



Lenovo

Rethinking E-waste in a Circular Economy

How businesses can unlock the value
residing in their e-waste



Transitioning to a circular economy has never been more critical. Sustaining our current consumption levels would require the resources of 2.3 planets by 2050.¹ However, by shifting to a circular economy, we can decouple the world's growth from net new consumption, according to the [World Economic Forum](#). That is a sobering wake up call for us all to act.

At Lenovo we are committed to lessening our impact on our planet and to reduce, reuse, and recycle wherever possible. One area we're focused on is e-waste management.

To bring awareness to a circular approach to e-waste management, we commissioned a study titled, *'Rethinking E-waste in a Circular Economy'* to understand current business e-waste practices and awareness of the value of their organisation's e-waste. Pleasingly, 75% of Australian business measures and tracks the amount of e-waste they create annually, but only 50% say they are very aware of the economic value that resides in their organisations' e-waste if it was sold to a business that could recycle it to salvage reusable components and metals. In fact, services such as Lenovo's Asset Recovery Service helps organisations, offset some of the costs of their next technology refresh.

However, the value doesn't just stop there. Disposing of e-waste in a sustainable way also drives employee satisfaction and increased loyalty. Increasingly we all want to see action and not just promises when it comes to tackling climate change. Our research also showed that almost nine

in 10 employees say awareness of their employer's actions to dispose of end-of-life technology in a sustainable way would make them feel more positive towards their employer.

Seven in ten employees also agreed that knowing that their employer disposes of their old technology in a sustainable way would make them more likely to want to work for them.

Lenovo is determined to build a smarter future through the products and services we offer and through our commitment to implementing sustainable practices. By 2025, Lenovo will have enabled the recycling and reuse of 362 million kilograms of end-of-life products and 76% of PC parts returned to our service centre will be repaired for future use.

Taking a circular approach to e-waste is critical. We must rethink the lifecycle of technology products to ensure that every recoverable material from every single device is reused at end of life. Not only does this help to mitigate the damaging effects of climate change, but for businesses, participating in IT recycling services, it can provide both economic and reputational benefits.

Matt Codrington
Managing Director,
Lenovo ANZ

Australian highlights

1 in 4

Australian businesses surveyed place a high priority on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues.

1 in 2

Australian businesses say they are very aware of the economic value that resides in their e-waste.

9 in 10

employees say awareness of their employer's actions to dispose of end-of-life technology in a sustainable way would make them feel more positive towards their employer.

7 in 10

employees agreed that knowing their employer disposes of their old technology in a sustainable way would make them more likely to want to work for them.

1 in 6

Senior IT business leaders reported their organisation increased the amount of hardware they purchased during the COVID-19 pandemic by 7.3% on average.

1 in 3

Australian businesses would not know how to go about using IT hardware recycling services.

New Zealand highlights

4 in 10

New Zealand businesses place a high priority on ESG issues.

1 in 4

New Zealand businesses say they are very aware of the economic value that resides in their e-waste.

1 in 2

New Zealand businesses say their e-waste is disposed responsibly.

Holly Ryan

Director and Jeweller, Holly Ryan Jewellery

As a jewellery designer, I am deeply passionate about sustainability and have built my business sourcing recycled metals and ethical stones for my designs, which is why I was so excited to partner with Lenovo to create these one-off rings. I don't want to see anything ending up in landfill, so it's always been important to me not to take anything further from the earth. These rings are symbolic of the power of the circular economy.

Incredibly, precious metals such as 24 carat gold, platinum, and sterling silver can all be found in computers and other electronic items. Thanks to companies like Lenovo these precious metals can be extracted from computers which would have ended up in landfill. Instead, jewellers such as myself are able to create beautiful jewellery out of materials which would otherwise have been thoughtlessly discarded.

At this point in the discussion around climate change, it's really important we all start doing whatever we can to try reverse the effects of climate change on our beautiful planet. I encourage all companies to be cognisant of what assets they may have within their business that can be recycled or upcycled and to put circular processes in place.

Holly Ryan



ANZ businesses are sitting on an untapped goldmine of old tech

With approximately AU \$84 billion⁴ dollars^{*} worth of recoverable materials going to landfill in 2019, the economic advantages of employing a circular model in the electronics sector are huge. However, only 17.4 per cent of global e-waste is officially documented as formally collected and recycled⁵. In Australia and New Zealand, only 9 per cent of e-waste is officially collected⁶.

There is a financial opportunity for organisations if they used end-of-life hardware services, such as

Lenovo's Asset Recovery Services (ARS). Not only can ARS mitigate the environmental and data security risks associated with asset disposal, these services can also maximise the value potential of end-of-life hardware by helping business customers offset some of the costs of their next technology refresh.

