Submission No 151

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITIES

Organisation: Field Farming Co Pty Ltd

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NSW Parliament House
6 Macquarie Street
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To the select Committee members of the Legislative Council

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITIES

We are fifth-generation farmers operating just outside Parkes, NSW, supplying grain and sheep products to both local and international markets. Our family has a strong history in this region and a long-standing commitment to sustainable agriculture and to our local community.

We write to strongly oppose the proposed Energy from Waste (EfW) facility in the Parkes Special Activation Precinct (SAP), which would process red-bin and other waste from Sydney—just 600 metres from one of the paddocks that we farm.

We wish to address some of the terms of reference as follows:

(d) Impacts on human health including on regional town drinking water, rainwater harvesting and soil contamination

We are extremely concerned about potential health impacts on our family, the risk of soil, water, and produce contamination, and the long-term viability of our farming enterprise. No comparable facility exists in Australia to provide long-term safety data, and without proven evidence of zero impact, we cannot accept the long-term health risks—regardless of whether the emissions are deemed within permissible levels.

We have several residences on the land we farm, ranging from 1.5 kilometres to 9 kilometres from the proposed facility. Each of these has rainwater tanks harvesting rain from houses and sheds, small vegetable gardens for personal use, and some house young children who play in the dirt. We are deeply concerned about the long-term effects of contaminants that may be deposited in our water and soil.

In response to these concerns, we plan to carry out our own independent baseline testing of our soil for dioxins and furans. If and when we experience fallout contamination on our property, who will be held responsible for compensation? The health and safety risks are too great to rely solely on industry assurances or theoretical modelling.

(e) The impact on agriculture locally and across the wider region

This facility threatens not only our family's future on the land—where four sixth-generation younger members plan to continue farming—but also Parkes' reputation as a clean, high-quality food-producing region. Farmers already must declare to the LPA if livestock graze under solar panels due to contamination concerns—how can we be assured this facility won't create similar or more serious risks?

The EPA cannot cite the Western Australian Energy from Waste site as a valid comparison, as it is not located within an agricultural zone. Parkes is a highly productive farming region, and the risks associated with fallout or leaching from such a facility could have serious implications for food safety, land values, and market access. The absence of like-for-like case studies means this proposal represents an untested risk in our context.

The very limited consultation process within the Parkes town and agricultural communities should be noted. Even during one particular information session held in Parkes, clear answers were not given; different answers were provided to the same question! An example was that we were told by one consultant that it would only be green bin waste burnt, not red bin waste. If the consultants were unclear on this major point, how can we be confident of the reliability of any information they have given.

(f) Alterations to the Parkes Special Activation Precinct specifically in relation to the proposed Energy Recovery Facility in that region

We strongly opposed the Parkes SAP right from its initial stages, as it includes part of our family farm. We have worked hard to purchase land adjacent to each other so that we can support and continue farming with the next generation. We have invested heavily in fixed assets such as silos and sheds—decisions we made before we were aware of the SAP plans. Had we known this development was coming, we never would have made such substantial financial commitments. A map is attached for reference. Note - Our other properties to the south, east and west are not covered on this map.

If the SAP continues, we face the very real possibility of being forced to sell or have our land compulsorily acquired by the government. This would result in the demise of our farm, as the loss of nearby land would render our operations unviable. To remain sustainable, we would need to sell all our other holdings in the area, dismantle our sixth-generation farm, and attempt to relocate to a region where we could afford to purchase enough contiguous land to continue farming.

Furthermore, we participated in government-led SAP consultations and provided sensitive business information under the understanding that we would be reimbursed—yet our tax invoice remains unpaid.

(h) The methodology of emission monitoring employed by leading large-scale waste-to-energy facilities in Australia and across the world

Also located within the SAP is the Masterpet Pet Care Kitchen, which promotes "world-class manufacturing technology to create the highest quality kibble ever made in Australia." We understand they are required to conduct odour monitoring by the EPA. Despite assurances that odour emissions would be minimal, the stench from the facility can be detected at one of our residences over five kilometres away, depending on wind direction. Other neighbouring property holders have voiced similar complaints.

As farmers, we are accustomed to the natural smells of animal agriculture, but this particular odour is offensive and unacceptable. If a facility promoted as "world-class" cannot contain its odour emissions, how can we believe that a waste-to-energy plant—with waste stored onsite for days or weeks prior to incineration—will perform any better? Notably, the residence affected by the pet food factory is even

closer to the proposed EfW facility.

