewardship scheme from 2021 with the aim of doubling recycling rates to 20 per cent within two years.

The industry-led scheme would require manufacturers and retailers to take more responsibility for recycling and impose a levy of about 4c per AA battery to cover the costs of doing so. Forty companies and groups have already signalled their support.

But the two biggest brands oppose the plan.

The Daily Telegraph can

reveal Duracell is instead pushing for an eco tax that would be about twice as high.

Energizer, meanwhile, has told the body preparing the scheme it would rather its products went in the bin.

Australia has the lowest battery recycling rate in the OECD. Within Europe, up to 70 per cent are recycled.

Battery Stewardship Council chief executive Libby Chaplin said she believed Duracell's eco tax proposal was not politically acceptable, nor would the community cop it.

Ms Chaplin said that Duracell had at least made some comment on the design on the scheme. Energizer had not engaged at all.

She said the feedback from Energizer was it "doesn't believe alkaline batteries should be recycled and should be thrown into landfill, which is interesting because publicly they say something quite different".

Energizer is part of the "Corporation for Battery Responsibility", which says putting "batteries in the trash

wastes valuable resources".

Energizer and Duracell did not respond to requests for comment. But the Canberra-based Consumer Electronics Suppliers Association, which represents the companies, confirmed both opposed the scheme.

"Energizer and Duracell are not happy with the scope of the scheme and believe it will be a net negative on the environment," CESA chief executive Ian McAlister said.

Environment Minister Susan Ley said "it is very disap-

pointing that the two biggest importers are saying they do not want to take part".

Ms Ley said she and environment ministers for the states and territories would prefer to see industry be proactive but mandatory schemes will also be considered if necessary. "Millions of batteries will be sold at this time of year and everyone should care about how they can be recycled," she said.

"Recycling is a major environmental priority and everyone needs to play their part."