

**Submission
No 569**

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITIES

Name: Aleta & Adam Pay

Date Received: 27 October 2025

Personal Submission in **opposition** of the Parkes Energy from Waste Facility.

20 October 2025

I am a long-term resident of, and Science educator residing in Parkes for the last 29 years. My husband was born in the local region growing up on the land and has lived here all his life. I am writing regarding our **opposition** of the proposed energy-from-waste incinerator planned for the Parkes Special Activation Precinct (SAP) 4-5 km from town.

In 1998 we purchased a 22 acre block on the outskirts of town for a quiet future. Enjoying the old growth trees on the travelling stock route, the kangaroos, goannas, echidnas, frogs, turtles and various other wildlife passing through and residing on our property. After talks with the council our only concern was the town rubbish landfill and it's then eight-year life expectancy. It was later revamped as a recycling centre and with an extended life expectancy. It's well maintained, and we rolled with it. Now we are surrounded by the Parkes SAP on three sides. In 2020 meetings and paperwork describe the SAP as an Eco-industrial precinct, recycling and solar farms, no mention of possible rubbish incineration.

1. Impact on native flora and fauna

My concerns stem from the impact of the polluting products from the proposed waste incineration on the local community population, wildlife, natural and agricultural environments. As the related polluting particles settle out of the atmosphere, they will contaminate soil and runoff into water bodies. What will be the effects on local flora and fauna? For instance, I have a large variety of frogs that breed in our dams during the wet times. Frogs are indicator organisms for our ecosystems and already under threat from other outside forces, this facility and its pollution will add to adverse environmental conditions for them. When will the Environmental impact statement be investigated, prepared and released to the public? At what time of year? Will both nocturnal and diurnal studies be completed during different seasonal conditions?

2. Mental wellbeing

As a local community member, I have considered the potential benefits and detrimental impacts of such a facility being constructed here in the Parkes SAP and I feel it leans heavily towards the detriment of our community. From various discussions with a range of community members the emotional stress and effect on the mental wellbeing of locals, both young and old is already evident in individuals in our community.

3. Cognitive development and health

Having grown up with the sulphurs smell and coal dust haze of the Hunter Valley and working with students impacted by lead rich dust in associated with mining in Broken Hill and its impact on the cognitive developmental of students, it is not a future I would like to see happen to communities residing in the Parkes Region. The incinerator related dioxin and furan nano particle fallout will be carried widely by the winds, settling over fields, waterbodies and townships leaving a large polluting fallout footprint.

Information presented by Dr Amanda Cohn and chemical engineer Chris Hanson and other sources, have stated that residents and the environment will be exposed to persistent organic pollutants (POP) 24 hours a day, 365 days a year with chronic low-level exposure over a large area. These levels may rise higher than normal during start up or shut down processes leading to serious health issues. The Australian EPA acceptable levels are much higher than world health levels, why is this the case?

Furans and Dioxin carcinogen nanoparticles settle out of air onto dust particles contaminating water and sediments, bioaccumulating in the environment and food chain or it can be inhaled directly into the body. These materials interfere with all body processes from physical to mental development concerns and can continue to cause issues for several generations even after the incineration process has ended. This can greatly affect the health and wellbeing of the local communities and future generations. What affect will this have on the future of the town of Parkes?

Other similar incinerator facilities across the globe have been closed or are shutting down (not upgrading) due to linked health concerns. The WA incinerator data cannot be used as a model as there is no long-term data to link to health issues for a reliable epidemiological study.

4. Urban – regional disconnect

I feel there is an Urban-Regional disconnect in the selection of the location of such installations. We are talking about technologies that are banned in the ACT or considered too dangerous by the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) for Sydney and its suburbs but is acceptable in a regional `sacrificial' community such as ours for the greater good of metropolitan areas. Can these installations operate safely and legally outside of the SAP? If not, then why are they acceptable within the SAP so close to a populated area? I'm sure the pollutants will not recognise the SAP boundaries and stay on the allocated SAP site.

