

Submission
No 586

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE
FACILITIES**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 28 October 2025

Partially
Confidential

Submission to Inquiry: Proposed Energy-from-Waste Incinerator, Parkes NSW

Submission by:

Regarding: Proposed Energy-from-Waste Incinerator, Parkes NSW

Date: 28/10/2025

As a long time and current resident of Parkes I appreciate the opportunity to submit a submission to this inquiry. I am 56 years old, came to Parkes in 1973 as a 4 year old, grew up and was educated in Parkes. I write to express my strong opposition to the proposed Energy-from-Waste incinerator at Parkes, NSW. This submission addresses each point in the Inquiry's full Terms of Reference and outlines serious concerns regarding environmental, health, economic, and social consequences of the proposed facility.

(a)

The technologies proposed for Parkes and Tarago are not comparable to leading European or Japanese facilities. Globally, state-of-the-art thermal waste-to-energy plants operate with advanced plasma gasification, continuous emissions monitoring, and robust waste segregation. The proposed Parkes facility employs older grate combustion methods not proven in regions with similar climatic and topographical conditions.

(b)

The predicted emissions spread is deeply concerning. Prevailing winds in Parkes predominantly travel eastward across the town and productive agricultural lands toward the Goobang National Park and the town's water catchment. This means airborne particulates, dioxins, and heavy metals could travel into sensitive ecosystems and residential zones.

(c)

Health data from older European incinerators show elevated incidences of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases in nearby populations. Even with improved filtering, no technology fully eliminates ultrafine particulate emissions or volatile organic compounds.

(d)

The risk to human health is unacceptable. Parkes relies on groundwater, rainwater harvesting, and regional catchments that are vulnerable to airborne deposition of toxic ash. Soil contamination could affect local agriculture and homegrown food sources.

(e)

Local agriculture—particularly cropping and livestock—faces risks of heavy metal bioaccumulation in soil and fodder. Contamination concerns could also threaten market confidence in produce branded as clean and regional.

(f)

The Parkes Special Activation Precinct was designed to showcase clean technology and logistics innovation. Introducing an industrial waste incinerator within that framework contradicts its founding principles and may deter other green investment.

(g)

Long-term waste dumping in the Tarago region offers a cautionary tale: poorly managed industrial waste projects have enduring ecological and social legacies. Lessons from that experience must guide decisions in Parkes.

(h)

Leading waste-to-energy facilities internationally employ real-time, publicly accessible emissions monitoring. Transparency builds trust; yet the Parkes proposal's monitoring plan appears limited, reactive, and opaque.

(i)

Alternative solutions exist. NSW should prioritize waste reduction, circular economy initiatives, anaerobic digestion for organic waste, and improved recycling infrastructure before resorting to incineration of residuals.

(j)

In addition to environmental and health risks, there remain unanswered questions about transportation costs, handling of toxic residues, and the safety of long-term ash storage. Transporting waste from Western Sydney over 350 km will impose significant financial and carbon costs, offsetting any claimed emissions benefits.

(k) Economic and Cultural Effects on the People and Town of Parkes

Beyond technical concerns, the proposed facility poses deep economic and cultural risks.

Economically, Parkes' clean, agricultural reputation supports tourism, food production, and property value. Introducing an industrial-scale waste incinerator threatens this identity, potentially deterring visitors and investors alike. Short-term construction employment cannot compensate for long-term losses across tourism and agriculture. Furthermore, increased freight will burden local roads and ratepayers.

Culturally, Parkes is a proud, tight-knit rural town defined by community spirit and land connection. The proposal risks dividing residents, eroding civic pride, and contradicting the Parkes Special Activation Precinct's commitment to clean industry. Such developments can fracture social cohesion and create lingering community anxiety.

If approved, this project would not only alter the skyline—it would reshape the town's story, from one of innovation and community to one of imposed risk and industrial burden.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed Energy-from-Waste incinerator for Parkes presents unacceptable risks to human health, the environment, and the long-term wellbeing of the community. The potential benefits are overstated and geographically inequitable. I strongly urge the Inquiry to reject the proposal in its current form and to recommend investment in sustainable, circular waste management strategies instead.

Yours sincerely,

Resident of Parkes.