For larger organisations, recycling a fleet of around 11,000+ assets could result in as much as \$2 million in offsets against their next tech upgrade⁷. In a tight economic climate, an opportunity to drive additional value to the business is one that can simply not be overlooked. Particularly given many organisations increased their electronic purchases during the pandemic.

STATS

ESG ISSUES STILL NOT HIGH PRIORITY FOR MAJORITY OF BUSINESSES:

- Only four in ten (39%) senior IT business leaders say their organisation places a high priority on ESG issues
- Just over half (55%) say that ESG is a medium priority, and 6% say ESG is a low priority for the business
- Larger organisations with 500 + employees (53%) are more likely to prioritise ESG issues than those in smaller organisations with 20 to 99 employees (26%) and 100 to 249 employees (36%)

BUSINESSES ARE NOT AWARE OF THE VALUE OF THEIR E-WASTE:

- Three quarters (75%) of senior IT business leaders surveyed say their organisation measures and tracks the amount of e-waste they create annually; with 73% tracking what is disposed of sustainably
- However, only 50% of senior IT business leaders say they are very aware of the potential economic value of their organisation's e-waste
- One in ten (9%) say their organisation doesn't really consider the economic value of their company's e-waste, while 2% of organisations have never thought about it

FOR THOSE WHO ARE, MANY ARE UNSURE HOW TO GO ABOUT RECYCLING:

- Over a third (35%) of senior IT business leaders do not know how to go about using IT recycling services
- Organisations with an annual turnover of \$50 million or more are more likely to report they are aware of IT recycling services and know how to access them (78%), compared to organisations with an annual turnover of \$5million-\$49 million (58%)

A CIRCULAR APPROACH TO E-WASTE IS CRITICAL AS BUSINESSES INCREASE HARDWARE PURCHASES:

- Almost two thirds (59%) of senior IT business leaders surveyed reported that their organisation increased the amount of hardware they purchased for staff to use during the COVID-19 pandemic and overall purchases went up by 7.3% on average. Taking a circular approach to e-waste offers both value and environmental benefits

Sustainable management of e-waste can be a driver of employee happiness and loyalty

With an increasingly competitive labour market, organisations need to do everything they can to retain existing employees and attract new talent. But workplace flexibility and attractive salaries aren't the only things weighing on employees' minds. For example, climate change is a key concern for the majority (83%) of Australians⁸, who believe Australia should be doing more to tackle the country's climate issues. When it comes to action, only 40% of Australians think businesses are committed to climate change⁹.

Not only climate change, but also e-waste is on employees' minds. In our 'Rethinking E-waste in

a Circular Economy' study, the vast majority (88%) of employees say awareness of their employer's actions to dispose of end-of-life technology in a sustainable way would make them feel more positively towards their employer. In fact, knowing their company is doing the right thing with e-waste will make existing employees feel more loyal and more engaged - feelings that can ultimately lead to increased employee retention. This presents an opportunity for organisations to put themselves ahead of the competition by ramping up their existing ESG efforts.

Positive ESG policies can also make a company more attractive to potential workers. The majority (70%) of Australian workers said they are more likely to want to work for an employer who disposes of their old technology in a sustainable way. This is particularly true amongst the younger generation of workers, with Millennial (72%), Gen X (72%), and Gen Z (70%) workers more likely to care about this issue than Baby Boomers (61%)**.



STATS

EMPLOYEES WANT EMPLOYERS TO DISPOSE OF TECH SUSTAINABLY

- 71% of Australian workers say it's important to know what happens to their unwanted workplace tech
- Those who are aware that their organisation has an official policy for recycling old technology, are more than three times more likely to say what happens to their old workplace tech is very important (55%) compared to those whose employer does not have an official policy for recycling (14%)

HOWEVER, MANY DON'T THINK THEIR WORKPLACES ARE COMMITTED TO SUSTAINABILITY

- Only a third (36%) of Australian workers strongly agree their employer is committed to following sustainable business practices
- Just over half (54%) of Australian workers report their organisation has an official policy for recycling old technology, but 19% are not sure what actually happens to it

EMPLOYEES FEEL MORE POSITIVELY TOWARDS BUSINESSES WHO SUSTAINABLY DISPOSE TECH

- 88% of employees feel more positive towards employers who dispose of technology in a sustainable way
- Specifically, employees said having this information would make them feel more respect (61%), admiration (35%) and pride (34%) towards their employer
- While three in ten (31%) employees said it would make them feel more loyal and one in four (27%) more engaged

MORE THAN IMPROVING EMPLOYEE OPINIONS, STRONG ESG POLICIES ALSO MAKE BUSINESSES MORE ATTRACTIVE TO POTENTIAL TALENT

- 70% of Australians are more likely to want to work for employers who dispose of their old technology in a sustainable way
- Millennial (72%) and Gen X workers (72%) are more likely to say that knowing that an employer disposes of their old technology in a sustainable way will make them more likely to want to work for them than Baby Boomers (61%)

Take the waste out of e-waste

Most materials that make up laptops and computers can be recycled and used to create new products. Some parts – such as motherboards, graphics cards, processors and hard drives, can be refurbished for reuse in other laptops or computers, giving them a second lease on life.

