

**Submission
No 454**

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITIES

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

Submitted by: Lorraine Everest – Local Retired Registered Nurse of the Forbes Community.

Background

My name is Lorraine Everest.

I have lived and worked in Forbes my whole life.

I have proudly worked in a rural hospital for my working Career.

I have observed the Forbes, and surrounding areas endure Drought and Flooding and am proud to have witnessed the residents' resilience, especially our farming communities.

I would like to continue to live in the Rural Community of Forbes, only 30Km's from Parkes and experience the lifestyle I have experienced for the remainder of living years.

I strongly oppose the proposed Parkes Energy-to-Waste Facility for the following reasons.

1. Lack of Consultation.

How long has it been the goal of the INLAND RAIL to transport WASTE to the Central West?

The Communities along the Inland Rail Route have been led to believe its purpose was to support the transport of Australian Agriculture Products between Melbourne and Brisbane to improve the ability to export such commodities.

I cannot remember any discussion over the years re-the transport of RUBBISH from the city of SYDNEY!

When was the decision made to transport residual waste to Parkes and when were members of the Parkes Community adequately informed and consulted?

With rubbish transported along the Inland Rail Line, are there still plans to transport Australian agriculture commodities for export?

If so, have representatives of the Inland Rail considered the effect this could have on the quality of the commodities destined for export given contamination risks from the adjacent transport of waste?

As a resident of the surrounding area of Parkes, I know that I learnt of the INLAND RAIL transporting RUBBISH at a Public Meeting in Parkes that was organised by concerned residents of the 'Parkes Clean Future Alliance' (PCFA) on 26th July 2025.

I question transparency of the authorities' communication regarding the use of the Inland Rail Line and the way rural community residents have learnt about Government-driven plans that will adversely affect their health, and way of life. Local residents and councils must navigate lengthy approval processes and strict regulations for even minor projects in their communities. Yet massive developments like the WfE facility are fast tracked, with little consultation and minimal scrutiny. This stark contrast highlights a troubling double standard that risks our environment, health, and local voices being overlooked. For something as large

and potentially impactful as the WfE facility. I believe residents must be robustly consulted over an extended period, allowing time to fully understand the proposal, raise concerns, and suggest changes. Rushing this process risks decisions being made without the input and oversight that our community and environment deserve. I argue, constituents of the affected electorates lacked adequate consultation thus requiring an urgent need to call a public meeting to inform the community of the NSW Government plans.

2. Contamination from the Facility.

How many onslaughts to our Rural Communities must be endured for the benefit of urban centres? Must the authorities also be reminded that rural farming communities provide the backbone of Australia's food system? Is this something we really want to risk contaminating?

Is the presence of PFAS contaminates in the water of the Belabulla River NOT enough for the local farming community in the Central West to contend with?

The local farmers in the communities of the Central West strive to meet all the policy and guidelines set by governing bodies to provide quality, safe and secure products for Australians and exporting countries to ensure safe consumption.

In my opinion this is neglectful thinking as this facility has the potential of placing farmers in Parkes and the Central West at risk of reduced ability to farm, the ability to provide quality goods demanded by Australians and overseas countries, safe drinking water for animals and humans and overall reduced income.

Air quality is at risk due to the plume from the chimney of the facility emitting contaminates such as dioxins, persistent organic pollutants and other toxins for 24hrs a day, 365 days each year, for decades.

Contaminates of the plume is NOT just going to be over Parkes; the content of the plume will affect a large radius of communities in the Central West.

The expanse of potential air contamination daily, and hour by hour can already be seen on the 'Parkes Plume Plotter' on the PCFA's Facebook page.

As these contaminants settle, contamination of our land and water will give rise to compounded flow-on effects for Communities and our animals.

The result of this supposed 'SAFE' facility is a disaster that will unfold for rural NSW especially, the prime agriculture and wine growing areas of Central West of NSW, majorly affecting local economies.

The cost of this proposed investment by the NSW Government in the development of the Facility, will also in the long-term bring expense to individuals, farming communities and a FINANCIAL EFFECT on the NSW and Australian Governments.

The next question is the will and capacity of authorities to accurately measure the level and effects of these AIR CONTAMINANTS?

Does the EPA have the INSTRUMENTATION to measure the size of the particles of the contaminants? Is there an Australian Standard of safe measurements of the content of the PLUME? Do Australian Standards meet World Standards? Are the NSW Government and companies in charge of operating the proposed Parkes Energy-from Waste Facility leaving themselves wide open for future legal battles over negligence to install and abide by proper health standards?

These questions MUST be answered by the NSW Government before this Facility plan progresses.

3. NSW Government Ownership/ Contracts.

I have concern re-NSW Government having ANY governance over the Parkes Energy - from-Waste Facility given that they have granted the tender for the facility to mostly overseas conglomerates. I question that they will have our community's best interests and wellbeing at heart.

I understand each of these companies will have separate responsibilities; that being Planning, Financing and Construction.

The NSW Government needs to be responsible and accountable for this decision.

They must be honest and open in informing their constituents of NSW and especially those in the Central West about who will monitor, report and be responsible for compensation relating to adverse effects of the waste facility should the need arise in the future.

One certainly lives in hope that residents will be able to receive full transparency and accountability from this conglomerate as any disasters or major decisions will affect the lives of everyone in the precinct and radius of the proposed Parkes Energy-from-Waste Facility.

There needs to be complete transparency of the Planning, Financing, Construction and Management of this Facility NOW!

4. Effect of this proposal on the Parkes and surrounding Communities.

*Fear of the effect the Parkes Energy-from-waste Facility will have on surrounding areas has already been heard and expressed by community members in both Parkes and Forbes.

*As I write this submission, I am personally concerned for my, and my husband's access to safe food and water, our health over time due to Air Contaminants/Quality and the loss of value of our property in Forbes should this Facility be allowed in Parkes by the NSW Politicians.

*I know my thoughts of remaining in the area are NOT isolated, I feel that residents especially in Parkes, are planning a move from the area.

*Like many other Rural Areas there is already a shortage of professional and trade personnel. I feel this Facility will do nothing to attract individuals or families to the area even if employment needs in towns are available.

*Many travellers move along the Newell Highway stopping in Forbes and Parkes to enjoy local attractions, from historic sites, artistic and cultural landmarks. If the WfE Facility progresses without proper consultation and care it could forever harm the environment and character that make our towns so appealing and welcoming, risking both tourism and the local economy.

*One also asks, have any of the PRO supporters of the NSW Government development of this Facility factored the effect on AIR QUALITY that could affect the research and tracking by the Parkes Radio Telescope (a major tourist attraction to Parkes (100,00/year, as quoted from the Parkes Radio Telescope today 24/10/2025 on ABC Radio))?

*The voices of those most likely to be impacted by the WfE Facility must be heard.

Conclusion.

As a resident of Forbes, I cherish the QUALITY of the current AIR we BREATHE, the LAND we EAT from and the Water we DRINK.

I also DO NOT wish to see more community members affected by ILLNESS/DEATH or an increase in BIRTH DEFECTS in newborns due to contaminants from a WASTE FACILITY enforced on the Central West by the MEMBERS OF THE NSW GOVERNMENT.

I implore members of the NSW Government to do the right thing and really listen to our voices. To really listen to us in view of what is truly better for our future ie NO PARKES ENERGY-FROM-WASTE FACILITY.

And lastly, I urge the NSW Government to choose a solution that truly serves the community, not the profits of distant corporations. Our towns deserve projects that are proudly Australian – developed by Australians, for Australians – putting local health, environment, and livelihoods first.