

Electricity distributor does the right thing with its fluoros

ETSA Utilities is the first electricity distributor in Australia to become a signatory to the federal government's [FluoroCycle Scheme](#), which aims to reduce the amount of mercury entering the environment.



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Mercury is a component of fluorescent lighting, including compact fluorescents. According to Environment Victoria, the majority of the 57-71 million lights that are discarded in Australia each year end up crushed into landfill. In landfill, mercury can be converted into toxic methylmercury due to the action of bacteria living in the landfill. The methylmercury can then spread to the wider environment through air, water and soil. Methylmercury is a bioaccumulant, meaning that it builds up in the food chain.

The Federal Government's FluoroCycle Scheme is a voluntary scheme that aims to reduce the amount of mercury going to landfill from fluorescent lights.

ETSA Utilities is the the main provider of public lighting services in South Australia, with responsibility for more than 200 000 public streetlights.

'We have been recycling our street lights for more than fifteen years, resulting in around 150 tonnes of waste being diverted from landfill into resource recovery,' says Rob Stobbe, ETSA Utilities Chief Executive.

'This includes approximately 25 tonnes of mercury bearing waste which has been processed by CMA EcoCycle [a specialist recycler of mercury-containing wastes] for recovery and recycling. This relationship will continue as we meet our ongoing commitment under the FluoroCycle Scheme.'

The Administrator of FluoroCycle is Lighting Council Australia, the peak industry body for the lighting industry. CEO, Bryan Douglas, commented that electricity utilities were major users of mercury-containing lamps.

Source: ETSA Utilities

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