

More tyres on the road to recycling

An improved method of recycling waste rubber for use in new tyres, industrial insulation, road pavement, flooring or geotextiles for retaining walls and embankments is being developed by CSIRO in association with Australian company VR TEK Operations.



Credit: CSIRO

Each year about one billion tyres are discarded globally, with most ending up in landfill.

Tyres can be costly to recycle and create health and environmental hazards when burned. Given that global demand for rubber currently exceeds supply, industry's inability to recycle tyres economically translates into inefficient resource use.

The new technology will reduce waste tyres to devulcanised and activated high quality rubber powders that can be used to manufacture new rubber products.

According to CSIRO scientist Barrie Finnin, CSIRO and VR TEK recently succeeded in segmenting a tyre using a cutting mechanism built to VR TEK's design.

'The next two stages will involve devulcanisation and activation of rubber to produce the resultant high quality rubber powders,' he said.

VR TEK Managing Director, Michael Vainer, added that recycling rubber is a cheaper and more energy efficient option than producing virgin materials.

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