



ATRA position related to tyre PYROLYSIS. November 2015

The Australian Tyre Recyclers Association (ATRA) represents the legal, safe and ethical collectors and recyclers of used tyres in Australia. ATRA members recycle for secondary use around 18.5M tyre units per annum or around 85% of the available market.

ATRA members process these tyres into alternate fuels, crumb rubber for asphalt and bitumen, rubber matting and adhesives and civil applications. Some of these products are used domestically and the majority are exported.

ATRA's principle purpose is the safe recovery and recycling of used tyres. As such, ATRA is strongly supportive of existing as well as new markets and technologies to dispose of used tyres. These would invariably benefit ATRA's members and a number would actively seek to utilise such processes as a means of disposal, market diversification, energy generation etc.

Tyre pyrolysis¹ (generally understood as the process of breaking down materials at high temperatures in the absence of oxygen, and in relation to tyres into oil and carbon black) has for many decades offered the possibility of an additional recycling method for used tyres.

More recently, used tyre pyrolysis in Australia has experienced renewed interest. ATRA supports an investigation into the financial and environmental viability of this technology and would welcome its application in Australia assuming it can be commercially proven.

ATRA is concerned that unproven and speculative tyre pyrolysis technologies are, prior to sustained testing, let-alone commercialisation, being touted by developers as a solution to existing and future used tyre stockpiles.

Questions that need to be asked of this technology in Australia include; What are the;

- costs of establishment of a fit-for-purpose technology?
- quality and value of the end products of tyre pyrolysis?
- emission levels and characteristics associated with pyrolysis production?
- volumes of product input that can be managed by this technology?
- gate fees required for financial viability?
- additional financial requirements, e.g. any government subsidies etc?

The commercialisation of efficient tyre pyrolysis in Australia would be welcome by ATRA as an additional means of disposal/ recycling of used tyres. Until some level of at least theoretic analysis and ultimately practical application is determined there is a real risk that tyre pyrolysis will become an excuse for government inaction on tyre stockpiles – as the allure of this 'new prize' overwhelms the uninitiated – and a drain on scarce R&D funds.

ATRA is urging interested parties to undertake a detailed analysis of tyre pyrolysis for Australian conditions and to answer the questions raised above.

END

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyrolysis>