

Environmental benefits of re-refining



This is recycling



This is not recycling

About 350 million litres of waste lube oil is collected in Australia every year. Wastefully, 60% is burned in Australia and 24% is exported to be burned overseas, mainly in Asia. This means more than 290 million litres of Australia's waste lube oil is burned as fuel every year.

Recycling benefits the environment

Each tonne of oil burned releases 2.92 tonnes of CO_{2e} into the environment. The waste lube oil in Australia which is burned or exported to be burned produces a carbon footprint eight times greater than re-refining.

If all of Australia's collected waste oil was re-refined instead of burned, greenhouse gas emissions would be reduced by about 1 million tonnes per year.

Burning destroys a valuable commodity and permanently removes lube oil from productive use. This increases demand for the international production of crude lube oil and reliance on imports.

Southern Oil re-refines waste lube oil for reuse as lube oil – its best and highest use and a cradle-to-cradle solution. Southern Oil guarantees the highest beneficial re-use of waste lube oil – which it believes should be the only waste management option for organisations committed to sound environmental performance.

Southern Oil's re-refining process produces no waste. Every component is reused and 99% of the lube oil component in the waste oil is recovered as high quality lube oil.

Production of re-refined lube oil uses 60% less energy compared to the production of crude lube oil, all of which is imported into Australia.

Burning is not recycling

Burning waste lube oil as a fuel (energy recovery) is often labelled as recycling by its proponents. It is not. Burning is not the same as recycling and energy recovery sits lower than recycling in the waste management hierarchy.

Burning is not considered recycling for any other commodity (e.g. paper, plastics, organic waste). Waste lube oil burnt as a fuel is not recycled and should not be accepted as recycling by government agencies.

This includes the use of waste oil derived products as a diesel replacement in ANFO (ammonium nitrate/fuel oil) explosives. This is still burning (albeit very fast) and should not be considered recycling.

Waste oil is classified as a hazardous substance and, if unregulated or burned at low temperatures, potentially releases a range of toxic compounds directly into the environment.

Used oil contains compounds which are potentially harmful, including poly aromatic hydrocarbons, chlorinated hydrocarbons, heavy metals and dioxins/furans. These chemicals are known carcinogens and mutagens. Southern Oil's re-refining process removes these harmful compounds.

Southern Oil's re-refined oils are subjected to testing and must adhere to quality standards under the national Product Stewardship for Oil Act. Waste oils for burning are not subjected to any quality specifications.

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