

Submission
No 598

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE
FACILITIES**

Name: Mrs Melissa Ingram

Date Received: 27 October 2025

Partially
Confidential

Submission to the Parkes Waste / Energy Recovery Facility Proposal

From: Melissa Ingram

Location: Parkes, NSW

Date: 27 October, 2025

My name is **Melissa Ingram**, and I am a **42-year-old lifelong resident of Parkes**. I have worked locally as a **cleaner for over 15 years**, and my husband and I **own our home**. Together, we also run our own **transport business (Bulk Tipper)**, moving grain and fertiliser from local farms to nearby grain storage facilities.

We are proud of our work and our community, but we are deeply worried about what the proposed **Parkes Waste / Energy Recovery Facility** will mean for our future. We have already decided **not to register Parkes as the base for our business** because we do not intend to stay here if the incinerator goes ahead.

Our **24-year-old son**, who works locally as a **welder and fabricator**, suffers from **severe asthma**. The potential air quality impacts of the incinerator are a major concern for us. I also worry deeply for my **niece**, who will be starting Year 7, which is located close to the proposed site, and for my **mother, in her 60s**, who suffers from chronic sinus issues.

This proposal has already caused **stress, fear, and uncertainty** for my family and many others in Parkes.

Lack of Transparency and Information

There has been very little **clear, accessible information** provided to the community about this project and the **Special Activation Precinct (SAP)** that seems to have made it possible. Many of us only found out once plans were already in motion.

It feels as though the **community's voices and wellbeing have not been respected or considered** in the decision-making process.

Questions:

- Why were local residents not properly consulted before the SAP and waste facility plans were developed?
- Where is the detailed evidence from the **EPA** or independent health experts proving this facility is safe for long-term operation?
- Who will be responsible if contamination or health problems occur in the future?

Recommendations:

- The NSW Government should **pause all progress** on this proposal until **independent reviews and genuine consultation** with the Parkes community are completed.
- All technical, health, and environmental documents must be made **publicly available in plain language** for residents to understand the risks.

Health and Air Quality Concerns

One of my biggest fears is how this project will affect the **air we breathe** and the **health of our families**. With my son's severe asthma and my mother's sinus problems, even small increases in pollutants could have serious consequences.

Waste incinerators produce **fine particle emissions, heavy metals, and toxic by-products**. These can worsen respiratory conditions, cause long-term illness, and affect children and older people most severely.

Questions:

- How can the State Government justify approving a facility known to release pollutants in an area with a growing residential population and nearby schools?
- Has there been a **baseline air quality study** conducted in Parkes, and will the community be able to access ongoing monitoring data?
- What emergency plans are in place if emissions exceed safe limits or if accidental releases occur?

Recommendations:

- Conduct an **independent air quality and health impact assessment** before any approval is considered.
- Guarantee **real-time public access** to air quality monitoring data once the facility operates (if approved).
- Include a **local health support program** for residents impacted by emissions or pollution.

Environmental and Agricultural Risks

Parkes is a **major food-producing region**, and the health of our **soil, water, and crops** directly affects our community and the wider food supply chain.

Transporting and burning waste from Sydney in an agricultural region is **not environmentally friendly**. It risks contaminating farmland and waterways with toxic materials.

If contamination occurs, it could damage **livestock health, crop yields, and local markets**, while hurting farmers' livelihoods and local businesses like ours that depend on agricultural transport.

Questions:

- What measures are in place to protect **local soil, crops, and groundwater** from contamination?
- How will the **Lachlan River catchment** and nearby waterways be safeguarded from runoff or leachate?
- What guarantees are there that our **food supply and agricultural exports** will remain safe and trusted?

Recommendations:

- Commission a **comprehensive agricultural and soil impact study** with independent oversight.
- Develop an **environmental protection plan** that includes ongoing testing of soil, water, and air around the facility.
- Prioritise **waste reduction and recycling initiatives** at the source, rather than creating pollution at the end of the line.

Social and Economic Impacts

This proposal has already caused a **great deal of distress** and **division** in our community. Many people are losing sleep worrying about the potential health and financial impacts.

For my family, it has already affected our **mental health and business decisions**. We have talked about leaving Parkes not because we want to, but because we cannot risk our health and livelihood.

The **impact on housing values** is another major concern. No one wants to buy a home near an incinerator. That means long-time residents could lose the value of their biggest investment through no fault of their own.

Questions:

- Has a **social impact assessment** been completed to understand how this project affects families, businesses, and property values?
- What plans are in place to support people who experience **financial loss or mental health impacts** as a result of this proposal?

Recommendations:

- Conduct an **independent social and economic impact study**.
- Create a **compensation and relocation fund** for affected residents if the project proceeds.
- Include **mental health and wellbeing supports** for those experiencing anxiety and stress due to the project.

Fairness and Common Sense

Waste incinerators have already been **prohibited in places like Goulburn, Lithgow, and Richmond Valley** due to health risks. If they are not safe there, **why are they being pushed onto regional communities like Parkes?**

Sydney and other cities should take **responsibility for their own waste**. Reports have shown that up to **50% improvement** in recycling and waste reduction could be achieved in Sydney alone a far better and safer solution than **trucking garbage hundreds of kilometres inland**.

It feels like regional people don't matter like our health, land, and community are being traded for someone else's convenience.

Recommendations:

- Ban **waste incineration facilities** in regional and agricultural zones.
- Invest in **recycling, composting, and waste prevention** initiatives within the cities where waste is produced.
- Ensure regional communities like Parkes are **respected and protected** from projects that risk their health and livelihoods.

Conclusion

Parkes is our home. We are a hardworking community built on farming, family, and pride in the land. We deserve **clean air, safe water, and a secure future** not a toxic waste facility that threatens everything we've worked for.

This proposal is not about progress; it's about **risking rural people's health and livelihoods** for the convenience of the city. I strongly urge the **NSW Government, Parkes Shire Council, and Parkes Energy Recovery Project** to **reconsider and withdraw** this proposal.

Our region deserves **respect, transparency, and a voice** in decisions that shape our future.

Sincerely,

Melissa Ingram

Parkes Resident & Local Business Owner