

**Submission
No 568**

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITIES

Name: Katie Leary
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To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to formally oppose the proposed energy-from-waste (EfW) incinerator in our region. As a new resident and active member of this community, I am deeply concerned about the serious and long-term risks this project poses to our health, environment, and way of life.

1. Impacts on My Family's Health

My family's well-being is my highest priority. We moved to Parkes in 2022 to raise our young family. Our concerns are based on scientific studies that have shown that waste incinerators release harmful pollutants, including fine particulate matter (PM2.5), dioxins, heavy metals, and other toxic compounds. These substances can increase the risk of respiratory illnesses, heart disease, cancer, and developmental issues in children.

We already face challenges with dust and seasonal air quality in regional areas. During the last drought in 2020 the dust was found on the alpine areas of new Zealand. —adding an industrial incinerator would only worsen this burden. Our families deserve clean air to breathe and a safe environment to raise our children in, not one laced with persistent toxins.

2. Air and Water Quality Risks

The incinerator's emissions will not only affect the air but will eventually settle into our soil and waterways through rainfall and dust deposition. Rural communities rely heavily on natural rainfall and groundwater; contamination of these resources would have devastating consequences.

Even small increases in pollutants like mercury or dioxins can accumulate in the environment over time, entering the food chain and affecting both human and animal health. Word on the grapevine is the lachlan river pollutant levels are already at highly acured numbers and the EPA are aware. Our community often face the risk of drought and rely on bore water systems to survive. Once contamination occurs, it can not be easily undone.

3. Impacts on Farms, Livestock, Gardens, and Bees

Our livelihoods and local food security depend on clean land and water. My family (and many others in our area) grow an abundance of seasonal food, keep livestock, and maintain gardens and bees. Any contamination from the incinerator could harm crop yields, animal health, and pollination. A local resident has drawn attention to a Plume Plotter, developed to show modelling for pollutants in our air. If the crow flies east, this plume from the source itself is 2klm from our house.

Bees are especially sensitive to airborne toxins and chemical residues; their decline would directly impact agriculture and biodiversity. Farmers and home growers would face financial loss and uncertainty about the safety of their produce.

4. Long-Term Toxic Waste and Environmental Legacy

Incinerators do not eliminate waste—they convert it into other toxic forms, such as fly ash and bottom ash, which still require long-term storage or landfill disposal. Where exactly has this been proposed to be? We dont want this in our town, These ashes contain concentrated heavy metals and carcinogenic compounds, posing ongoing risks to soil and groundwater.

Our community could be left managing toxic waste long after the project's operators have moved on. This is an unacceptable and irresponsible legacy to impose on future generations.

5. Fairness and Regional Equity

It is deeply unfair that regional communities are repeatedly chosen for developments that metropolitan areas reject and laws declare that it is unsuitable for metropolitan areas. Our smaller population should not make us an easy target for projects that pose health and environmental risks.

We deserve the same right to clean air, safe water, and environmental protection as any city community. Rural areas should not be treated as dumping grounds for industrial projects that others refuse to host.

In summary, this proposal threatens to undermine the health, environment, and sustainability of our region. I urge decision-makers to reject the incinerator and instead invest in safer, cleaner waste management solutions—such as waste reduction, recycling, composting, and circular economy initiatives—keep Sydney and metropolitan waste in their own backyard.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Sincerely,

Katie Leary

Parkes, NSW