

National Toxics Network 2008-2009 Annual Report



We're celebrating our achievements:

- ✓ In response to government inaction and growing community concerns about exposure to **pesticide spray drift**, NTN published *A Community Information and Action Kit: The Threat of Pesticide Spray Drift*. The Kit was launched at a public forum in Tasmania in collaboration with active local groups. Over 2,000 kits have been distributed through network organisations and the community. The Kit generated national media interest and brought attention to the serious threat of pesticide spray drift.
- ✓ Protecting **children's environmental health** is a central pillar of our work. Dr Mariann Lloyd-Smith and Dr Bro Sheffield-Brotherton successfully published their research paper '*Children's environmental health: intergenerational equity in action - a civil society perspective*' in the prestigious *Annals of the New York Academy of Science* 2008.

- ✓ Working closely with our Pacific colleagues, the Island Sustainability Alliance (Cook Islands), we initiated the **Pacific Program for Environmental Health and Justice**, which aims to strengthen the role of Pacific environmental NGOs. On request from environmental NGOs in East Timor, NTN completed a report on the proposed heavy oil power plants to be based in Timor-Leste to provide electricity. This report has been used by other small island states to address similar proposals.
- ✓ Working with German environmental organisations, NTN played a key role in **stopping the export of thousands of tonnes of Orica's toxic HCB waste** for high temperature incineration in Germany. We revealed the Australian government's lack of proper consultation over safer destruction technologies available in Australia. We will continue to oppose the export of the toxic HCB waste and lobby for safe destruction of this toxic waste with suitable technology in Australia.

From our Coordinator

It has been a busy year for NTN juggling media, responding to community concerns, building capacity, holding governments to effective engagement processes, submissions, committee representations, international meetings and campaign work.

In collaboration with international environmental health and justice organisations we've worked on a range of issues including: nanotechnology with Friends of the Earth; endosulfan and atrazine with Pesticide Action Network (PAN); the listing of nine new POPs chemicals with the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN); and, stopping the proposed export of Orica's toxic HCB waste with German and Danish NGOs.

With NTN partner the Alliance for a Clean Environment (ACE) in WA, we responded on a range of toxic threats including the dumping of dioxin-laden waste in an unlined dump among beach dunes at Dalyellup, as well as lead carbonate contamination.

In collaboration with consumer organisation Choice we researched an article on household pesticides that are banned in the EU, but still used in Australian homes and gardens and pointed to the failings of the regulator to apply the Precautionary Principle to pesticide regulation.

We are tracking well with our five-year strategic plan (2006-2011) and our actions toward achieving a toxic free future by: 1) Strengthening network power; 2) Working collaboratively and developing alliances;

3) Building on our expertise; 4) Developing and sharing capacity building tools.

This year we consolidated NTN's logo and aligned our vision - *Working globally for a toxic free future* - with the growing international environmental health movement. Our new website has received many compliments for its ease of use and reliable source of technical and practical information. We also have an active Toxics Discussion e-group.

In 2005, we acknowledged the fundamental link between climate change and toxics issues. We anticipate a growing awareness of the link between coal fired power generation and mercury pollution as well as the climate impacts caused by industrialised agriculture dependent on petrochemical pesticides and fertilisers.

Thank you to our supporters. Your contributions of time and continued financial support will keep our work going in the year ahead.

On behalf of the NTN committee, thank you for being part of the movement for a *toxic free future*.

Jo Immig
NTN Coordinator



Building capacity

A key focus of NTN's work is building capacity amongst NGOs across the Australasian and Pacific regions. We do this in several ways.

NTN provides a reliable source of technical information on toxic chemicals as well as experience and expertise that communities, campaigners and the media can draw on.

We also help instigate and support effective community engagement processes in chemicals policy and management.

NTN members have also made significant contributions to:

~ Developing the principles, protocols and plans of action for the Australian industrial chemical regulator's (NICNAS) community engagement charter.

~ Establishing the Australian Environment Network (AEN) which provides a focal point for nominating environmental NGO representatives to government processes.



POPs Awareness Raising Workshop hosted by the Island Sustainability Alliance (Cook Alliance) and NTN- an initiative of the Pacific Program for Environmental Health and Justice.

