



## A Message from the NTDA Chief Executive



*Dear NTDA members and automotive aftermarket colleagues;*

To say that 2022 has been tough for the trade would be an understatement and one could, therefore, certainly be forgiven for looking to 2023 with an amount of trepidation.

The Bank of England recently announced that the UK is facing its longest recession since records began, both the cost of living and doing business are affecting us all and current political leadership ineptness across the Western economies is very demoralising.

Combine this with ongoing post-Brexit issues, the war in Ukraine and the supply chain disruption this has caused, the threat of further conflicts in the South China Sea and North Korea and it becomes difficult, for some people, to think beyond Christmas!

The NTDA is certainly seeing the impact across its membership. Recently a number of smaller members have ceased trading. Some because after paying suppliers and other operating costs they can't generate a profit, but more are closing their doors because they simply can't recruit tyre technicians, mechanics, MoT testers and other skilled employees.

It is safe to say, that the growing skills shortage is now the biggest crisis the trade faces and the NTDA has just commissioned Build Public Relations Ltd to conduct a national survey, in early 2023, with members and other automotive aftermarket industry leaders with a view to publishing an NTDA Industry Skills Shortage Research and Policy Report by Q2 2023.

The fact of the matter is, successive governments have neglected vocational training for decades and as the old adage goes; "You reap what you sow". The good news is, it's not all doom and gloom and there are a lot of businesses out there looking for a way forward. For instance, our professional licensing activity is thriving as employers recognise how important investing in training and development is, to retaining their employees and currently more than 11,000 technicians have been trained, assessed as competent and issued with a professional licence under our REACT and Tyre Technician Professional Development schemes.

Also, the last 3 years have been some of the best on record for NTDA membership growth, *(including many supplier members from the aftermarket)*, as businesses recognise the benefit of belonging to an association that will lobby, represent and fight on their behalf. Whether tyre manufacturer, wholesaler, retailer, repairer, re-treader, collector, re-processor or aftermarket equipment, tools and accessories supplier, our members are all an intrinsic part of a supply chain responsible for ensuring professional stewardship of the tyre and fast fit trade and coming together under the common banner of the NTDA makes that trade much stronger.

For example, the NTDA is lobbying to secure the future access to vehicle data for the aftermarket which includes our members. In October 2022, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) wrote to the Secretary of State recommending the introduction of new, UK-specific, block exemption regulations for the automotive sector, naturally we support this, both as the NTDA and as part of UK-AFCAR, and believe the block exemption needs to be improved and modernised, as it is the central piece of legislation, ensuring a certain level playing field for competition in the automotive aftermarket, between independents and national chains, such as our members, and vehicle manufacturers and their authorised networks.

In other areas of activity, we have continued with our enduring support of the Professional Recovery Operators Federation, (PROF) and our backing of its campaign to allow both its recovery operators and our commercial and mobile tyre technicians working across the strategic road network to have red beacons on their vehicles and more recently have responded to the Northern Ireland Department for Infrastructure Public Consultation proposing a ban on tyres aged 10 years and older on heavy goods vehicles, buses, coaches and minibuses. The NTDA supports the proposal both on safety grounds and because this will bring NI legislation in line with the rest of the UK.

*We look forward to working with, and for, all of our members and wish you all a wonderful festive season and a safe, healthy and prosperous 2023!*



As we look to the future, the Circular Economy, especially in relation to Green Tech, also represents massive opportunities. For example, the growing investment in developing innovative technologies to convert end-of-life tyres back into carbon, oil and steel, without producing emissions.

In addition, the work manufacturers are undertaking to design tyres in ways that initially reduce rolling resistance and tyre wear, (a requirement of Euro 7 standards), and then facilitate repair and remanufacturing, increasing tyre lifespan and reducing environmental impact.

Truck tyres, for example, are now designed to be retreaded up to three times and the NTDA is 100% committed to promoting retreading, because it makes absolutely undeniable sense to keep resources in use for as long as possible whilst also supporting skilled employment in this important sector of the trade. Who knows – we may even start to see the return of car tyre remoulding, which is already a growing sector in countries such as France!

Let's just hope that our government catches up, also starts to recognise the many opportunities, cuts through the red tape, gets a grip of its own levelling up plans and drives business growth – we certainly need it to!

*I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous 2023!*

*Stefan Hay*

## 2023 Diary Dates to Remember



Looking to the future, the Association is already planning ahead for 2023, so here are just some of the excellent networking events at which we hope to see you at throughout the year:

- **NTDA Stand at Automechanika Birmingham** from 6th to 8th June, NEC Birmingham, B40 1NT
- **NTDA Tyre Industry Golf Day and Charity Fundraiser Dinner** on Tuesday 4th July 2023, Belton Woods Hotel, SPA and Golf Resort
- **9th NTDA Tyre Industry Conference and Lunch, sponsored by GB Tyres (UK) Ltd** on Thursday 19th October 2023 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Milton Keynes, Stadium Way West, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK1 1ST
- **94th NTDA Annual Dinner, sponsored by Maritime Cargo Services, together with the 10th Tyre Industry Awards Ceremony, sponsored by Sailun Tyres**, on Thursday 19th October 2023 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Milton Keynes, Stadium Way West, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK1 1ST