



MEDIA RELEASE

Cape Town Calls for e-Waste Collection

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

22 September 2010

The e-Waste Alliance in the Western Cape are calling all households and businesses in and around Pinelands to drop off their e-waste on Wednesday, 01 September at Jeffares & Green Consulting Engineers in Pinelands between 08:00 and 17:00.

The e-Waste Alliance in proud partnership with the Institute of Waste Management of Southern Africa (IWMSA) Western Cape Branch and Jeffares & Green Consulting Engineers will be hosting its first public e-waste collection and information event on 01 September 2010 to celebrate spring day.

Richard Emery, Branch Chairman for the IWMSA WC Branch indicated, “we are delighted to be part of this initiative, we will also be hosting information sessions whereby people can learn more about e-Waste. The public – households and businesses - are encouraged to bring their e-Waste to the Jeffares & Green offices in Pinelands (14 Central Square).”

Susanne Dittke, e-Waste Alliance coordinator said, “the e-Waste that is collected will be re-furbished, repaired and re-used where possible, and recycled if not. All materials will be handled according to integrated waste management principles and in the most environmentally safe manner.”

What exactly is e-Waste? The Institute of Waste Management of Southern Africa (IWMSA) provides a few answers and insights – e-Waste is any unwanted electrical equipment such as computers, printers, fax machines, cell phones, toasters, microwaves, or any other electrical or electronic goods or direct parts thereof.

e-Waste is either forgotten and stored away in cupboards, or discarded in ways where it lands up on our landfills. The fear is then that poisons that are found in e-Waste can leak into the earth and water tables, which in a cycle, can always come back to us in various forms that we ingest, be it through water or air”.

Our e-Waste contains precious metals which are toxic and classed as hazardous. The most common being Lead, Mercury, Cadmium and Arsenic, but there are many more that are abundant. Lead found in old TV screens, batteries and circuit boards, causes vomiting, diarrhoea, coma and even death. In young people it can also cause nerve, blood and even brain disorder. Mercury from Fluorescent lamps and LED's (Light Emitting Diodes) is linked to brain and liver damage. Cadmium is found in Rechargeable batteries, old TV screens and monitors, and even printer ink and toner cartridges. Cadmium damages the kidneys and lungs, and may also be linked to osteoporosis. Arsenic is linked to skin disease and nerve damage, as well as in some chronic exposure, Lung cancer.

Years ago Asbestos was a silent killer, and when educated about it, the global community reacted and banished its use and started plans to remove it from buildings and clothing. It's taken for granted that every day Electronic goods are there to make our lives easier, but people are not aware of all the dangers that lurk inside it. What we now know can save us in the future; we need to have greater preventative maintenance now instead of having to find a cure later on.

The e-Waste Alliance, a collaborative effort of Capetonian businesses was borne from the need to safely manage e-waste. “The equipment will be reused if at all possible. Our companies donate a number of PCs to schools, NGOs and community members in need; the rest are typically sold into low-income households or to small entrepreneurs. If your old equipment can't be fixed, we'll make sure that it will be recycled in an environmentally responsible manner.” Dittke indicated.

For more information or to participate, please contact Susanne Dittke at 083 462 6665 or envirosense@xsinet.co.za

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