

Submission
No 371

INQUIRY INTO 'ENERGY FROM WASTE' TECHNOLOGY

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I am writing an objection to the incinerator proposal for Western Sydney. The "energy from waste" as this project is being marketed to the local residents may at first be perceived as good idea, maybe even a sensible one. But this, upon further consideration, is one of the worst decisions your Government has undertaken to date.

Firstly, the set up costs for such technology, which is inevitable to be rendered obsolete in the not to distant future. The country is currently, as I understand, working toward a zero emissions energy supply through various projects already being implemented, for example; solar and wind as well as research into other possible energy sources including Geothermal. The solar energy program introduced by the previous Labor Government, was a step in the right direction, only to be all but killed off by drastically reducing the rebates offered to those wanting to participate in the scheme. The evidence is there for all to see. How many new solar panels installed recently? Not that there are no roofs left to utilize, there are still vast majority without the solar technology. So, this fact is undeniable.

Secondly, what a waste of the land you will need to build this on. That land could better used for other forms of industry, creating jobs for people, in turn helping the economy grow by lowering the rate of unemployment. How much could be saved on welfare alone? In addition to this, it would allow for the rezoning in another area for use as residential housing estates. I know it may only be a small step in solving the housing crisis you keep talking about, but a step in the right direction none the less.

Thirdly there are the inherent risks associated with such a development, risks not only to ALL the people of Sydney, but also the environment. Air quality is the most obvious, but what about the contamination to the land and waterways through toxic fallout from the operation of such a facility. The potential for environmental destruction is to high, regardless of the precautionary measures employed. Should a major failure occur, it will have seriously detrimental consequences. As mentioned previously, not only will air quality be affected, but also land and water. Prime farming land providing the food we ALL eat may well become infertile and useless and even the water we ALL drink may also become so toxic that its consumption may cause serious health issues. Is this plant a good idea? Sure doesn't seem so to me, nor anyone who may have thought about it.

The possible health issues arising from the operation of the incinerator, would greatly add to the already overloaded health care system. Longer waiting periods for treatment, lost productivity due to increases in the frequency of illnesses. Can we really afford this hidden cost?

Whilst it seems like a great way to create energy, from waste, a better strategy would be to seriously reduce the amount of refuse generated. There is no simple answer to this, but maybe the move back to glass jars and bottles could be a good starting point. Although the initial outlay may require more energy to produce these containers as opposed to there plastic counterparts, the long term cost would be far less, not just in the monetary aspect, but a saving for the environment. It costs less to clean, sanitize and reuse than it does to recycle and constantly produce new containers. Reusing also requires less energy. This just one possible solution, to just one form of waste. I'm sure if we all try, we could all collectively solve many of the waste problems facing the modern day throw away society we have become. Time to change this bad habit we are guilty of having become accustomed to.

The "Energy from waste" proposal, no matter how you try to portray or sell it, it is one of the worst you have put to the people. The number of petitions that I have personally seen, not organised, is evident that the people of Western Sydney, including myself, are fed up at being treated as second class citizens and your incinerator, your "Energy from waste" scam, are NOT welcome here!!

Don't WASTE taxpayers money, INVEST it in a brighter, cleaner and sustainable future for ALL Australians.

Wasn't backyard burning of rubbish banned in the late seventies to help with the reduction of air pollution? So what makes it right for you to now do this on such a huge scale? Isn't it the responsibility of ALL Australians to "KEEP AUSTRALIA BEAUTIFÜL?"