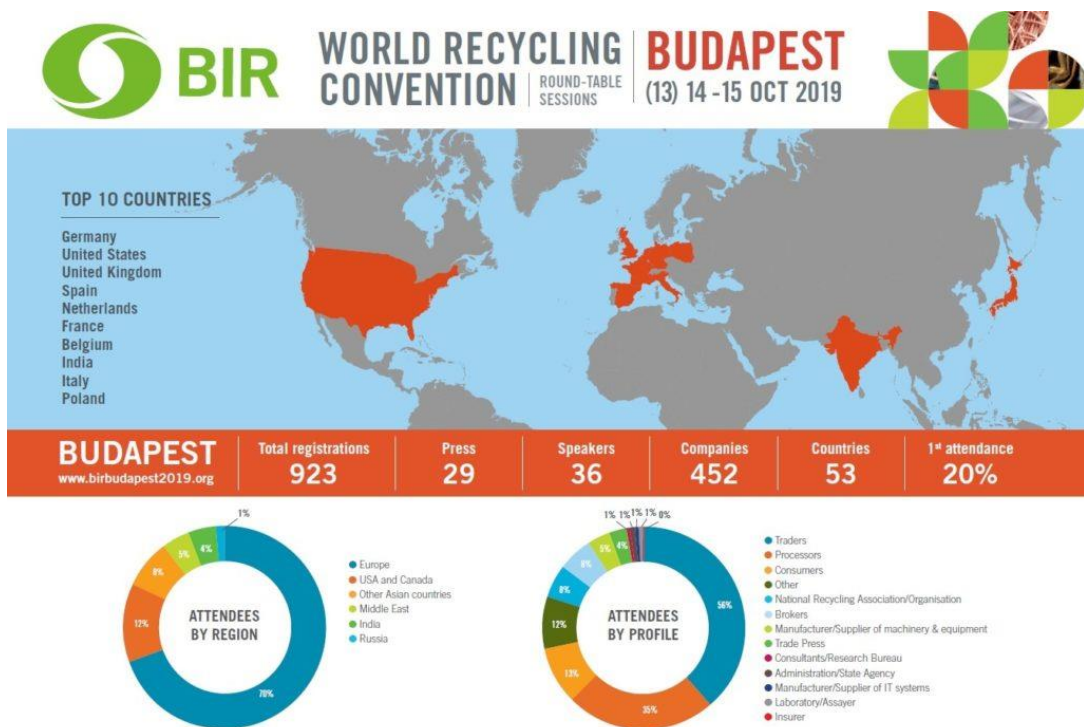




## BIR Notes

October 2019

## Opening Session





## ***“Don't panic”***

In the midst of global uncertainty, **“Don't Panic”** was the common phrase used at the BIR convention in Budapest. While commodity prices have bottomed out and the geopolitical situation (trade war between the US and China) creates challenges, this also opens up opportunities for countries like Vietnam and Bangladesh.

With South Africa's economic climate, not too dissimilar to that of the rest of the world, we would do well to adopt the mind-set **“Don't Panic”**.

## **Objective**

### **A word from BIR President Tom Bird**



*“Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*The world has been full of turmoil in recent times from the perspective of: general politics; macro-economic issues ranging from Brexit to trade wars; and, of course, the huge coverage in the media relating to the environment and climate change. Where do our industry and recycling fit into, and play their part in, all of this? How do we position our industry at the forefront of the climate change and environmental debate?*

*BIR is the sole international/global recycling organization. With the support of national federations and members, we need to cement this position. There are a number of key areas I will be looking at and promoting as BIR President, with the support of the Director General and the secretariat”*

The MRA has long been a member of [BIR](#) and the question of cost benefit was considered by the Executive Committee. Recently, at the recent [IFAT 2019 Conference](#) the MRA was able to meet with the Director General Arnaud Brunet to discuss it’s membership and other issues. The take-home from the meeting was that the BIR would like to expand their footprint and representation on the African Continent, using the MRA as a vehicle to achieve this objective, through partnership and collaboration

BIR afforded the MRA an opportunity (free registration) to attend the [BIR Budapest Convention](#) - with the view to explore these objectives. Over the next 3-4 years, the MRA will join forces with the BIR to become a more recognized association. Not only on the African Continent, but on the global stage as well.

## **Environmental Issues**

Much of Europe and the United States faces similar challenges relating to the "image" of the recycling industry. The insistence by government departments to classify scrap metal as waste is common practice. The all too familiar phrase: **“We are the solution and not the problem”**, for a moment, made me forget that I was 6000 km’s from home. Collaboration with associations around the world will ensure that we are “in-the-know” when it comes to scrap definitions and re-classification.

With the recently proposed export tax, there is a potential "Green Hurricane" on low value traded items finding their way into landfills. The MRA needs to have a voice with government when it comes to matters relating to such policies and the potential negative unintended consequences relating to disposal thereof. We need people who understand our industry. What we don’t need more regulation and red tape.

In a recent European regulatory document, 23 pages, the omission of the word **RECYCLING** was a clear indication that we, and not government, know our industry best.

The recycling industry was "green" before it was fashionable and we need to educate government and *Joe Public* through various collaborations and initiatives like [Global Recycling Day](#). Ignorance is our greatest challenge, both locally and internationally. Time and effort needs to be invested to ensure our industry gets the recognition for the role it plays.....for the right reasons.



### **Ferrous Board Meeting highlights – by invitation only**

- Request for information sharing for reporting and statistical data collection and reporting
- BIR has no representation from and African perspective and it was proposed that Quintin join the Ferrous Board. To be discussed further at the conference in Istanbul.
- An opportunity would be given for South Africa make presentation on the local market at the next BIR convention.
- The MRA's attendance was well received
- South Africa, through the membership of the MRA, has an opportunity to participate in the sharing of data with BIR to become more recognized as a global player.

### **Conclusion**

Much was learned and gained from the experience. Leveraged correctly, the MRA and its members can look forward to a mutually beneficial relationship with the BIR over the next few years.

Should you have any comments or question regarding this report or the MRA's involvement with BIR? Please direct them in writing to the MRA secretary for consideration and reply.