



OPEN LETTER REGARDING STAWELL TYRE STOCKPILE

December 2016

Dear Stawell Resident

I want to let you know personally and honestly the situation regarding the status of the used tyre stockpile in Saleyards Road, Stawell, dispelling misinformation that is being reported.

As you may be aware, UTRC purchased the approx. 9 million tyres in June 2015 to create a new environmentally-friendly and employment-rich tyre recycling business in Stawell.

Back then we were lauded for taking on the toxic hazard that was illegally created over eight years by rogue operators who went bankrupt.

UTRC has done everything possible to get the clean-technology pyrolysis plant built and operational. But throughout the entire period we have been hindered in our attempts with unreasonable demands by the authorities.



The facts are:

- Before UTRC took ownership, no-one did anything, nor spent any money to fix the problem: not the Council, Victorian Government (eg DELWP), EPA, CFA nor GWMWater.
- In 2015, the Victorian Government provided a \$20-50,000 grant to a Control Group comprising the Council, DELWP, EPA, CFA and GWMWater to review what was to be done with the tyre dump. This group continues to meet monthly yet has never invited UTRC to a meeting or advised UTRC of meeting outcomes.
- UTRC has received no government funding or reimbursements whatsoever to help get the plant built despite repeated requests to waive some fees.
- We have spent \$2 million cash so far in application fees, imposed site works to meet new regulations and red tape and are still months off being able to submit a Council building permit to build the recycling plant. The CFA even required us to move approx. 1 million tyres to create a fire road in the middle of the tyre pile, and wants us to install 2 x 250,000 litre water tanks and pumps, even though we have already installed 2 x 45,000 litre tanks and bought our own high pressure fire engine truck with a 15,000-litre tank.
- The EPA requires UTRC to shred the tyres and store them in 40-foot containers even though the new pyrolysis plant when built will totally eliminate the tyres. We had to purchase a shredder for \$250,000 and have purchased 15 containers (\$2,500 each) that are stored on the block next door that is licensed from DELWP. We have been shredding for months and we are expected to keep shredding and buying more containers even though we will run out of space to store them and the block will be so full of containers, we will have no room left to actually build our recycling plant.

- DELWP mandated that \$125,000 is required to replace approx.125 trees (\$1000 per tree) that need to be removed from the land licenced by UTRC from them, on which to build the recycling plant. These replacement seedlings would be grown on a landowner's property in the Wimmera area. This requirement was made of UTRC 9 months ago, yet DELWP had no land it could identify for planting in the Wimmera region for more than six months. We asked DELWP if we could at least remove the trees whilst it located a landowner candidate but were advised if we removed any trees to progress the project, we would be heavily fined. Then, once a landowner was located, a further 3 months was lost due to contract completion with the landowner. The total time lost has been 9 months.
- During fencing works, we found a water pipe owned by GWMWater on the DELWP licensed land where our plant is to be located. However, there's no record of a pipe ever being laid there and no approval for it has ever been given. Now demands are being made for UTRC to pay \$15,000 towards its relocation, even though the pipe shouldn't be there in the first place. Due to this, we can't finish the fence which is a mandate of the Council, DELWP and EPA.
- The EPA said UTRC needs to prepare a works approval application to build the recycling plant, which we are doing, but also demands we pay \$25,000 for the EPA to review our application. To date, we have already spent \$105,000 just preparing the comprehensive works approval application.
- Further EPA guidelines require UTRC to split the tyre pile into 12 separate piles, which will cost us another \$200,000 in labour and equipment, with little benefit to anyone.

The Control Group and the State Government have said they are doing everything to support UTRC, yet the State Government is actually writing to citizens stating that UTRC isn't delivering from its end. There are great, supportive people from the EPA, CFA, Council and DELWP working in this Group who have provided exemplary support to UTRC, but they are being hamstrung by an unreasonable State Government and oppressive regulations.

More than \$1 million of our costs to date have been paid to local businesses who are providing products and services to the project. All UTRC has asked from the State Government is to waive three small fees based on the principle that UTRC is spending a fortune to fix a problem that it had no hand in creating in the first place, in order to benefit the State of Victoria and the people of Stawell.

UTRC is doing its best to get the recycling plant operational, but is being crushed and smothered by unnecessary red tape, unfair regulations, unconscionable fees and a lack of good sense and decency.

I welcome your feedback and invite you to leave a comment on our website at utrc.com.au



Yours faithfully,

Dr Matthew Starr

CEO

DEWLP: Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

EPA: Environment Protection Authority Victoria

GWMWater: Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water Corporation

