

The Case for Change

Tackling the Invisible Climate Risk



Over 80% of refrigerants remain in end-of-life RAC equipment (refrigeration, freezers and air conditioning).



Up to 65% of discarded RAC units still contain harmful gases that contribute to global warming and ozone depletion.



On average, for every RAC unit Winning Group degasses, they avoid **235 KGs** of CO2 equivalent from being released into the atmosphere.



E-waste is expected to grow **30%** by 2030, with cooling appliances making up **18%** of the total.



When refrigerant gases are not properly collected and disposed of, they harm the atmosphere, human health, and the environment.

Barriers

The Refrigerant Reclaim Australia rebate system is not sufficient to cover the high costs associated with degassing.

The absence of a mandatory stewardship scheme to cover the cost of recovery and responsible end-of-life management of the RAC equipment.

Inconsistent enforcement of the Ozone Protection Act 1989 undermines recovery efforts.

Winning Group's Case Study

Since 2005, Winning Group has pioneered a free removal and recycling program, which collects and recycles packaging, mattresses, e-waste and old appliances including RAC units, recovering refrigerants and promoting high-value material recycling, with environmental and economic benefits:

- In FY24, the program helped to avoid over 8,000 tonnes of CO2e.
- Recovered refrigerants offer the highest emissions avoided per kilogram of product.
- The program creates jobs, cuts landfill waste, supports a circular economy, and reduces costs for local councils and ratepayers

Recommendations for Action

NSW Govt to utilise the Product Stewardship Act 2024 to mandate industry participation in stewardship schemes.

1

Federal Govt to include RAC equipment on Minister's Priority List for Stewardship, expand e-waste programs & integrate refrigerant recovery into climate policies.

2

Local Govts to revise collection practices, increase consumer participation through incentives and rebates, & support consumer education campaigns.

3

Industry to expand the adoption of take-back programs, and adopt standards for safe refrigerant handling and recycling.

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