Should the project proceed, we demand 24/7 emissions monitoring be implemented and made publicly available in real time. The community must have transparent access to pollution data—not only periodic reports. Given recent revelations surrounding the EPA's suppression of the Broken Hill mine lead contamination report, public trust in the regulator is now severely damaged. If such a report could be buried in that instance, what guarantees are in place that the same will not occur in Parkes?

We urge you to reject the Energy from Waste proposal and instead prioritise the health, livelihoods, and long-term future of Parkes residents and its agricultural community.

Please acknowledge this letter as a formal submission and ensure it is recorded in your electronic filing system.

Yours faithfully

Mr Andrew Field
DIRECTOR

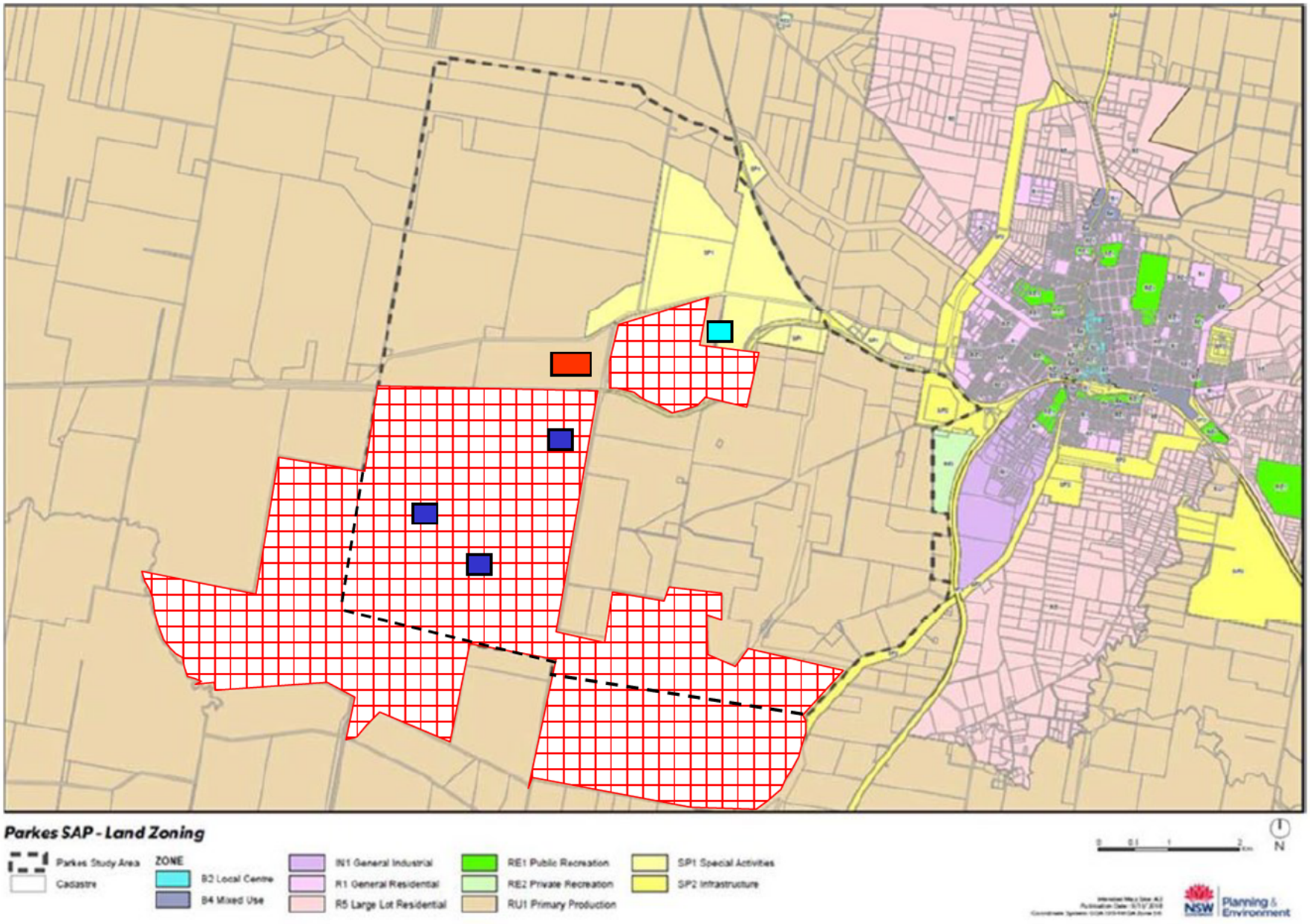

Figure 1.3 Zoning map

- Land owned or leased by our farming enterprise
- Proposed site of the Energy from Waste Facility in Parkes
- Residences
- Masterpet Pet Care Kitchen