Submission No 260

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITIES

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Date Received: 30 October 2025

Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the proposed Energy-from-Waste Facilities in Regional New South Wales

Submitted by: Becky Wykes
Submission Type: Individual Submission
Date: 30/10/2025

Hi. My name is Becky Wykes and I'm a proud local farmer and fencing contractor of the Parkes Shire area, at Trundle NSW.

I was raised on our family farm at Peak Hill, where my parents run a mixed farming enterprise of sheep, cattle, and crops. Growing up on the land shaped who I am today — my three siblings and I were always involved in the day-to-day running of the farm. We spent our childhood helping out wherever we could, learning the value of hard work and what it means to care for the land and animals that sustain us.

Through those experiences, I developed a deep appreciation for agriculture and rural life. My parents led by example — they showed us the importance of honesty, persistence, and stewardship of the land. They taught us that the land doesn't just provide for us; it's our responsibility to look after it for the generations to come.

Now, as a farmer, a small business owner and starting a little family, I'm proud to continue that legacy. I understand firsthand the challenges and rewards of rural living — from the unpredictability of the seasons to the strong sense of community that binds country people together. I care deeply about the future of our region, our environment, and the sustainability of farming practices that support both our livelihoods and the land we depend on.

As someone who has lived and worked in this region my entire life, I care deeply about the health of our land, our people, and our future. That's why I **strongly oppose the proposed energy-from-waste incinerator facility** going ahead in our area for the following reasons.

Reasons of opposition:

1. Health and Safety of Residents

The health and safety of our community must come first. Even with modern technology, incinerators release pollutants such as dioxins, heavy metals, and fine particulate matter — substances known to cause respiratory illness, cardiovascular problems, and, over time, increased cancer risk. These tiny particles travel long distances through the air and can settle on soil, water, and vegetation.

In rural areas like ours, where families often rely on rainwater tanks, home-grown produce, and outdoor living, exposure to these pollutants poses an even greater risk. The potential contamination of local air and water would directly affect the wellbeing of our residents — especially children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing health conditions. We should not have to compromise our health or our environment for an industrial project that offers us little to no benefit.

2. Agricultural Sustainability and Integrity

Our region's agricultural integrity is one of its greatest assets. We produce clean, safe, and high-quality food and fibre that our country depends on. The introduction of an energy-from-waste incinerator threatens that reputation and the sustainability of our farming systems.

Ash and emissions from the incineration process can settle on farmland, potentially contaminating soil, pasture, and water sources. Even the perception of contamination can damage our markets — consumers are increasingly conscious of food provenance, and any association with pollution could undermine confidence in local produce.

Farming relies on healthy ecosystems — clean air, uncontaminated water, and fertile soil. Once those are compromised, productivity and biodiversity suffer. It takes generations to build healthy, resilient land; it only takes one poor decision to jeopardise it.

3. Economic and Property Risks

While the proponents may claim economic benefits, the long-term financial risks to local residents and businesses are far greater. Property values near industrial waste facilities often decline due to concerns about odour, emissions, and visual impact. This affects not only homeowners but also those who have invested heavily in farming operations and rural enterprises.

Tourism and small business — both important to our region's economy — could also take a hit. Who wants to visit or invest in an area associated with pollution and industrial waste? Furthermore, any costs associated with monitoring, health impacts, or environmental cleanup would likely fall back on local councils and taxpayers, not the company profiting from the project.

4. Unfair Burden on Regional Communities

Regional areas like ours are too often seen as convenient locations for facilities that city councils or metropolitan communities reject. This proposal represents yet another unfair burden on rural

people who already carry a disproportionate share of environmental and infrastructure challenges.

We deserve the same level of protection, respect, and consideration as urban communities. Our clean air, open landscapes, and close-knit way of life are not dumping grounds for city waste or industrial experimentation. Rural Australia is not a soft option — it's the backbone of this nation, and it deserves to be treated that way.

Conclusion

For all these reasons — the protection of our health, the sustainability of our farms, the integrity of our local economy, and the fairness owed to regional communities — I strongly **oppose** the construction of the energy-from-waste incinerator. Our future should be built on clean, sustainable practices that protect both people and the land, not on risky, short-term industrial projects that threaten everything we value.

I look forward to seeing a stance on this situation and not letting it proceed any further to protect our health, our families, our farmers and our community.

Thankyou,

Becky Wykes