

Submission
No 323

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE
FACILITIES**

Name: Mrs Jacquelyn Greenland

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Partially
Confidential

To Whom It May Concern

Re: Proposed Waste to Energy Facility - Parliamentary Inquiry

I am writing this letter as a formal objection to the Waste to Energy Incinerator that is being proposed for Parkes. I will be addressing some of the terms of reference in this letter. My name is Jacquelyn Greenland and I am a Parkes local, a wife, mother, teacher, landholder and concerned citizen. I believe the proposed incinerator will have a devastating effect on agriculture (one of the main industries in this area), on homes, schools and workplaces in close proximity to the proposed facility; due to serious health concerns, and that it will contribute to the decline in the population of Parkes while adversely impacting local businesses.

I was born and bred in Parkes and have been teaching here for more than 25 years. My family were the first free settlers to acquire land in the Parkes Shire and as such I have a vested interest in the well-being and longevity of the community, which I have grown up in, and remain a part of. My father is a fourth generation farmer in this area, farming the same land as his great grandparents did 160 years ago. I had hoped that at least one of my children would be the sixth generation. However, with the possibility of an incinerator being built in this excellent agricultural landscape, and the forecast contamination to the soils and expected air pollution, I cannot in good faith encourage any of my children to stay on the farm, or indeed in the district. I do not believe the necessary studies have been undertaken to ascertain the impacts of pollutants on both soil and air quality, not to mention the possible contamination of water supplies, impacting crops and livestock. This of course brings unnecessary worry to all those involved.

Like most farming families in this district some of my greatest concerns related to this proposal are the hazardous emissions expected from the incinerator. I believe of course that this will not only impact farming families, but many sectors of the wider community. The youngest of my four children is in his final years at _____ and I work as a full time teacher there. I am saddened to think of the potential consequences that await future students and teachers.

_____ is within the critical 5km radius of the proposed site so more likely to be impacted than any other schools in Parkes. Over the last twenty or so years _____ has tripled in size and children are on waiting lists hoping to attend. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent to build infrastructure to support the next generation of learners. Where will these learners come from if parents in our community are aware of the heightened risk of illness and disease and the general unpleasantness of schooling near such a facility?

According to the Arctic Council, "Dioxins are a by-product of many industrial processes. Large- and small-scale combustion, particularly of waste, is one potential major source of dioxin emissions into the atmosphere." Dioxins are amongst the hazardous emissions expelled from waste incinerators, which will certainly impact our community. While it is difficult to ascertain the short and long term impacts of the particular dioxins on our community, dioxins in general can have devastating effects on people. The WHO says that these impacts include reproductive and developmental problems, birth deformities, damage to immune systems, heightened risk of cancer and interference with the proper functioning of hormones. None of these impacts seem like something that I would like to be exposed to myself, let alone my children, grandchildren some of whom are currently living in Parkes, and of course their peers.

On particular days depending on the weather conditions, I experience the odour of the pet food production and burn offs at the local tip. I am not naive enough to believe that an incinerator double the size of the current Perth facility and capable of burning through 600 000 tonnes of rubbish annually, will not also produce hazardous airborne pollution.

While the idea of a Waste to Energy incinerator is being touted as clean and green, it is far from both. Did you know that even the Australian Greens are not in favour of the idea?

In a recent fact sheet; *Waste to Energy: Greenwash at its best*

<https://greens.org.au/sites/default/files/2019-09/Waste%20Incinerators%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

compiled by the Australian Greens, among the concerns they listed in regard to waste incinerators were the following:

- “Even new plants generate tens of thousands of tonnes of hazardous waste every year, which risks the health of workers and local communities”
- Incinerators are more polluting than coal and gas-fired power stations for energy output and they are very expensive”

I do not believe that the people of Parkes have been fully apprised of the facts in relation to the risks to people, animals, air, water and land. I feel that one of the reasons for this lack of transparency is that the full short and long term impacts of harmful chemicals released from such facilities is not yet known. According to the NSW Government Website, studies must be done to assess the “impacts associated with air quality, human health, odour, traffic, noise, social and visual amenity”. If these assessments have been undertaken, as a resident of Parkes, I would like to see the results. If in fact, a facility such as this is deemed completely safe and healthy, and all the checks and balances are in place, which we are being asked to believe, why waste all that money on transport, just build a facility closer to where the waste is being produced! Along these same lines, I would like to know why Parkes and just three other regional areas across NSW and the ACT have been deemed appropriate for the construction of these facilities, when they have been banned across the rest of the state. has the constructio

I strongly believe that the transportation of Sydney’s rubbish to Parkes in order for it to be burnt here is a nonsensical idea. I am convinced that it would be far better to more fully research other ways in which to approach the issue of residual waste. Teaching children more explicitly about the importance of reducing, reusing and recycling, sorting rubbish more thoroughly and finding more efficient ways to dispose of toxic waste, could all be considered as possible solutions to this issue. These suggestions are inline with the waste hierarchy, in which energy recovery is the third least preferable option.

I would like to ask you to consider these questions:

If you lived in Parkes at the moment, would you be concerned about the proposed Waste to Energy Incinerator and the impacts on your family?

If the proposed incinerator was to go ahead, would you be willing to work in an area within a 5km radius of the site on a daily basis?

If an incinerator was placed in close proximity to your children or grandchildren’s school, would you be happy to continue to send them there?

These are questions that I am forced to wrestle with, questions that take a toll not only on me, but also on many others who regularly ask themselves the same things.

I do not want to live in a town with a Waste to Energy Incinerator. I am concerned about the long term impacts on farms; stock, crops and farmers. I am concerned about the environment in which I will be working along with over 400 students for 200 days a year and I am concerned about the physical health, mental wellbeing and economic and social welfare of the general public.

Parkes should not be home to a Waste to Energy Incinerator! I ask that you seriously consider the submissions received on this matter before making a final and life-altering decision in regard to the proposed facility.

Yours Faithfully

Jacquelyn Greenland
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