



FORMER Gauteng premier David Makhura at the launch of an electronics waste management initiative.

POLLUTION

Take disposal of e-waste seriously, recycler warns

STAFF REPORTER

NOT-for-profit Producer Responsibility Organisation (PRO) Circular Energy is calling on government departments, the electronics industry and the general public to band together to eradicate illegal e-waste dumping.

The PRO, which operates a nationwide take-back system for the collection, recycling and processing of waste electrical and electronic equipment, says that it has noticed that the issue of e-waste was getting worse in South Africa with far-reaching consequences not being considered.

According to Circular Energy, e-waste, which consists of discarded electronic devices, is a complex issue that can be easily exacerbated by the hazardous components within these items.

Circular Energy spokesperson Patricia Schröder said that improper disposal techniques used in illegal dumping have negative effects, not only on the environment but also on human health.

"Illegal e-waste dumping has far-reaching implications," she said.

"It poses a threat to the health of communities that are already susceptible. It also contaminates soil, water and air. To deal with this threat, fast action is required. That is why Circular Energy is taking a strong stance against this growing issue and is calling on the government, industry and consumers to collaborate in eradicating illegal e-waste dumping."

Schröder said that the government and businesses could work together to close regulatory gaps and impose severe fines on those responsible for illicit e-waste dumping, and that this would send a clear message that such behaviour would not be tolerated. Schröder also commented on how consumer behaviour played a pivotal role in combating the issue.

She said the choices consumers made had powerful effects and that by disposing of electrical and electronic products responsibly, people could create a shift towards responsible recycling and discourage illegal dumping.

Circular Energy has joined forces with Woolworths to establish drop-off points across the country, with containers for small portable batteries and household lamps.

"Proper disposal is as easy as making one call or drop-off drive. This initiative aims to make it easier for consumers to dispose of these items properly. By utilising these drop-off points, consumers can contribute to responsible waste management and help prevent the escalation of illegal e-waste dumping," Schröder said.

To make matters easier, the public can also request the collection of e-waste through Circular Energy's website.