

**Submission
No 563**

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITIES

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Date Received: 26 October 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed Parkes Energy from Waste (EfW) project. While I understand the need to address Sydney's waste management challenges, I believe this project raises significant risks and inequities that must be carefully considered. Below, I will outline my concerns, personal reflections and suggestions for alternative approaches.

Concerns Regarding the Proposed Project

Health Risks

The emissions generated by the proposed energy recovery facility could have serious impacts on human health, particularly for residents reliant on tank water or local drinking water supplies. Reports from older waste incinerator facilities internationally indicate an increased risk of respiratory and other health issues, and it is unclear whether the newer technology proposed will fully mitigate these risks.

Environmental Impacts

The facility presents risks to the environment, including soil contamination and air quality degradation. These risks are particularly concerning in a region like Parkes, where agriculture is a cornerstone of the local economy. Any threat to soil or water quality could jeopardise the livelihoods of farmers and regional food security.

Equity of Infrastructure Plan and Regulation

It is inequitable that projects of this nature are prohibited in most parts of NSW due to health risks but are permitted in regional areas such as Parkes, Goulburn, Lithgow, and Richmond Valley. Regional communities should not be disproportionately burdened with Sydney's waste and associated risks.

Economic and Community Impacts

The potential for reduced property values, decreased tourism, and long-term damage to the perception of Parkes as a clean, safe, and desirable place to live and invest cannot be ignored. This project risks undermining the community's confidence and quality of life, which could lead to mental health challenges for residents worried about their futures.

Lack of Consultation and Social Licence

The consultation process has felt inadequate, leaving many community members feeling unheard. A project of this scale and impact requires meaningful engagement with the community to ensure transparency and trust.

Personal Reflections

As a member of the community, I have noticed increasing anxiety and uncertainty among my neighbours and friends. Families are questioning whether they should remain in Parkes, and

businesses are hesitant to invest in the region. Personally, I feel that this project has already diminished our sense of security and stability.

Should the project proceed, my family and I would seriously consider relocating to an area free of these risks. The idea of living near such a facility has also influenced my considerations for housing, schools and future investments.

Alternative Solutions

Rather than pursuing energy-from-waste incineration, I urge the government to invest in solutions that align with modern waste management practices and sustainability goals. These could include:

Enhanced Waste Reduction and Recycling Initiatives: Strengthening recycling programs and reducing the amount of residual waste that must be managed.

Cold Energy from Waste Technologies: Exploring safer, cutting-edge technologies that minimise emissions and environmental risks.

Localised Waste Management Solutions: Developing smaller-scale, community-based waste solutions rather than imposing large facilities on regional centres.

Conclusion

The proposed Parkes Energy from Waste project raises significant health, environmental, and economic concerns for the local community and broader region. It is critical that alternative solutions be explored and that regional communities are not disproportionately burdened with the costs and risks of Sydney's waste.

I strongly urge the Inquiry to reconsider the approval of this project and to prioritise solutions that are equitable, sustainable, and community-focused.

Thank you for considering my submission.