

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND SCIENCE

Inquiry into the Australian Tyre Industry

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OPENING STATEMENT

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Thank you, Chair, and members of the Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to appear today.

I'd like to begin with something the Committee may already have noticed in the evidence before you: the submissions to this Inquiry are, on the fundamentals, in agreement. Whatever our particular vantage point along the supply chain — whether we import tyres, fit them, collect them, recycle them, or turn them into something new — we generally share a common view. That Australia stands to gain from an industry wide approach to change, and that change can only occur if the Federal Government steps in to support a cost benefit analysis.

Each year, Australia generates around 537,000 tonnes of end-of-life tyres. Only 17 per cent remain in Australia and is value added into new products. 49 per cent is exported largely as tyre derived fuel for overseas markets, the remainder is stockpiled, buried or dumped.

In fact, around 100,000 tonnes of mining tyres continue to be buried at mine sites across the country each year, despite Australian tyre recyclers having invested more than \$100 million in the infrastructure to process them.

Meanwhile, responsible importers — the businesses that have stepped up voluntarily — are being steadily undercut by free-riders who pay nothing and benefit from everything the Scheme delivers. On current data, companies responsible for 47 per cent of replacement tyre imports and 99 per cent of vehicle-fitted imports contribute little to nothing toward stewardship. Those numbers have been moving in the wrong direction for several years.

Now, where the Committee has heard divergent views, they are not about whether change is needed — they are about how it should be designed. And that, I'd respectfully suggest, is a very healthy sign. It tells you this is an industry that is engaged, invested, and looking seriously at how mandatory schemes operate here and overseas, and at how reform would work within each part of the supply chain.

Those are exactly the conversations we want to be having. They are also genuinely complex, because the tyre supply chain is complex — a passenger tyre in metropolitan Sydney has a very different economic and logistical story from a giant mining tyre in the Pilbara, or a retread fitted to a waste collection truck in regional Queensland. So, it's no surprise the Committee hears different emphases from different parts of the chain. But they reinforce a point many submissions have made, whatever framework Australia designs, it must be designed with industry at the table.

A brief word about TSA, because our role in this inquiry is perhaps a little different from others you'll hear from.

TSA is a not-for-profit. We are not a member-based body, and we are not advocating today for any single commercial interest. We operate the voluntary Tyre Product Stewardship Scheme under ACCC authorisation — an authorisation that carries real obligations to audit and compliance, to education, and to market development. We are funded, voluntarily, by 17 tyre importers who pay a levy on every tyre they place on the Australian market — I remind the committee, these tyre importers account for 53% of tyres imported into Australia. We do not charge collectors, recyclers, or retailers to be accredited with us — and that's more than 1,700 organisations across the country.

That structure matters for why we're here. Our remit is the whole supply chain — from the point a tyre enters Australia, through its working life, to the point its material is given a productive second life. We are openly accountable to our Board, to the ACCC, and to every participant in the Scheme. We make evidence-based decisions grounded in research, industry experience, global practice, and the daily reality of what our collectors and recyclers are seeing on the ground. Our job is to follow that evidence wherever it leads — including, if it ever came to it, being honest about whether the industry could be served better without us.

And the evidence — from our own recent Supply Chain Analysis, from the WA-led National End-of-Life Tyres Options Project, and from more than a decade of on-the-ground data — points consistently in the same direction. A well-designed mandatory product stewardship scheme would lift recovery rates, particularly in the off-the-road segment where the gains are largest. It would level the playing field for the responsible importers already doing the right thing. It would give recyclers the investment certainty they need to know downstream markets exist. It would support regional and remote

communities where the current economics work against recovery. And it would unlock advanced manufacturing opportunities that Australia is currently letting slip to other countries.

What's needed now is a clear signal from government. A cost-benefit analysis is the logical next step — the step that moves this from an important national conversation into a concrete, costed pathway. Australians deserve a system that matches our ambition.

I very much welcome the Committee's questions. Thank you.