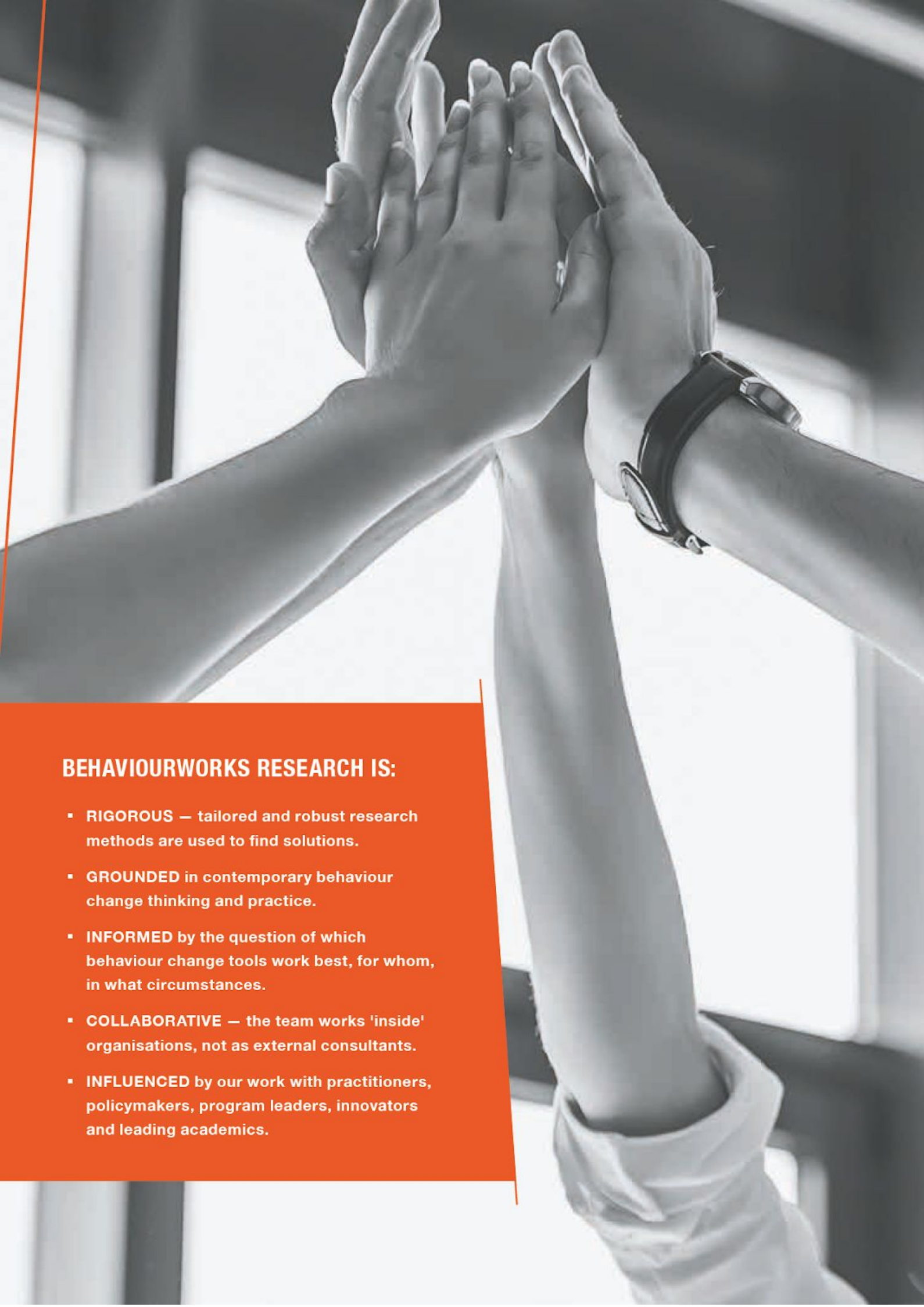
Submission to the 'Right to Repair' Inquiry
BehaviourWorks Australia, Monash University



BEHAVIOURWORKS RESEARCH IS:

- **RIGOROUS** — tailored and robust research methods are used to find solutions.
- **GROUNDED** in contemporary behaviour change thinking and practice.
- **INFORMED** by the question of which behaviour change tools work best, for whom, in what circumstances.
- **COLLABORATIVE** — the team works 'inside' organisations, not as external consultants.
- **INFLUENCED** by our work with practitioners, policymakers, program leaders, innovators and leading academics.

