

Sumitomo Rubber SA pledges investments ahead of Dunlop Ladysmith plant's 50th anniversary

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[Sumitomo Rubber South Africa](#) (Pty) Ltd (SRSA) is set to inject new life into its [Dunlop](#) tyre manufacturing plant in Ladysmith, KwaZulu-Natal, as the production facility marks its golden anniversary this year. The company has lined up a series of exciting investments that will see the plant improve local production capacity, expand product lines and create new job opportunities.



Dunlop Ladysmith production facility

The Dunlop Ladysmith production facility first opened its doors in October 1973 and has since been at the forefront of tyre production in South Africa.

SRSA CEO, Lubin Ozoux, said, “The 50th anniversary of our Dunlop Ladysmith manufacturing plants marks an exciting time for us, as we look to build on this impressive history and create a brighter future for the region.”

“We want to increase our impact on creating employment in South Africa over the next few years and months. We will, therefore, be investing in machinery and systems that will ensure that we have capability locally to meet the requirements of Original Equipment manufacturers, gain efficiencies to better serve the local market, and create a better and safer experience for motorists on the road,” said Ozoux.

The new investment drive follows previous phases of expansion at the facility. In 2018 SRSA officially launched its new, state-of-the-art, 180,000m² Truck and Bus Radial (TBR) factory at the plant, facilitating local manufacture of truck and bus tyres which it previously imported. This involved an investment of over R2.1bn and marked the second phase of SRSA's multi-billion-rand investment to upgrade and modernise the Dunlop plant's capacity.

Prior to this, SRSA had also modernised its passenger car, sport utility vehicle (SUV) and light truck tyre manufacturing capabilities at the plant.



Lubin Ozoux, CEO Sumitomo Rubber SA

“These investments have enabled us to increase manufacturing output and meet the needs of the region’s tyre markets, particularly in the latter part of our five decades of operation at the plant,” said Ozoux.

As the manufacturer of popular tyre brands including Dunlop, Sumitomo and Falken, SRSA strives to deliver the newest, most ground-breaking tyre innovations.

Flagship brand Dunlop now offers tyres for the full spectrum of motoring applications – passenger, SUV and 4x4, light truck, truck and bus, and motorcycle – and the majority of these are manufactured locally at the Ladysmith plant.

Stringent manufacturing processes ensure that Dunlop not only meets, but exceeds, global standards. SRSA’s ongoing research and development – anchored by the technical design expertise of its Japanese parent company Sumitomo Rubber Industries - are incorporated in product design, resulting in enhanced performance, safety, and longevity of Dunlop tyres.

In 2013 SRI, a leading Japanese listed global manufacturer in the premium automotive tyre and industrial rubber product market, situated in Kobe Japan, secured the rights to use the Dunlop brand throughout the African continent.

The subsequent establishment of Sumitomo Rubber South Africa (Pty) Ltd in 2014 accelerated the pace of the company’s vision of expansion and development of innovative technology and safety throughout the continent.

Ozoux concluded, “As a resident tyre manufacturer linked to a global multi-national organisation and a proud member of the South African Tyre Manufacturers Conference (SATMC), we look forward to an exciting future in South Africa, with a renewed commitment to delivering world-class products to our customers. The investments lined up for the Dunlop Ladysmith manufacturing plant will not only improve capacity but will also provide more job opportunities, creating a positive impact on the local community. We believe that the future is bright, and we are proud to continue to serve as a trusted brand that delivers quality, reliability, and safety on the road.

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