Overall, almost every part of a computer can be recycled or refurbished, drastically reducing the amount of e-waste that ends up in landfill. If every business committed to responsibly disposing their organisation's e-waste, we would be well on our way to eradicating e-waste altogether.

Lenovo Asset Recovery Service (ARS) can help businesses responsibly dispose of any hardware from any brand, including:

- **Notebooks**
- **Desktops**
- **Peripherals such as keyboards, mice and cables (with systems)**
- **LCD/CRT monitors**
- **Enterprise Hardware such as Servers, Storage Arrays, Switches, and UPS**
- **PDA's and mobile phones**
- **Printers**



From the materials I've received from Lenovo, I've created a series of kinetic rings. They are wabi-sabi in aesthetics, which means a celebration of imperfect beauty, generally found in nature. The rings are representative of the imperfect beauty of nature, the transience of nature, and also of a circular economy.

Holly Ryan, Jeweller

Lenovo Asset Recovery Service – the environmentally responsible choice for IT asset disposal

Lenovo's Asset Recovery Services (ARS) provides an end-to-end solution to mitigate the environmental and data security risks associated with end-of-life asset disposal, while maximising the value potential of those assets.

Lenovo experts can assist in the development of a sustainable corporate disposition strategy for any technology hardware, with a range of certified asset disposition options to meet a business's needs.

- **Compliant**
Lenovo provides documentation and certificates associated with proper data destruction
- **Cost Effective**
ARS can offset some of the costs of a technology refresh and simplify the transition from old to new
- **Consistent**
Lenovo's global coverage allows organisations to have a consistent solution across regions, where all HW brands are covered

STANDARD LENOVO ARS FEATURES:

- Securely transport assets from client location
- Processing to receive, test and prepare equipment for resale
- Recycling to ensure proper disposal for obsolete equipment
- Utilising industry recognised data sanitisation standards such as NIST SP 800-88 R1 and Commission Regulation (EU) 2019/424
- Single point-of-contact and detailed reporting
- Return value for re-marketable assets

ADDITIONAL LENOVO ARS FEATURES:

- Remote or on-site discovery to provide current inventory with value assessment
- Dismantle and move assets to on-site pickup area
- Quarantine hold of assets for specified period to ensure data migration
- Refurbishment to prepare assets for redeployment, donation, lease return, or employee sale

PLUS, WE HELP BUSINESSES TO EXPLORE OTHER AVENUES FOR TAKING UNWANTED HARDWARE OFF BOOKS, INCLUDING:

- Refurbishment and re-marketing
- Donation to an organisation of choice

Methodology

Independent market research firm YouGov was commissioned by Lenovo to conduct this study to bring awareness to a circular approach to e-waste management. YouGov conducted a survey of a nationally representative sample of employees and a national sample of senior business leaders from small, medium and large organisations across a broad cross-section of industries in Australia.

Senior Australian
IT managers

268 business leaders

Australian
employees

1,000 employees

In addition, Lenovo independently surveyed 30 New Zealand business leaders to similarly understand their e-waste awareness and practices.



Endnotes

¹ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/05/why-the-circular-economy-is-the-business-opportunity-of-our-time/>

² <https://www.cleanup.org.au/e-waste>

³ United Nations Global E-waste Monitor 2020 <https://ewastemonitor.info/gem-2020/>

⁴ United Nations Global E-waste Monitor 2020 <https://ewastemonitor.info/gem-2020/>

⁵ <https://globalewaste.org/news/surge-global-waste/>

⁶ <https://globalewaste.org/statistics/region/australia-and-new-zealand/2019/>

⁷ <https://www.lenovo.com/us/en/resources/data-center-solutions/brochures/ars-maximizing-value-at-the-end-of-the-technology-lifecycle-brochure/>

⁸ <https://www.ipsos.com/en-au/8-10-australians-are-concerned-about-climate-change>

⁹ <https://www.ipsos.com/en-au/8-10-australians-are-concerned-about-climate-change>

** Millennials: Born between 1981 and 1996, Generation X: Born between 1965 and 1980, Generation Z: Born between 1997 and 2012, Baby Boomers: Born between 1946 and 1964

Creating value with confidence from old technology assets. That's smarter.

Trust Lenovo's expert and experienced team to guide you on the best asset recovery strategy for your circumstances and to roll out a plan that creates value for your organisation, while delivering on security, compliance and environmental responsibilities.

Click [here](#) to find out more about Lenovo Asset Recovery Services or **call** your Lenovo Sales Representative at **13 LENOVO / 13 536686 #2**