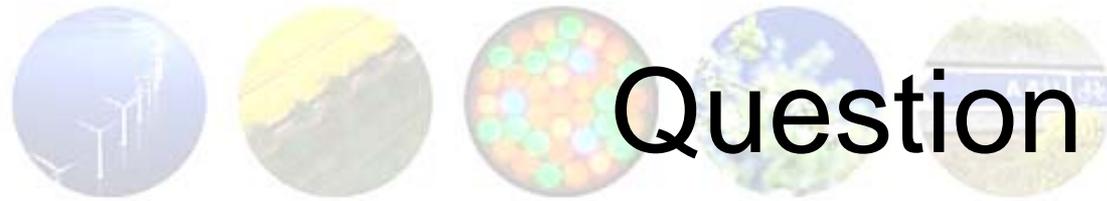


Under-estimating the importance of consumer behaviour – the UK WEEE obligations

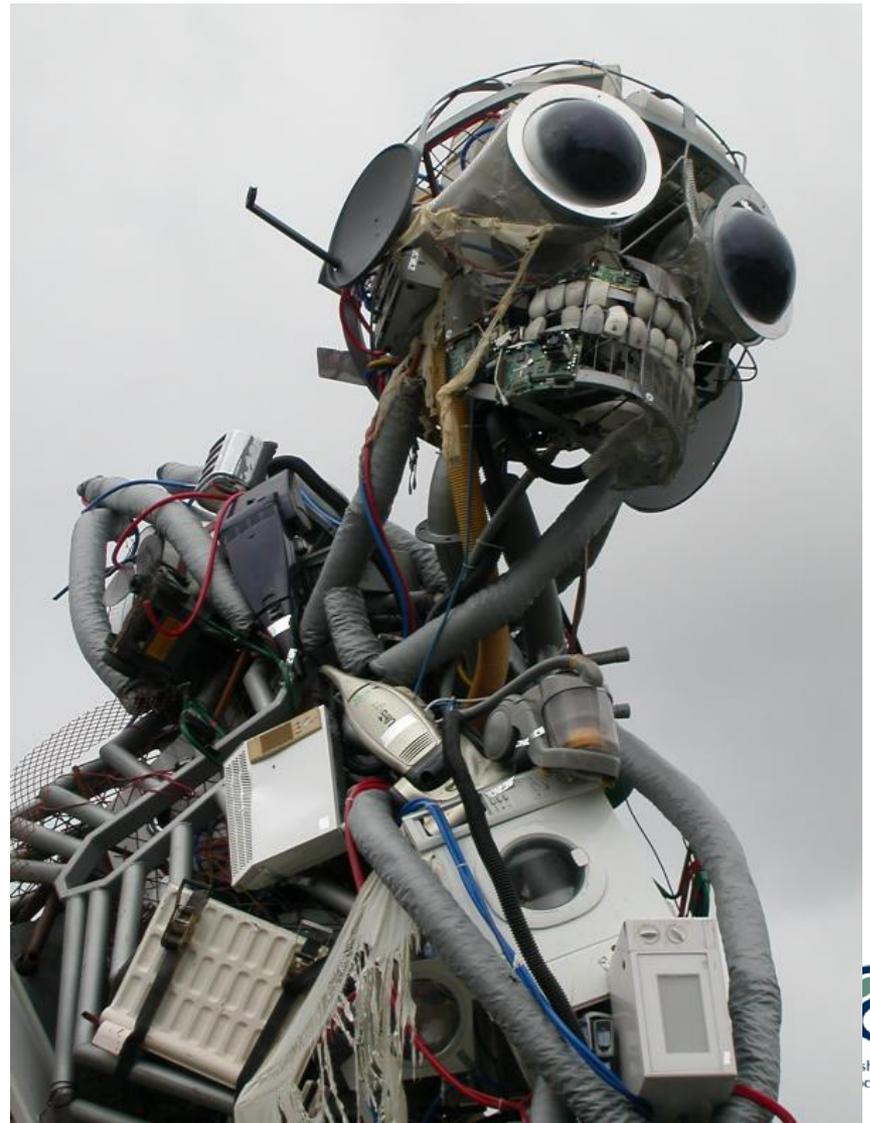
Cerys A. Ponting
Hazel A. Nash

Joint Actions on Climate Change



Question

- What is 7 metres tall and weighs 3.3 tonnes
- He's currently single...
- WEEE Man!!!





