

Submission
No 552

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE
FACILITIES**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
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NSW Parliament
Legislative Council
Select Committee on Proposed
Energy from Waste Facilities

26 October 2025

Submission to the NSW Parliament Select Committee on Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities

1. Introduction

I am a resident of Parkes Shire and wish to make this submission regarding the proposed Energy from Waste facility at Parkes. My submission is made in response to the Committee's inquiry into the environmental, agricultural, and human health impacts associated with such facilities.

While I acknowledge the need for effective waste-management solutions, I am deeply concerned that the proposed facility, if approved without adequate safeguards, poses a serious and long-term risk to the **air quality, soil health, drinking water, and agricultural productivity of our region.**

2. Key Concerns

2.1 Air Quality Impacts

The facility will generate particulate emissions, including fine particles (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀) and other contaminants. These pollutants, once released into the atmosphere, may combine with moisture to form contaminated rainfall. Residents across much of rural Parkes Shire are not connected to the town's reticulated water supply and **rely on rainwater harvesting from roof catchments** for drinking and household use.

If airborne pollutants settle on roofs or mix with rainfall, this will directly contaminate drinking water sources, exposing families—particularly children and the elderly—to harmful substances. Even trace levels of heavy metals and dioxins are unacceptable in drinking water.

2.2 Soil and Agricultural Contamination

The Parkes region is a key contributor to Australia's agricultural output. Any deposition of incineration residues—such as heavy metals, dioxins, or furans—onto agricultural soils risks **bioaccumulation within crops and livestock**. Over time, this could compromise food safety and damage the reputation of local

produce in both domestic and international markets.

Persistent contamination would render farmland unfit for production and could have catastrophic economic and social consequences for local farmers and the regional economy.

2.3 Impacts on Drinking Water and Public Health

For many rural households, rainwater is the **sole source of drinking water**. Allowing an industrial facility to emit pollutants capable of contaminating that water supply would breach the fundamental obligation of government to protect community health and wellbeing.

It would also create an environmental inequity—urban populations benefit from treated, monitored water supplies, while rural residents would bear disproportionate exposure to pollution.

3. Recommended Safeguards

If the Energy from Waste proposal were to proceed, it is imperative that the appropriate safeguards be implemented as conditions of approval. Such safeguards may include, but are not limited to:

3.1 Connection to Safe Drinking Water

All existing and future residences located within the predicted fallout zone of particulate matter should be **connected to the Parkes town water supply system**, funded by the project developer. This measure would eliminate the risk of residents ingesting pollutants through harvested rainwater.

No level of contamination in drinking water should be considered acceptable.

3.2 Soil Testing and Protection

- Baseline soil testing must be completed across all properties within the projected fallout area of contamination before construction commences.
- Ongoing, independent soil testing must occur at regular intervals, funded by the developer.
- If testing identifies elevated contaminant levels attributable to the facility, operations should be immediately suspended until corrective action is taken.
- The developer must be required to rehabilitate contaminated land or, where this is not possible, purchase the affected land at market value and compensate the landholder for loss of income and productivity.

3.3 Air Quality Monitoring and Enforcement

- Baseline air quality testing should be undertaken within the predicted fallout area of airborne contamination before construction begins.
- Continuous, independent air quality monitoring of the fallout area must occur during operation, with data publicly available in real time.
- Should toxic airborne contaminants be detected within the fallout area, facility operations should be automatically suspended pending investigation and remediation.

3.4 Transparent Oversight

An independent community and scientific oversight committee should be established to review air, water, and soil monitoring data, ensuring public transparency and accountability.

4. Alignment with the Committee's Terms of Reference

This submission addresses several key elements of the Committee's Terms of Reference, including:

- (b)–(e): The spread and quality of emissions, and potential health impacts from emissions on rainwater harvesting, drinking water, and soil contamination.
- (f): The impact on agriculture locally and across the wider region.
- (h): The methodology of emission monitoring, and the importance of employing best-practice international standards.

5. Conclusion

The residents of Parkes Shire deserve to live in a safe and clean environment where the air, water, and soil are protected for future generations. The proposed Energy from Waste facility presents serious risks that must not be dismissed or underestimated.

If the project is to proceed, it must only do so under **strict environmental conditions** that protect the health of residents, preserve the integrity of agricultural land, and ensure full accountability for any adverse environmental outcomes.

Protecting human health must remain the first priority of government decision-making.