Addressing POPs

Our campaign work addresses persistent organic pollutants (POPs) locally, regionally and globally. NTN is the Australian focal point for the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN) and provides support to Dr Mariann Lloyd Smith as Co-Chair of IPEN.

We work on the legacy of toxic POPs waste; the remediation of DDT contaminated cattle tick dip sites; finding non-incineration solutions to the Botany Orca HCB stockpile; and, speaking out on dioxin emissions from the proposed Tasmanian pulp mill.



Botany Industrial Park Sydney where Orca stores its many thousands of tonnes of hazardous POPs hexachlorobenzene waste.

Internationally, NTN has been part of the NGO delegation for the UN POPs Review Committee since its inception in 2005. We help prepare NGO submissions and comments on the nominations and assessments of new POPs as well as liaising with government delegations.

As an outcome of the 2009 Meeting of the Conference of Parties for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (COP4), nine new POPs were added to the Convention (albeit with extensive exemptions for some).

NTN has initiated a **traded toxics** campaign to increase awareness of the Stockholm Convention and POPs listings, as well as the risks posed by new POPs exemptions.

We are developing educational material on the continuing use of PFOS in domestic products and the recycling of the products containing the POPs flame-retardants, Octa and Penta BDE. These newly listed POPs have been used extensively in clothing, textiles, furnishings, computers and electrical goods.

As new production of the PBDE flame-retardants has been stopped, ongoing human exposure will now result from products and wastes in which they are still present. The COP4 agreement to allow the continued recycling and reuse of products contaminated with these chemicals until 2030 has increased the need to address the trade in toxic products.

In our POPs work we collaborate with local groups and also work closely with the GAIA network, German NGO Bund, Greenpeace Denmark, and many other IPEN POs and NGOs.

Applying precaution to pesticides

NTN campaigns to realign Australia's pesticides regulatory system to include the four principles of chemical reform: *community-right-to-know*; *no data no market*; *precautionary principle*; and *substitution*.

We also campaign for action on banned and toxic individual pesticides such as atrazine, endosulfan and carbofuran. We are tackling the issue of pesticide spray drift and the secondary poisoning of water, soil, air and wildlife from the increasing load of pesticides in the environment.

NTN produced a *Pesticide Spray Drift Kit* to assist communities and individuals to report and take action on spray drift incidents. NTN collaborates and coordinates with local groups and its sister organisation, the Pesticide Action Network (PAN) in pesticide campaigns.

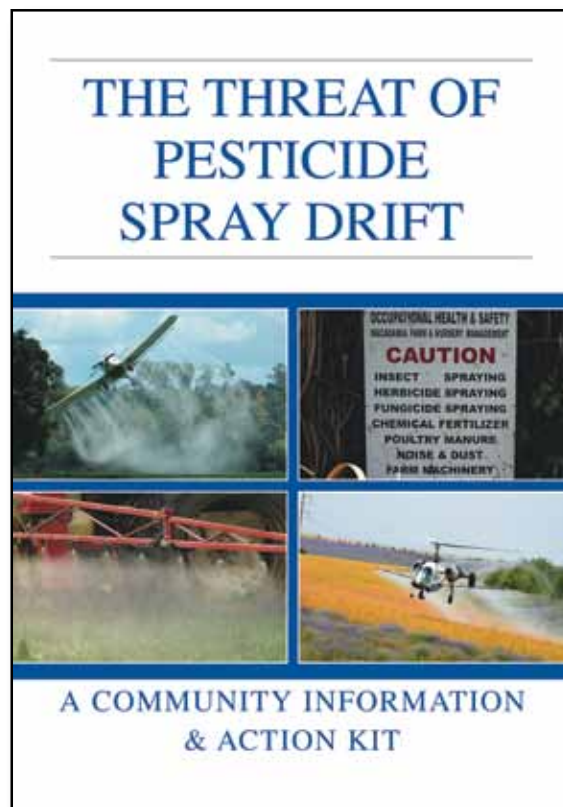
Removing toxics from products

NTN's work on toxic chemicals in products includes e-waste, nanomaterials, heavy metals, PVC, Bisphenol A (BPA) and phthalate contaminated household goods.

