

# E-waste mountains grow

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Toxic electronic waste is being poured into landfills, but it can – and should – be recycled. Pikitup offers this service at its garden sites.

**U**RGENT action is needed to tackle the growing mountains of electronic waste

piling up in landfills as people discard their old gadgets in favour of ever-newer technology.

“The reason for this is because [e-waste] contains hazardous materials which can potentially pollute the environment,” says Pikitup’s spokesperson, Pansy Oyedele.

Pikitup collects approximately 1,4 million tons of waste in Joburg each year, of which up to 10 percent consists of e-waste. E-waste also accounts for 70 percent of the overall toxic waste that is disposed of in landfill sites.

Oyedele notes that most people have no idea that e-waste can be recycled, proof of which is seen in the amount of it dumped at landfill sites. “The range of products that fall under the heading of e-waste is unlimited. Most household and office items are electronic, including batteries.”

She explains that e-waste can be recycled through the recovery of materials and unique components, leading to the creation of job opportunities or development of skills. “A perfect example of this is that steel, aluminium and copper can be stripped away from old computers and then reused in newer models.”

Globally, e-waste is growing at a rate of about 40 million tons a year as consumers in developed and developing nations buy new gadgets and discard their old ones. And this figure is expected to increase. For example, by 2020 China is expected to throw away seven times more cellphones than it does now, and India 18 times more.

These high-technology goods are not only bulky, they often contain toxic materials such as lead and mercury. If the e-waste is not taken care of properly, it can cause pollution and health hazards.

Oyedele says Pikitup offers e-waste recycling services to Joburg residents for free. “Companies, small businesses and residents who wish to dispose of their e-waste can drop it off at their nearest garden site.”

For more information on the list of garden refuse transfer sites where e-waste can be disposed, visit [Pikitup's website](#), call Joburg Connect on 011 375 5555 or send an email to [joburgconnect@joburg.co.za](mailto:joburgconnect@joburg.co.za) or [info@pikitup.co.za](mailto:info@pikitup.co.za).

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