

Case study

CARTRIDGES 4 PLANET ARK

Cartridges 4 Planet Ark is an example of what **product stewardship and a circular economy** can achieve. The following case study outlines how Cartridges 4 Planet Ark is an example for future sustainable solutions. Use this resource to learn more about the program and share it with your stakeholders.

Printer cartridges are made up of a complex mix of plastics, metal, inks and toners they represent a significant investment in resources. When they are disposed of into landfill these resources are lost.

Though useful when recovered, these materials pose environmental hazards when sent to landfill, as they erode chemicals leech into soil and groundwater.

Printer cartridges are collected from all over Australia to be repurposed into new products. **Product stewardship scheme are often free to consumers!**

They are great opportunities to make **recycling convenient and accessible** whilst also attracting commitment to sustainable business practices.



**CARTRIDGES 4
PLANET ARK**

The future aim for Cartridges 4 Planet Ark is to become a formally accredited scheme. **Voluntary accreditation** will formalise the commitment of businesses involved in product stewardship schemes and help maintain valuable contributions to recycling goals.

This process has already begun with the *Recycling and Waste Reduction Act 2020*, which has improved the voluntary product stewardship framework, including reducing the cost and time frame involved in becoming accredited.

“Voluntary accreditation is the next step to ensuring a meaningful commitment to product stewardship. A process where we can all benefit.”

Other benefits for voluntary accreditation include:

- having a **competitive advantage** because the public knows that your industry has worked to reduce the negative impacts from its products
- demonstrating sustainability claims when **competing in government procurement activities.**
- use of the Australian Government’s product stewardship logo to tell consumers that your product is sustainable and a good environmental choice.
- **maximising the value** of product and material streams.



Our **participating manufacturers** cover the cost of collecting, transporting and recycling of their own cartridges as well as promoting the program to workplaces and to the general public.

By supporting Cartridges 4 Planet Ark, and covering the costs of the program, it remains completely free for end users looking to recycle their printer cartridges.

You can help us make sure we can continue to provide a free recycling service by reducing the number of non-participating manufacturers' cartridges in your collection boxes.

One of the most significant accomplishments that Cartridges 4 Planet Ark can boast is our **zero waste to landfill guarantee**. The resources within each cartridge can be separated and repurposed for continued use.

Cartridges 4 Planet Ark recycled over 55 million printer cartridges and diverted almost 20,000 tonnes of waste from landfill between 2003 and 2023!



Aside from recycling used print materials into new cartridges, inks and pens, there has also been the development of **eWood, a timber alternative** made from recycled rigid plastics.

TonerPlas™ has been developed to turn plastic waste into a high-performance asphalt road.

Similarly, **Lousy Ink, a sustainable art supplier**, has grown using a business model that revolves around the reuse of collected cartridge ink. This ink is supplied by Close the Loop and Cartridges 4 Planet Ark.

By supporting stakeholders along the entire supply chain, we hope to change the way people think about product circularity and recyclability.