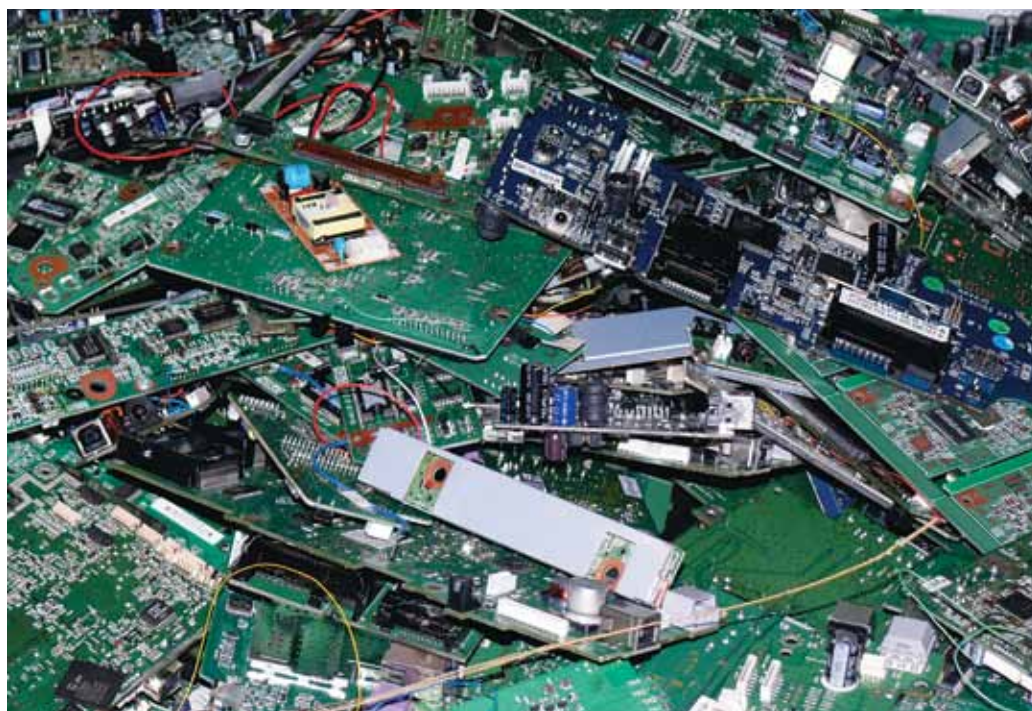
On nanotechnology, we produced a brochure *Nanoparticles in Newborns: a new intergenerational risk*, which looked at the scientific research on placental transfer of nanoparticles in humans. We're calling on governments to strictly regulate nanomaterials as novel new chemical products that carry significant risks.

We respond to numerous community and media requests for information on the impacts of exposure to PVC, BPA and phthalates in everyday household products and we help guide consumers to better product choices.

Through regular columns in national magazines, we respond to community concerns about the risks of exposure to toxics in everyday products such as personal care, gardening, cleaning and building and renovating materials.



Pesticide spray drift threatens communities and the environment everywhere.



E-waste from computers contains toxic chemicals like brominated flame-retardants.

NTN Public Officers and Committee Members 2008- 2009

Jo Immig (NSW) *Coordinator*

Dr Mariann Lloyd-Smith (NSW) *Assistant Coordinator*

Julia Pitts (ACT) *Public Officer*

Jane Bremmer (WA) *Secretary*

The Hon Richard Jones (NSW) *Treasurer*

Our Gratitude to Supporters

NTN is funded by a grant from a USA based philanthropic foundation as well as donations from Greenpeace Asia Pacific and individuals. We do not receive any government or industry funding.

Committee Members:

Dr Alison Bleaney OBE (TAS)

John Wickens (NSW)

Imogen Ingram (Cook Is.)

Elizabeth O'Brien (NSW)

Dorothy Bowes (QLD)


Don Want (NSW)

Lee Bell (WA)

Ellen White (NSW)

Dr Bro Sheffield Brotherton (VIC)

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