

December 2007

RENEW NSW paves the way in used tyre management

When you walk down the street in the Blue Mountains, Bathurst or even Orange, the very road you're walking on in the near future might not be made from bitumen or concrete as you would normally expect, but from a product that is much more ecofriendly - recycled used tyres, thanks to RENEW NSW - the statewide organisation that focuses on improving waste management practices in rural and regional NSW.

With the innovation of Ecoflex technology, the 170,000 tonnes of waste tyres generated in Australia each year can now be converted into building products that are environmentally safe and commercially sustainable. These building products can be used for a wide range of civil and commercial construction purposes including retaining walls, paving systems, concrete slabs and erosion control.

NetWaste - one of 8 regional groups that comprise RENEW NSW and includes areas throughout central and west NSW - is leading the way in used tyre disposal management and is encouraging other member councils to participate in the joint approach to reduce the quantities of used tyres being buried at landfill sites by providing a practical and affordable solution using Ecoflex technology.

The combination of high structural values present in used tyres and low-cost of Ecoflex products made possible by recycling these tyres, yields a highly productive source of innovation for the construction industry.

Dara Clayton, Coordinator for NetWaste, highlights the difficulty faced by regional councils dealing with tyre disposal: "From my work with Councils in the Central and Western regions of NSW, many find it difficult to source an environmentally sustainable solution to tyre disposal that is cost effective. It is particularly challenging for the smaller, more remote Councils where large quantities of tyres are dumped at landfills that are unmanned. Often these tyres are coming from large regional centres where a tyre disposal charge would be incurred if the tyres were taken to the local landfill site."



**1. Tyre stockpile
Dubbo City Council landfill site**

It's hard to imagine but of the 18 million used passenger tyres are discarded each and every year, it is estimated that 57% ends up at landfills, and 13% is illegally dumped. Tyres are typically disposed of illegally in remote locations, meaning they can be expensive to remove as a result of the high transport costs involved. Removal costs can also increase if the tyres are covered with dirt, or buried underground. Inappropriate disposal of tyres costs the community and local Councils, who typically incur the removal costs. Illegal dumping of tyres not only takes up limited landfill space, but also has the potential to cause environmental harm.

It is this illegal disposal of tyres at unsupervised landfill sites that has become a significant issue in the Central West. It is almost impossible to charge a disposal fee, or monitor the wastes being received. The impact of this is significant as the responsibility falls upon Councils to either have the tyres collected and transported to Sydney for recycling, or have the stockpile shredded for burial in the landfill.

It is estimated that approximately 300,000 waste tyres are generated in the NetWaste region annually. This equates to approximately 3,000 tonnes of potentially valuable material, which in many instances, is currently disposed to landfill or illegally dumped. In both instances, such disposal presents problems and costs to regional councils.

The extent of this problem is clearly demonstrated by the estimated cost of \$60,000 to be incurred by one NetWaste member Council to process numerous loads of tyres dumped at rural facilities unless alternative options are found. Without the opportunity to charge a recovery cost at the gate for the disposal of these tyres, Councils are faced with having to source the funding internally.

NetWaste has identified a 'regional used tyre disposal project' in its Waste Strategy for 2008 and has released a Used Tyre Discussion Paper to member Councils to provide a broader understanding of tyre disposal and recycling options in the region, and across Australia, in an effort to reach a solution.

A field trip to Newcastle was also organised for member Councils to see first-hand the waste tyre recycling system known as Ecoflex technology. A proposal has been submitted to the NetWaste Forum for a regional contract with Ecoflex. The concept involves 2 to 3 councils engaging Ecoflex to undertake a construction project using their used tyres, which will then be showcased to other member councils.



2. Council members view an E-Pave road

The unique range of Ecoflex engineering solutions provides the construction industry with:

- Significantly reduced cost, 15 – 25 per cent lower construction cost.
- High performance building solutions – proven by over 450 building projects.
- That makes a real contribution to sustainable development and improved environmental management.

The current system for the collection and removal of tyres appears fragmented and there is support from member Councils for tyre rubber to be used in the NetWaste region, as well as other regional areas through NSW, for the manufacturer of other products for civil and commercial purposes. This would not only address a local solution to the issue of tyre disposal and recycling, but also potentially generate employment within the region.

Interviews are available with –

Stephen Sykes, Chair
RENEW NSW 0419 415 110

Dara Clayton, Co-ordinator
Netwaste Regional Waste Group (02) 6993 8770

NETWASTE regional waste group includes the following member councils:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bathurst• Bland• Blaney• Blue Mountains• Bogan Bourke• Brewarruna• Broken Hill• Cabonne• Central Darling• Cobar• Coonamble• Cowra• Dubbo• Forbes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gilgandra• Lithgow• Lachlan• MidWestern• Narromine• Oberon• Orange• Parkes• Walgett• Warren• Warrumbungle• Weddin• Wellington
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