

## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

14 April 2026

Ref: NW/KB

**Chair:** The Hon. Nichole OVERALL, MLC

**Deputy Chair:** Dr Amanda COHN, MLC

**Members:**

The Hon. Dr Sarah KAINE, MLC

The Hon. Natasha MACLAREN-JONES, MLC

The Hon. Peter PRIMROSE, MLC

The Hon. Rodney ROBERTS, MLC

The Hon. Emily SUVAAL, MLC

Dear Nicole and Committee Members,

**Select Committee on Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities – Parkes hearing 14-4-2026**

On behalf of the Parkes community, I thank the Committee for today's hearings and the respect shown to our community. I am sure you would agree the proceedings clearly demonstrated the depth of opposition, strength of feeling, and genuine fear that proposed Energy from Waste (EfW) facilities are generating, particularly in regional communities.

Importantly, the evidence and commentary presented today highlighted that opposition to EfW is not confined to local residents or councils. Community members have clearly identified that a number of serving State and Federal Ministers, as well as local Members of Parliament, have publicly expressed opposition to these proposals. This underscores that concern about EfW spans political boundaries and tiers of government.

A central issue for our community is one of fairness and equity. Parkes is being asked to host infrastructure designed primarily to manage metropolitan Sydney's waste, yet with little to no direct local benefit, while accepting the full burden of uncertainty, perceived risk, long-term scrutiny, and reputational impact.

This raises a fundamental question: Should a regional community be required to deal with Sydney's waste when the impacts remain largely unknown, benefits are minimal, and support is by enlarge absent, and if so, what price is placed on that burden?

Community concern is not ideological. It is driven by the reality that the long-term health, environmental, and agricultural impacts of EfW remain uncertain and contested, and by the fear that any adverse consequences may emerge slowly and irreversibly over decades.

Accordingly, Council urges the Committee to recommend:

1. A statewide moratorium on all EfW facilities in NSW until definitive, independent studies conclusively establish safety for human health, agriculture, and the environment.



If EfW is found not to be safe, the process must stop. If it is proven safe, logic demands that facilities be located at or near the source of waste generation, metropolitan Sydney, rather than disproportionately imposed on regional NSW.

2. While Council strongly urges a moratorium, we also recognise that EfW projects may proceed irrespective of the Inquiry's recommendations. In that event, it is critical that the following requirements be mandated, and we ask the Committee to give these matters serious consideration:

- The highest standards of safety, best-practice monitoring, transparent reporting, and genuine community engagement be required, as outlined in Council's submission.
- A binding requirement that EfW facilities be continuously upgraded to operate at international best available technology as standards evolve, both in terms of operation and monitoring.
- The introduction of a mandatory community hosting levy, similar to and set at no less than half the Sydney landfill levy, returned directly to host communities.

On 26 July 2025, before more than 600 Parkes residents in the very room the inquiry was held, Dr Cohn would recall being asked whether she would choose to live in Parkes if an EfW facility were built here. Her response was unequivocal: NO. That moment captured, plainly and publicly, the lived reality confronting this community, that infrastructure of this nature fundamentally alters how a place is viewed as somewhere to live, invest, and raise families.

For metropolitan households, the cost of a hosting levy would be modest, approximately one dollar per week. For regional communities, it represents acknowledgement of risk, uncertainty, and the absence of genuine choice.

We again acknowledge the Committee's respectful and genuine engagement with communities throughout this Inquiry. Such engagement is critical to maintaining trust and social licence, both of which have been significantly eroded in the progression of EfW proposals in New South Wales. Over the past four years, there was a clear opportunity for the NSW Government to work closely with affected communities to ensure people were at least fully informed and clear about the intent, operation, and risks of Energy from Waste facilities. Council pleaded for this, but it did not occur. As a result, uncertainty has hardened into fear and opposition.

Council urges that the Inquiry's recommendations place fairness, transparency, and genuine community consent at the centre of any future approach to EfW in NSW

Yours sincerely,

**Cr Neil Westcott**  
**Mayor**