Submission No 96

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITIES

Organisation: The Hills Shire Council

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THE HILLS SHIRE COUNCIL
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SUBMISSION BY THE HILLS SHIRE COUNCIL
INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITIES

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the inquiry into proposed energy from waste facilities. The submission is made on behalf of The Hills Shire Council. The submission was endorsed by Council at its Ordinary meeting on 14 October 2025.

Background
The Hills Shire Council has made previous submissions in the past to the NSW Government on its concerns on the dire state of critical waste infrastructure in NSW and more specifically, the Greater Sydney area.

In December 2024, the Mayor of The Hills Shire Council, Dr Michelle Byrne, wrote to the Hon. Penny Sharpe outlining the dire state of the waste sector and the urgent need for policy reform and critical infrastructure within the Sydney metropolitan area. Council subsequently lodged submissions to the NSW Government's Energy from Waste Framework Review in March 2025 and to the Draft NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan (Chapter 1) in June 2025. In both instances, Council requested that the Government reconsider its ban on locating energy from waste facilities within the Sydney metropolitan area.

Regional Precinct Model
Council supports the need for a state-wide, balanced approach to managing residual waste generated in Greater Sydney. The main way to achieve this is by addressing the current policy of restricting energy from waste facilities to regional areas. It imposes significant and ongoing burdens on metropolitan councils and regional communities. It requires waste to be transported long distances, creating investment barriers for industry, unnecessary risk, and higher waste management costs, which are ultimately borne by councils and ratepayers.

It is unfair for regional communities to be the end destination for Greater Sydney's residual waste. Facilities safely operate around the world in major cities such as Singapore, London, and Tokyo. Europe alone has around 500 facilities, thermally treating approximately 100 million tonnes of residual waste each year. Given this, there appears no reason why energy from waste facilities should not be allowed in Greater Sydney as well.

Council urges that the ban on energy from waste facilities within Greater Sydney be lifted. The ban was from previous Governments and there is an opportunity for the current State Government to adopt a more progressive approach. Allowing facilities within Greater Sydney could have enabled advanced proposals such as Cleanaway's previously proposed Energy & Resource Recovery Centre in Eastern Creek, which had to be abandoned after the regional precinct model was introduced. The potential approval of this facility would have contributed to Sydney managing its own waste locally, rather than unnecessarily needing to be transported to regional areas under the current policy framework.

Awareness and Education
Council acknowledges the concerns of regional residents regarding the performance of energy from waste facilities, despite the technology being proven internationally. Energy from waste is a relatively new technology in Australia, and more effort is required to build social licence and improve public understanding. Council believes the opposition facilities typically receive is due to limited awareness and engagement. This inquiry is a good first step in the right direction to ensure transparency, strengthen consultation, and to build community confidence. However, more needs to be done through a state-wide awareness and education campaign.

Conclusion

Council calls upon the NSW Government as part of this inquiry to reconsider its policy on no energy from waste facilities within the Sydney metropolitan area. Furthermore, that a state-wide awareness and education campaign be implemented to build social licence and improve public understanding of this internationally proven technology. The waste sector in NSW is currently in an infrastructure crisis, and the current policy settings are creating barriers to establishment of a proven waste technology operated around the world in major cities.