

# From around other BIR committees

## E-scrap committee

The committee's study of reliable generation and flow data is already in draft form and will be published before the May 2018 meeting in Barcelona.

The study includes a summary of per capita WEEE production around the world and 2025 forecasts, from which it is evident that more than half of the world's WEEE will arise in the Asia-Pacific region.

Around 3.2 million tonnes a year is generated in India, but a UN report forecasts 20 million tonnes for the year 2020.

## Tyres committee

"Extremely negative" publicity continues to surround the use of tyre-derived crumb

rubber in synthetic turf, despite 100 studies stating there is no risk to human health, according to BIR tyres & rubber chairman Barend Ten Bruggencate, of Dutch tyre collection organisation Recybem. He reported that TV programmes aired in the Netherlands have alleged a connection between rubber granulate and health risks to human embryos, as well as an environmental impact from leaching into the soil.

"But there is no evidence," insisted Bruggencate, adding that tests on water from underneath synthetic turf pitches have indicated that the quality is actually higher than for rainwater.

US news stories have suggested that recycled rubber playing fields can cause

cancer in youth soccer players – but "with no specific evidence," emphasised Robin Wiener, ISRI president.

A multi-agency study involving, among others, the US Environmental Protection Agency is "at least a year away" from publishing its conclusions about crumb rubber use in synthetic turf, noted Wiener.

She said it was unfortunate that "the issue is not going away until there is a definitive study" because "ongoing speculation" has already led to a 30% market decline for crumb rubber in recent years.

Wiener urged the research community to be categorical about the risk factor "to help parents, teachers and policy-makers understand the true risks".

## INDIA-FOCUSED COMMITTEES

### Aluminium recycling committee

India's demand for secondary aluminium will increase by 8-10% a year, mainly boosted by the country's rapidly growing automotive industry, according to Akshay Agarwal, executive director of Century Metal Recycling: "This growing appetite will be met primarily by increased aluminium scrap imports."

Secondary aluminium accounts for 30% of India's overall consumption of 3.3 million tonnes a year. In the past six years, secondary aluminium demand has almost doubled to 1.1 million tonnes, of which 90% is imported. By 2021, demand is expected to reach 1.5 million tonnes. In 2016, 120,000 tonnes of aluminium scrap was generated in India, with the automotive and power segments accounting for 75%. But Agarwal said scrap collection is disorganised and there is insufficient awareness, leading to a large amount of scrap going to landfill.

The first car dismantling facility is scheduled to be running in the country before the end of this year, followed by the first car shredder. Agarwal said this was "baby steps to a future where you may abort scrap import dependency".

Navin Sharma, chief executive of Gravita India, said: "We see a trend of e-rickshaws growing by 20% in the coming years... the first electric buses are on the streets and thousands have been ordered."



### Textiles committee

India's textiles recycling sector employs more than one million people and, each year, turns over \$2bn in processing five million tonnes of material.

But despite these huge numbers in terms of social and economic contribution, the textiles sector is under pressure from increasing labour costs, a freight cost disadvantage, ageing technology, high import duties and onerous licence requirements.

Indian companies holding licences to import post-consumer textiles are facing an obligation to export 100% by weight of what they bring into the country – a measure that could force businesses into closure.

Since all post-consumer textiles for processing are imported and none is collected domestically, the effectiveness of textile recycling operations in India are demonstrated by a rate of 99%. Even labels, buttons and zips are regularly sold into India's 'disorganised' market.

BIR textiles division president Mehdi Zerroug, of Framimex in France, argued that an "open and controlled" import of used clothing into the Indian and Chinese markets would be an "extraordinary development" for the recycling industry and that BIR believed such a prospect should be reasonably discussed.

realistic and questioned how it would be measured. He wondered how recycling plants could adapt to such low limits and whether they would be granted a period of up to a year to make the necessary investments in new equipment "You cannot switch your machines just like that," he warned.

A sharp decrease in the volumes of mixed paper and OCC heading to China once the country's import controls began to be enforced were noted by

Baxi: "We were confronted with a decrease of over \$100 per tonne in OCC prices in a period of six weeks whereas the market grew by \$125 in the December-June period."

The lower grades of recovered fibre will require major investments by suppliers in quality control processes and technology, according to Andreas Uriel, managing director of German paper recycler Uriel Papierrohstoffe.

"These extra costs must be covered

by appropriate recovered paper prices," he added.

Stricter customs controls have meant that the cost of bringing waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) shipments into China is as high as \$10,000 per container, according to Wong: "WEEE scrap plastic recyclers have no choice but to either close down their operations or move to south-east Asian countries to continue their businesses."