

Submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Industry, Innovation and Science

Inquiry into the current state of the Australian tyre industry and
challenges and opportunities within a circular economy

From: Shire of West Arthur (Western Australia)

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Executive Summary

The Shire of West Arthur supports the Inquiry and offers a regional perspective from a small, predominantly agricultural community. While large-scale illegal dumping is not a major issue locally, we face unique challenges and opportunities:

- Local realities:
- Our landfill rarely receives large volumes of dumped tyres.
- A local mechanical business occasionally accumulates stockpiles but has not recently disposed of them at landfill.
- Farmers may bury tyres on properties to avoid disposal costs—a practice that is difficult to monitor.
- Small-scale dumping in bushland occurs but is infrequent.
- Opportunities:
- Expand tyre-derived materials in road construction and road safety infrastructure.
- Investigate tyre-based road barriers as an alternative to concrete—offering durability, recyclability, and reduced embodied carbon.

Local Context and Observations

Illegal dumping and stockpiling:

- The Shire does not experience significant illegal dumping at landfill sites.
- Occasional stockpiling by local mechanics suggests a need for cost-effective collection and recycling pathways.

Agricultural practices:

- Farmers may bury tyres to avoid disposal fees—a practice that poses long-term environmental risks and should be addressed through education and accessible recycling options.

Bushland dumping:

- While instances are small, they highlight the importance of community engagement and enforcement to prevent environmental harm.

Recommendations Specific to Regional Communities

- Tyre-based road barriers:
- Encourage R&D and pilot programs for modular tyre barriers as an alternative to concrete.
- Benefits:
- Lower weight and easier installation in rural areas.
- Impact absorption and reduced severity of crashes.
- Damaged barriers can be recycled repeatedly, creating a closed-loop system.
- Regional collection and processing support:
- Subsidies or grants for rural councils to manage stockpiles and transport tyres to accredited recyclers.
- Farmer engagement:
- Develop targeted education campaigns and incentives to discourage on-farm burial and promote recycling.
- Circular procurement:
- Mandate recycled rubber in local road projects and explore tyre-derived products for civil works beyond asphalt (e.g., barriers, drainage systems).

Conclusion

The Shire of West Arthur urges the Committee to consider the realities of small rural communities in designing stewardship and infrastructure solutions. By supporting innovative uses such as tyre-based road barriers and improving regional collection systems, Australia can advance a circular economy that works for all regions—not just metropolitan areas.