



23 April 2021

**Minister for the Environment, the Hon Sussan Ley MP
Federal Member for Chisholm, the Hon Gladys Liu MP**

Joint media release: The Morrison Government is helping maximise opportunities for Australia's manufacturers while also driving down emissions and protecting the environment, with funding

Batteries are an essential accessory item on almost every child's birthday and Christmas toy wish list and today, thanks to a \$1 million grant from the Morrison Government, parents and carers can be confident that once the AAs stop powering their child's remote control car or FurReal pet, they can be kept out harm's way and recycled responsibly.

Making the announcement at Woolworths in Burwood, Victoria, Minister for the Environment Sussan Ley said the grant to the Battery Stewardship Council will support the development and implementation of an accredited and industry-led stewardship scheme for handheld batteries.

"Australian's are throwing away around 17,000 tonnes of batteries every year, with the vast majority winding up in landfill where they corrode over time, leaking harmful chemicals into the soil and potentially causing fires that can burn underground for years," Minister Ley said.

"We know consumers are committed to recycling, but the focus has been on kerbside glass, paper and plastic with very few of us knowing how to properly dispose of our household batteries."

"Our funding will support the Battery Stewardship Council to build a network of partner organisations and collection points, from supermarkets to libraries and office suppliers, where consumers can take their used batteries, deposit them safely and have the confidence that they will be recycled."

Supermarket chain Woolworths, one of the largest businesses signing up to the scheme so far, will start the roll-out of their battery collection pods across their 1000 stores from next week.

"Convenience is often one of the key elements to changing consumer behaviour, so it is wonderful to see Woolworths joining other member organisations like Officeworks in providing their customers drop off points for used batteries," Minister Ley added.

Federal Member for Chisholm Gladys Liu joined the Minister at Burwood in her electorate, congratulating Woolworths on its commitment to keeping batteries out of landfill.

"Businesses who produce, sell and use battery products have a shared responsibility to manage these products throughout their lifecycle, including at disposal," Ms Liu said.

"I am pleased to be in my own electorate today to see one of the first Woolworths battery deposit pods – the roll-out of these pods will make the disposal of batteries simple and convenient for consumers, leading to a safer, cleaner environment."

Battery Stewardship Council CEO Libby Chaplin said the funding will enable the Battery Stewardship Council and its partners to lay the foundations and build a national scheme in Australia. "Today's announcement sends a clear signal to industry to have the confidence to invest in green jobs, and, the infrastructure necessary to ensure that collected batteries are safely and responsibly recycled," Ms Chaplin said.

"We are calling for battery manufacturers, importers, distributors and retailers to join the BSC and participate in the new Battery Stewardship Scheme."

Adrian Cullen, Head of Sustainability for Woolworths Supermarkets said the retailer's presence in hundreds of communities across the country offered a unique opportunity to make battery recycling more accessible to Australians.

"We're introducing new battery and mobile phone recycling units in every Woolworths supermarket to create the largest network of drop-off points in Australia and help communities responsibly recycle these common household items," Mr Cullen said.

"Sustainability is an increasing priority for many of our customers and together we can work towards a better tomorrow by making sustainable product disposal part of an everyday routine when you visit your local supermarket."

The proper disposal of batteries is not just important for the environment, with around 20 children presenting to an emergency department every week with a button battery related injury.

CEO of Kidsafe Susan Teerds said the key to preventing these injuries is in ensuring that they are removed from households and recycled as soon as possible.

"Anyone who has spent time with young children knows the constant battle to keep small objects including shiny button batteries out of their mouths," Ms Teerds said.

"Button batteries are extremely dangerous and can lead to serious injuries and unfortunately even deaths in children. Removing them from the home and disposing of them safely is a big step in the right direction for kids' safety."

For more information on the NPSIF, visit the department's website at: <https://www.environment.gov.au/protection/waste/product-stewardship/national-product-stewardship-investment-fund>