This incineration process suggested does not create a circular economy as described. Once in operation it is an installation that will need to be continually fed with waste incoming waste material. It will not promote recycling or repurposing of the waste at its point of origin. The waste producers need to take responsibility and reduce the levels of red bin waste they are creating at the source and not transporting it to another site (out of sight).

How is it viable to transport 600 000 to 1.2 million tonnes of waste per year 600km by rail across the state through rural areas? Is this a sustainable solution to the problem? At the incinerator site during break downs or maintenance where and how will this waste material be stored? Transport of this proposed red bin waste materials also triggers concerns, not just for our community but those along the rail line as waste `juices' leaking out of rail cars along the track. The related offensive smells, the possible spread of vermin/ pest/ disease, the runoff contamination of nearby water bodies or spontaneous fires in rail cars while enroute create a whole new level of concern which has not been addressed when the facility and process were promoted.

At the end of the incineration process there a toxic ash that needs to be sealed away. How much will be produced? Where and how can it be stored to guarantee it will not leech into ground water? How will it be safely transported?

5. Water supply

The proposed incinerator aims to burn waste to generate heat, this heat will heat water to turn turbines to generate electricity. Parkes is a dry drought prone area with a limited water supply, no one has successfully answered inquiries about where the water supply is coming from and the possible impacts on the local water supply issues. Will the incinerator be shut down in times of drought or will residential water supplies be diverted?

6. Impact on agriculture

Air currents impacted by plumes of hot air above the kiln stacks have the ability to disperse POP nanoparticles across a larger than expected residential and agricultural areas (up to 150km away). Parkes is an agricultural centre, pollutants in the ground (soil and water) and organic products (plant and animal tissue) will impact on food security, affect incomes and livelihoods of families and the community as a whole. Contaminated produce will damage the Agricultural industry and reputation of producers within the region. Will the metropolitan consumer populations be buying our produce as compensation?

7. Impact transparency

We have been informed by the Parkes Energy Recovery consortium that there will be no related smell, taste or visible pollution (if the incinerator is working correctly).

The newest technology filters will not remove the ultra-fine nano particles of POP created by the furnace. **There are no safe levels of dioxins or dioxin like compounds.**

With no continuous monitoring of pollutants by the EPA how can 'safety' be ensured? Will the EPA make public locally collected base-line sample testing results prior to the incinerator start up as part of an Environmental Impact Study? Will monitored results be made public during their regular inspections of the incinerator during its operational periods? Will these inspections also test areas away from the incinerator site and SAP?

Will the EAP be monitoring dioxin and furan levels or only carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide levels? There are a lot of questions plaguing the local population but very few definite responses.

8. Survival of the township of Parkes

Will the 40-50 permanent jobs offset the variety of services and professions lost if the incinerator goes ahead. Residents, farmers and even Doctors have already stated they will leave town if this facility goes ahead. This will greatly impact on the community, its services and its resources impacting locals' quality of life and its overall mental health. I have not even mentioned the expected drop in real estate values, or the inability to afford to relocate elsewhere.

The Energy from waste consortium promote an energy production of 60 megawatts per year. Will the produced energy benefit the local community, or will it return to the grid to benefit Sydney populations? Will it be used to offer cheaper power to attract other polluting businesses/ industries to the Parkes SAP? There have been conflicting stories and a lack of transparency addressing this issue.

Call it what it is, it is a waste incinerator that can conveniently produce some power.

Most Parkes community members wanted to live and work in a small country town, live a rural lifestyle away from the pollution, industry and related problems of larger urban areas, this has now been brought to our doorstep with little negotiation and producing lot of concerns.

To reiterate, if this is a safe option, why was it rejected as unsafe in the outer Sydney suburbs, but considered safe for the Parkes community. I would like the reasoning behind the distinction between the sites explained (in writing).

We thank you for taking the time to process and consider our concerns on the installation of a waste incinerator in the Parkes SAP. Please feel free to contact us for further discussion.

Sincerely,

Adam and Aleta Pay

Adam mobile phone