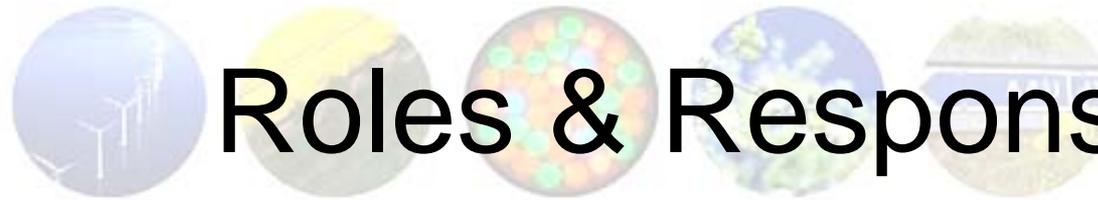
Introduction to the WEEE Directive

- WEEE Directive seeks to address rising volumes & reduce the environmental impact associated with the hazardous nature of components in electrical and electronic equipment through Producer Responsibility
- Minimise negative environmental & health impacts of WEEE by maximising the separate collection of WEEE from other forms of waste;
- Encourage the re-/eco-design of electrical and electronic products;
- It does this by requiring producers and retailers to take **responsibility** for the product at the end of its life – extended producer responsibility (EPR).



The link with climate change?

- ∴ WEEE Directive = A result of the EC's 5EAP '*Towards Sustainability*'
- Modern interpretations of SD - inextricably linked to ecological sustainability due to anthropogenic CC
- BRASS Research:
 - mixed methods methodology combined:
 - 2 surveys: Phase 1 (2006, $n=205$) & Phase 3 (2008, $n=25$)
 - Phase 2: 24 qualitative semi-structured interviews



Roles & Responsibilities

Producers:

- Required to facilitate dismantling & recovery for reuse/recycling through specific design features/manufacturing processes where possible
- Required to set up systems to provide for separate treatment, recovery & recycling (or 3rd parties acting on their behalf)

Distributors (Retailers)

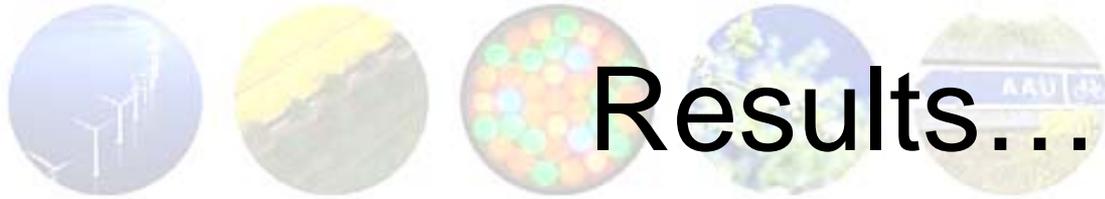
- Establishment of 'bring back' systems for households where WEEE can be returned to the distributor free of charge

Local Authorities

- Responsible for establishing & maintaining appropriate WEEE containers

Consumers

- **Public awareness - important in achieving the environmental goals of the WEEE Directive. Article 10 requires member States to provide information to households and consumers which assist them in making more energy efficient choices**

