



Insights from the 2025 BIR World Recycling Convention, Bangkok

The BIR World Recycling Convention 2025 in Bangkok brought together over 1 000 global delegates to focus on the challenges and opportunities shaping the future of recycling. From trade tensions to technological breakthroughs, the event highlighted the important role recyclers play in navigating a rapidly evolving global landscape.

Key themes from the convention:

- Tariffs and protectionist policies continue to disrupt global scrap flows. The International Trade Council warned that rising trade barriers could stifle innovation and limit access to secondary raw materials.
- The International Environment Council reaffirmed BIR's commitment to defending recyclers' interests amid growing regulatory uncertainty.
- A landmark partnership between BIR and the United Nations aims to improve global monitoring of electronic waste, with a focus on EV batteries and electronics, a sector poised for explosive growth.
- The Ferrous Division showcased how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is revolutionising sorting, grading, and logistics. These tools are becoming more accessible even for smaller operators.
- With markets experiencing instability, data-driven decision-making is helping traders navigate volatility and identify emerging opportunities.

"What stood out was the urgency. Whether it is AI, trade policy, or e-waste, the pace of change is accelerating. South Africa must stay plugged into these global conversations, not just to adapt but to lead where we can," says Quintin Starkey, Metal Recyclers Association of South Africa (MRA) Committee Member.

As the MRA looks ahead to 2026, these insights will inform our strategic priorities from policy engagement to capacity building and international collaboration.

Read more about the event and its global insights at <https://www.bir.org/en/news-press/press-releases>.

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