BehaviourWorks Australia welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into 'Right to Repair'. A brief summary is provided here, with a summary of relevant research and more detailed responses to each question including references included on the following pages.

Summary of relevant research

As part of our Waste & Circular Economy Collaboration[1] and related projects, BehaviourWorks Australia has recently conducted survey research and trials providing insights that we believe are critical to the Commission's deliberations.

Our findings provide support for public interest to repair products and have access to services at a competitive price, and we believe that public policy such as a right to repair can promote the uptake of repair services and increase repair behaviours among the population.

This summary draws on National and Victorian surveys of household adoption of repair behaviour, plus a program of work exploring the potential for new labelling schemes (or expansion of existing schemes) to support the transition to a circular economy (CE). This research specifically included product lifetime and repairability labelling.

As part of the labelling research, we conducted a series of online choice experiments investigating consumer preference for circular product characteristics – including repairability. While experimental research is an early step on the development pathway to evidence-informed behavioural public policy, **initial results indicate consumer an interest in repairable and durable products, beyond their current availability/uptake.**

Australians want to repair and use items longer, and are willing to pay a premium

Looking at fashion & textile products, we found that **consumers do prefer products that are durable and repairable** when given the opportunity to choose, though price is the single most important attribute.

Encouragingly, people will pay more for CE attributes, up to a point. For example, **consumers are willing to pay (WTP) a price premium of $20 if a jacket could be repaired for 10% of the purchase price**. They would **pay a premium of $46 if the**

[1] The collaboration involves five partners: Sustainability Victoria, the Victorian Government Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Environment Protection Authority Victoria, the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, and the NSW Environment Protection Authority (with contributions from the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment).

product could be repaired for free[2] (such novel business models/services are beginning to be offered by innovative companies such as Patagonia or Nudie Jeans).

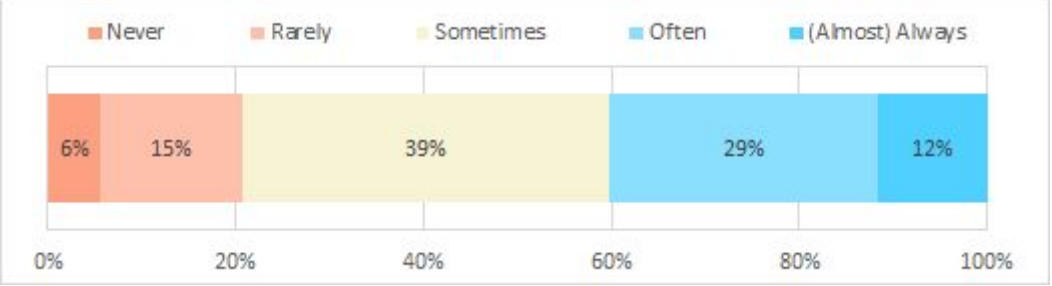
The significance of price underlines the importance of complementary policy tools levelling the playing field or support for competitive/affordable pricing of repair services. Despite the general willingness of consumers to pay extra, the limits of their willingness to pay raises important questions about whether repair services can realistically be offered for a currently acceptable price (eg. 10% or less of purchase price).

