

Media Release

9 November 2015

BSL rolls out can recycling in its production mix

In time for National Recycling Week (9-15 November), Boyne Smelters Limited (BSL) is now operating Queensland's only and Australia's largest aluminium can recycling facility after a successful pilot proved the potential of the value-add processing concept earlier this year.

The smelter is now recycling around 13 million aluminium cans a month, which will add 2,400 tonnes of aluminium to its production annually.

In 2011, BSL invested in a partnership with Inalco for an onsite processing plant to recycle dross, cell bottoms, and scrap aluminium. Prior to 2011, all dross was sent offsite for processing.

But it wasn't until Australia's largest remaining aluminium recycling plant closed last year, resulting in the majority of aluminium cans being sent offshore for processing, that BSL staff saw a wider opportunity to use its onsite capability.

"Our people saw a gap in the market and saw an opportunity to add value to Australian resources here in Gladstone. They prepared a business case and we started a pilot in June this year," BSL Site GM Joe Rea said.

"I'm pleased to say the pilot was successful. We've seized the opportunity to add to our recycling capability by processing aluminium cans through the existing onsite plant as a supplementary feedstock.

"Part of the pilot was proving to our customers that the quality of our BSL product would not be compromised and they've been more than happy with the results."

BSL sources 80 per cent of its cans from Queensland with the remainder from NSW, trucking in a planned 156 million cans a year.

Aside from the benefits of reducing landfill waste, recycling aluminium uses only around five per cent of the energy of primary aluminium production, resulting in less greenhouse gas emissions.

All up, the recycling plant processes on average 520 tonnes of scrap aluminium, cans, dross and cell bottoms a month at BSL with metal recovery at around 60-90 per cent, depending on the feedstock.

BSL has the capacity to double its current recycling production figures without additional investment in the plant, however, the volume of cans needed to maintain cost efficiencies is challenged by road freight costs. BSL will review the can recycling business case in early 2016.

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Fast Facts

- Boyne Smelters Limited (BSL) has been operating since 1982 and is Australia's largest aluminium smelter.
- The smelter is situated in Central Queensland and produces more than half a million tonnes of aluminium each year.
- The operation employs around 1,000 people and indirectly supports about 6,700 jobs nationally with 3,000 of these jobs in the Gladstone region.