

Submission
No 115

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE
FACILITIES**

Name: Miss Jesse Woods

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Partially
Confidential

Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities

From: Jesse Woods Parkes, NSW

My name is Jesse Woods, I'm 19, and I'm studying a Bachelor of Agriculture online with while helping run our family farm in Parkes. Farming has always been both my livelihood and my passion, and I want to continue supporting sustainable agriculture and our community's future here. I am firmly opposed to the proposed energy-from-waste incinerator, as it threatens our environment, health, and the foundation of farming and rural life in Parkes.

Emissions and Environmental Risks (Terms of Reference b & e)

I am deeply concerned about emissions of dioxins, furans, heavy metals, and PFAS, which are toxic, persistent, and accumulate in soil, water, and crops. Even trace amounts can enter the food chain, posing long-term risks to human health and agricultural productivity. The cumulative effects are largely irreversible, threatening local farms and the long-term sustainability of agriculture across eastern Australia. Westlime Parkes, less than five kilometres from the proposed site, distributes lime across NSW and Victoria, potentially spreading contamination over hundreds of kilometres.

The facility's waste sorting is inadequate. Burning around 600,000 tonnes of waste from Sydney annually—including batteries, treated timber, asbestos, and other industrial wastes—would release highly toxic emissions. Rail access could allow waste from other cities, greatly exceeding stated capacity. Proponents claim filters remove 99.98% of toxins, but even 0.02% at this scale represents a significant cumulative load entering air, soil, water, and the food chain. The facility would endanger agriculture, community health, and the environment across eastern Australia.

Agricultural and Economic Impacts

Parkes is an agricultural town—farming is not just an industry; it is the heartbeat of the community and the core of its economy. Our produce supports local, national, and international markets, relying on Australia's "clean, green" reputation. Even the perception of contamination could irreparably damage this. Contaminated crops or livestock could reduce farmer income, harm local businesses, limit employment, and undermine the vibrancy of the entire town. Decades of sustainable farming practices and soil restoration are at risk, threatening the foundation of livelihoods built over generations.

The incinerator could drive families away from Parkes rather than attract new residents. As a regional town already struggling to retain teachers, doctors, and essential services like the maternity ward, fear of contamination or compromised agriculture could trigger a cycle of decline—fewer families, fewer services, weaker community cohesion, and amplified economic impacts.

Human Health Risks (Terms of Reference d)

Parkes is a major food-producing region. Placing a waste-to-energy facility here puts communities at risk. Persistent emissions could contaminate water, rainwater, crops, and pastures. Even low-level exposure poses long-term risks to human health, bioaccumulating in people and animals. The risk extends beyond Parkes: contamination could compromise produce, dairy, and livestock nationally, threatening public health and Australia's food security.

Equity and Fairness

It is deeply concerning that Parkes has been chosen as one of only four locations in NSW for this facility. Smaller regional towns should not bear risks deemed unacceptable in Sydney. The town's political influence and resources are limited, yet we are expected to absorb waste from far larger urban populations. Claims of local benefit are misleading: none of the energy produced will be supplied to Parkes homes. This decision prioritises urban convenience over regional well-being and raises serious questions about fairness and safety.

Personal and Community Connection

I have lived in Parkes my whole life. Our family farm has been here for five generations, and I hope to continue that legacy for many more. This land is not just a business—it is part of my identity, shaped by decades of hard work, care, and dedication. My connection to this land reflects that of many families in Parkes, for whom agriculture is living history, culture, and sustenance. Approving this facility would put livelihoods, community identity, and the town's long-term prosperity at risk.

Conclusion

I recognise the serious waste problem in Sydney, Australia, and globally, but this proposed energy-from-waste incinerator is not a clean, green, or sustainable solution. It shifts risk from waste producers to our community, threatening agriculture, the environment, human health, and social cohesion. I am a young, educated person invested in Parkes' future, and I cannot support a facility that poses such profound risks. Parkes deserves protection, respect, and a strong voice in every decision affecting our health, land, and legacy.

Yours Sincerely

Jesse Woods