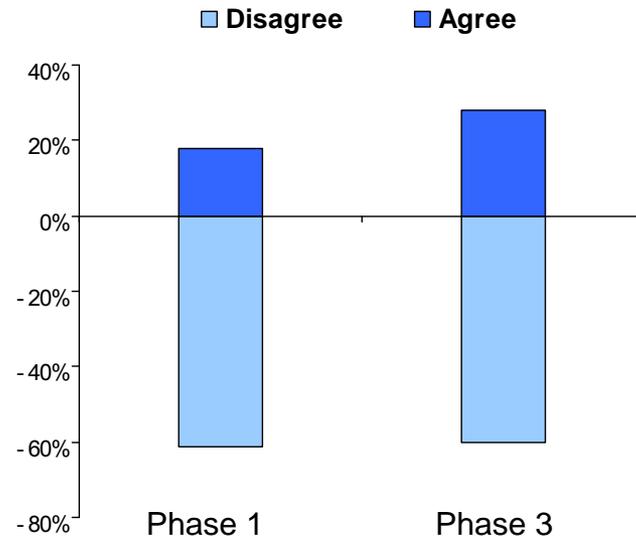
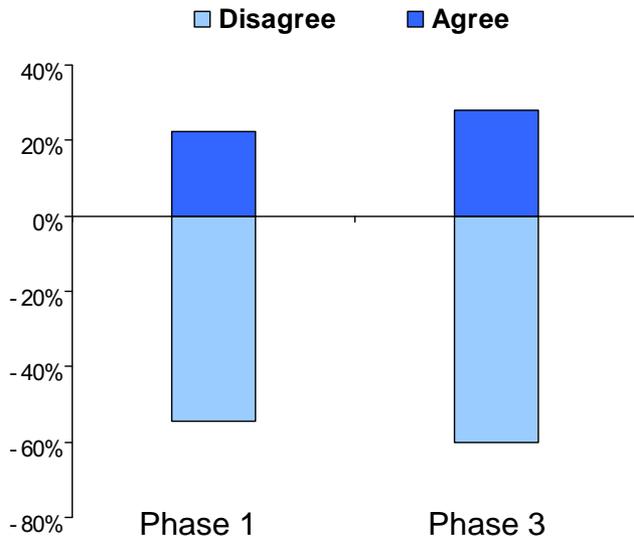


Results...

Q: To what extent do you think the WEEE Directive has been effective in terms of raising consumer awareness of:

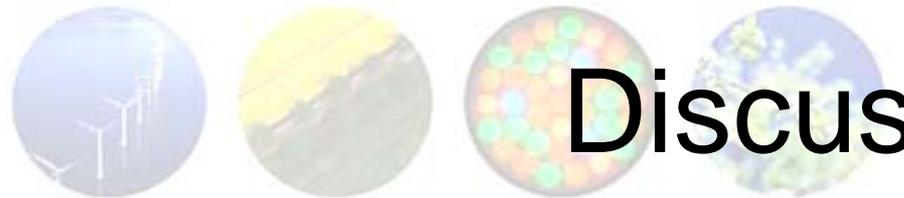
EEE life cycle impacts & associated WEEE management issues

Their role in management of WEEE



Ph1 - *“Zero consumer information on the WEEE directive limits the effectiveness”*

Ph3 - *“There has not been enough publicity for the consumer about discarding of products”*

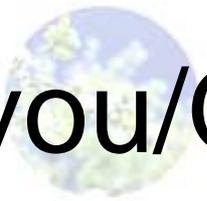


Discussion

- April 2009 – BERR consultation on recast Directive sought feedback on introducing a visible fee & its potential to inform consumers:
 - *“Government is running scared of having the visible fee identified as yet another... stealth tax... the Government should have, ...from the promulgation of the Directive in 2002, ...educate[d] consumers in this country about recycling costs of electrical kit” ID06*
 - *“Whenever we try and educate the consumer in terms of environmental issues, they don’t particularly listen to manufacturers because they believe it’s hype ... but there again, the consumer doesn’t listen to the Government anyway” ID22*

Conclusions

- Policy measures intending to promote SCP through life cycle approach/Producer Responsibility obligations unlikely to alter design & consumption, unless consumer influence & behaviour is recognised as a significant influence
- need to educate consumers re. adverse environmental impacts of WEEE & how to dispose of it properly
- Some general hope that the WEEE obligations will eventually assist in changing consumption & waste disposal behaviour amongst UK population



Thank you/Questions

- For further information please contact:

Cerys Ponting – pontingc@cf.ac.uk

Hazel Nash – NashHA@cf.ac.uk