



MEDIA RELEASE

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UNWANTED PAINT PRIMING THE WAY IN ROAD CONSTRUCTION

The humble can of household paint is at the heart of an Australian research mission to divert 90 per cent of the country's unwanted paint out of landfill and vital waterways and into our budding circular economy.

"The circular economy revolution isn't going to just happen – Australia needs to get out there and make it work," Paintback's General Manager of Research and Development Dr Salwan Al-Assafi said.

Paintback is the official product stewardship program for Australian paint, which is supported by paint manufacturers and funded by a 15c-per-litre levy on paint products, which helps to fund important research into innovative uses for the reclaimed paint. It aims to recover 90 per cent of unwanted paint and packaging it collects and transform them for use in Australia's circular economy – where products are re-used or repurposed for other manufacturing or industry processes to keep them circulating instead of being discarded permanently.

"Thanks to Australians, there is already a local circular economy for paint, but we want to expand it by creating new products, putting them back into circulation and creating new markets for Australia's unwanted paint," Dr Al-Assafi said.

"We want the humble household paint to become a showcase for the circular economy."

To do this, Paintback has partnered with the Australian Road Research Board (ARRB), the National Transport Research Organisation.

Together they are researching how reclaimed water-based paint can have a beneficial use in road infrastructure applications.

ARRB Principal Professional, Sustainability and Material Performance, Dr James Grenfell said the project would investigate the use of reclaimed water-based paint in the following applications:

- Rejuvenation type products involving bitumen emulsions
- Stabilisation of granular materials
- Dust suppressants
- Non-structural concrete for low-risk road applications

"There is the strong potential that this project will develop materials solutions and blends that can be up-scaled and produced at the plant scale with a view to being introduced into general infrastructure construction and rehabilitation works," Dr Grenfell said.

Last year alone, Australians returned 9.3 million kgs of paint and pails to Paintback, which runs more than 160 permanent collection points across the country to collect the paint and ensure it is disposed of safely or converted for other uses, like creating an alternative fuel for kilns, or extracting water from latex paint for use in industry.



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Paintback research shows that, while one in three Australians have old or leftover paint at home, more than half (54 per cent) of them didn't know there were organisations to help them dispose of paint safely. Given that 5% of paint purchased each year ends up surplus to requirements, this isn't just an issue for the environment, it's a big opportunity as well.

"If we can make Australia's unwanted paint a hero of our circular economy, we help protect the environment, reduce the amount of paint in landfill, and support local innovation," Dr Al-Assafi said.

Photo Opportunity Available

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