

Submission
No 548

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE
FACILITIES**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

My partner and I are former residents of Parkes. We made the difficult decision to move away earlier this year as soon as we learned of the plans to build a waste-to-energy incinerator in our town. We had always hoped to raise a family in Parkes, but as we began planning to have children, we could not ignore the serious health risks associated with this project — including the potential for birth defects and long-term illnesses caused by toxic emissions that contaminate the air, water, and soil.

Waste incineration is one of the major industrial sources of dioxins and furans — highly toxic compounds produced when chlorine-containing materials and organic matter are burned at high temperatures. These substances are found in both the fly ash and stack emissions of incinerators.

Dioxins and furans are known to cause reproductive and developmental problems, damage the immune system, interfere with hormones, and increase the risk of cancer. Documented health effects of exposure include:

- Skin lesions such as chloracne and darkened skin
- Altered liver function and liver toxicity
- Hormonal disruption
- Damage to teeth and bones
- Immune system impairment
- Developmental and reproductive toxicity (including low birth weight, impaired lung and heart development, and increased infant mortality)
- Wasting syndrome
- Cancer

These compounds interfere with essential biological processes during pregnancy and are directly linked to poor birth outcomes. These are not speculative risks — they are established, well-documented scientific facts.

Even though we no longer live in Parkes, we remain deeply concerned that the NSW Government continues to consider waste incineration as a waste management solution, particularly in agricultural regions such as Parkes. Our key concerns are as follows:

1. Agricultural contamination:

Parkes is a major agricultural area. Contamination of soil and water from toxic emissions and ash will inevitably affect crops and livestock, leading to contaminated food being distributed to other parts of the country. This poses a serious public health and food safety issue far beyond the Parkes community.

2. Corruption and lack of accountability:

The fact that the local council has failed to meaningfully consult with the community, combined with allegations that the former mayor stands to benefit financially from this project, points to corruption and a deep failure of governance. If no one is ever held accountable for such corruption, then how can the public possibly trust that the EPA will prevent contamination or provide factual and transparent results from environmental testing?

3. Greenwashing and public deception:

The incinerator project within the Parkes Special Activation Precinct (SAP) has been falsely promoted as a “sustainable” or “green” solution, when in reality it represents the opposite. This is a clear example of greenwashing — the deliberate misrepresentation of harmful industrial activity as environmentally responsible. Such deception misleads residents, denies them informed choice, and erodes trust in government decision-making.

The people of Parkes, and all communities across regional New South Wales, deserve honest representation and protection from industrial pollution, not false promises and greenwashed projects. Incineration is not a sustainable or equitable solution — it endangers health, agriculture, and the integrity of our environment.

I urge the NSW Government to reject this proposal outright and instead invest in genuine, safe, and sustainable waste reduction strategies that prioritise community wellbeing and transparency.