

Submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry – Australia's circular economy: Unlocking the opportunities

11 April 2025

Dear Commissioners

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Productivity Commission's *Australia's circular economy: Unlocking the opportunities* interim report.¹

The Consumer Policy Research Centre (CPRC) and CHOICE jointly note their support of recommendations 9.1 and 9.2 in the interim report:

- Recommendation 9.1. Introduce a product labelling scheme for household appliances and consumer electronics
- Recommendation 9.2. Include reuse and repair targets in the National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme (NTCRS) and increase the use of tracking devices

These recommendations would help to address two of the key barriers to a circular economy: a lack of information for consumers, and a lack of incentives for businesses to design products that are more durable and repairable.

The introduction of a product labelling scheme would provide consumers with information about the durability and repairability of household appliances and consumer electronics. This information is essential for consumers to make informed purchasing decisions and choose products that are more sustainable. Currently, at the point of purchase, it is difficult for consumers to identify how long products will last or whether they can be easily repaired.

France's repairability index provides a useful model which could guide the development of a similar system in Australia to help consumers make informed, sustainable purchases.²

CPRC's research into consumers and sustainability

CPRC's research continues to show a strong consumer need and desire for more clarity of credible product durability and repairability information. Consumers want certainty of

¹ Productivity Commission (2025). *Australia's circular economy: Unlocking the opportunities*. Accessed: <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/circular-economy/interim>

² Ifixit Europe (2021). *The French repair index: challenges and opportunities*. Accessed: <https://repair.eu/news/the-french-repair-index-challenges-and-opportunities/>

product durability to help them understand the value of the investment they're making through a purchase, and what they can do if something breaks.³

Conclusions

We believe that recommendations 9.1 and 9.2 are important steps in:

1. promoting the circular economy
2. incentivising industry to design, produce and sell products with longevity at the forefront
3. providing greater transparency and assurance to Australians on the products they've purchased, and
4. ultimately reducing e-waste.

CPRC's research highlights a need for Federal Government to introduce clear obligations that require businesses to provide greater transparency and more meaningful information on product labelling.

We urge the Australian Government to progress and implement these recommendations without delay.

Yours sincerely

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CPRC is an independent, not-for-profit, consumer think tank. Our mission is to improve the lives and welfare of consumers by producing evidence-based research that drives policy and practice change. For more, visit www.cprc.org.au.

CHOICE is the leading consumer advocacy group in Australia. CHOICE is independent, not-for-profit and member-funded. Our mission is simple: we work for fair, just and safe markets that meet the needs of Australian consumers. We do that through our independent testing, advocacy and journalism. To find out more about our campaign work, visit www.choice.com.au/campaigns

³ CPRC (2024). *Consumer use and misuse of product information on large appliances*. Available: <https://cprc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/CPRC-ECA-Qualitative-Research-BRIEFING-NOTE14.pdf>