

MEDIA RELEASE

NEW REPORT FINDS RECYCLED ROADS CAN LEAD RECYCLING REVOLUTION

Australia can hugely boost domestic recycling by replacing virgin resources with recycled materials in roads and thereby enable the COAG ban on waste exports, according to a new expert report released today by the Australian Council of Recycling (ACOR).

Undertaken for ACOR by independent consultancy MRA, the report's research shows that by using recovered soft plastics, secondary glass cullet, and passenger tyre crumb in asphalt and/or road base in the nation's 12 biggest current road projects, such as Sydney's WestConnex, the Bruce Highway Upgrade in Queensland, and the CityLink Tunnel in Melbourne, Australia could:

- At least double the amount of soft plastic that is currently domestically recycled;
- Increase tyre recycling by 50% and contribute to an immediate export ban on baled tyres that are often inappropriately disposed of in Asia, and;
- Help wipe out every stockpile of unused glass cullet in the country.

| Current recycling | Additional tonnes from 12 recycled roads |
|---|---|
| Glass: 627,000 tonnes (or 57%) | Glass: 1.34 million tonnes |
| Soft plastics: 89,900 tonnes (or 4.5%) | Soft plastics: 104,500 tonnes |
| Passenger tyres: 328,000 tonnes (or 2%) | Tyre crumb: 174,000 tonnes |

Pete Shmigel, ACOR CEO, said: "Roads are Australia's largest single asset, and by building them with recycled materials, we can also deliver the goal of domestically sustainable recycling. Our message to Governments who build roads is: use recycled content to keep valuable stuff out of tips, deliver value for money to taxpayers, and generate more jobs.

"The report looked at a current total of about 1000 kilometers of new road, and the results were very positive. In reality, some 10,000 kilometers of new roads are being constructed; so regular use of recycled material in roads according to a new standard would be a road-led recycling revolution for regional jobs and environmental benefits like greenhouse gas reduction.

"It's important to recognise that recycled roads – compared to 'virgin roads' – are cost competitive and comparable if not better on quality and longevity. Every time you drive from Melbourne Airport to the city, you are driving on an excellent recycled road, and there's simply no reason why Governments should not do more of it.

"In fact, at their meeting in early November to consider the National Waste Policy Action Plan and the COAG ban on waste exports, both Federal and State Ministers for the Environment need to make pledges to build recycling markets, including using recycled materials in their road projects. They should nominate targeted projects.

“Eleven of the twelve projects modelled are part funded by the Commonwealth which can require recycled content as part of funding agreements. That’s a great opportunity for our ‘Recycling PM’ to further deliver on his vision.

“The choice is before us. Drive recycled roads into a better economic and environmental future, or drive old roads straight to the tip,” Pete Shmigel said.

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