The interest we found in repair services is supported by other research. For example, market research by Ipsos on behalf of ING found that just under half (46%) of Australian consumers expect to be increasingly re-using products by having them repaired instead of throwing them away.This is lower than the 60% in Europe– suggesting that numbers in Australia will also increase as notions of circular economy become more commonplace.[3]

Many currently don't repair

In our recent survey of the Australian population, when asked generally about repair in the last year, more than 20% of Australians reported that they have **never** or **rarely** repaired products.

In the last year (2019-20), how often have you repaired products when broken?



Sample: 1,528 Respondents

BehaviourWorks has produced further detailed research on behalf of the Victorian Government Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning in support of monitoring behaviour changes from the *Recycling Victoria Policy*, which we can share further information from pending their submissions.

This includes Victorian measures of:

[2] For jeans, consumers would be willing to pay around $12 more for the option of repair at 10% purchase price, and around $27 for the option of free repair. Klemm, C., Kaufman, S., 2020. Can circular economy policy leverage eco-labels?: trial research initial report, A report from the BWA Waste and Circular Economy Collaboration. BehaviourWorks Australia, Monash Sustainable Development Institute, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia.

[3] ING (Nov 2019). ING International Survey - Consumer attitudes towards the circular economy (conducted by Ipsos). https://think.ing.com/reports/circular-economy-consumers-seek-help

- the number of people reporting repairing a product either themselves (or through personal contacts)
- through a paid commercial service
- a free brand service

These can be compared across a range of common products (e.g. cars, bikes, appliances, furniture etc).

There are barriers to businesses providing more repairable products

Our review of perceived barriers for business to CE product innovation/practices found that a key barriers include the (perceived) lack of consumer demand, and business hesitancy to experiment with CE practices. These results are reported in the following BWA Report.

Kaufman, S., Curtis, J., Saeri, A., Kunstler, B., Slattery, P., Wild, A., Bragge, P., Downes, J., 2020. Business uptake of circular economy approaches: A rapid evidence review for behavioural public policy. Prepared for the BWA Waste and CE collaboration, BehaviourWorks Australia, Monash University.

While our experimental studies suggest this consumer demand does exist (reported below), this is latent or hampered by lack of good, credible and timely information.

Detailed Response

INFORMATION REQUEST 6

f) Do consumers have access to good information about durability and reparability when making purchases? If not, how could access to information be improved?

It is difficult to find reliable information on repairability and durability of a product

Our research indicates that **many Australians find it difficult to find reliable information on repairability and durability of a product**. More than half of respondents "somewhat agree" that it's difficult to find reliable information on (a) how easy it is to repair a product, and (b) how long a product will last. See below for detailed data.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? *Using a 5-point Likert scale from (1) Strongly disagree to (5) Strongly agree*

	Mean	Std. Deviation
It's difficult to find reliable information on how long a product will last	4.02	0.930
Buying durable products saves money in the long-term	4.10	0.904
It's difficult to find reliable information on how easy it is to repair a product	3.80	1.007
Buying products that can be repaired saves money in the long-term	3.75	0.990

Sample: 382 Respondents

We believe that **credible, and easily accessible information at the point of sale** – for example through product labelling schemes – **has the potential to assist consumers and promote behaviour change.**

Our research showed that if consumers have access to easily comparable, credible information on CE attributes (including repairability) alongside other product information at the time of choosing a product, product repairability can influence consumer choice towards products that enable repair. This has the added benefit of increasing demand and therefore, likely, greater supply of products designed for repair.

An example of such a labelling scheme as a policy tool exists in France, where a voluntary repairability and durability labelling scheme was recently introduced, with the repairability label set to become mandatory in 2021.[1]

Governments may be particularly well placed for providing such information.

Our study shows that while any type of product labelling is generally moderately well trusted, **governments are the most trusted source of product labelling information** on the environmental benefits of a product.

Information provided should consider current understanding of repairability among the Australian population. Our research shows: When it comes to 'repairability', for most Australians this generally connotes that a professional repair firm or the company that sold it can repair, rather than consumers themselves.