

**Submission
No 621**

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITIES

Name: Mrs Melissa Norman

Date Received: 27 October 2025

Submission to the Proposed Parkes Waste / Energy Recovery Facility

From: Melissa Norman

Location: Parkes, NSW

Date: 27th October, 2025

Introduction

My name is **Melissa Norman**, and I am a **lifelong resident of Parkes**. I am **married with two adult children**, one of whom lives here with her partner, who is a **local business owner**. I work in **administration**, and my family has deep roots in this community we were **born and bred in Parkes**.

I want my family, and future generations, to enjoy the **same healthy, safe, and uncompromised lifestyle** that we've always valued here. If my children choose to raise their own families in Parkes, they should be able to do so without the fear of pollution, health risks, or the decline of our beautiful environment.

Both of my **daughters are asthmatic**, and I have already experienced the pain of **losing both of my parents to cancer**. My mum lived in Parkes for 72 years and my dad for around 40 years. They are both buried here, and I want to continue honouring their memory by protecting the place they loved and called home.

The idea that my husband and I might have to **move away** from our home, our parents' resting place, and our community to avoid living near an industrial incinerator is deeply distressing.

Lack of Consultation and Transparency

I am **disappointed in the lack of consultation** from both **Parkes Shire Council** and the **NSW Government** regarding this proposal and the Special Activation Precinct (SAP) that allowed it.

The community was not properly informed or given a fair chance to understand or respond before decisions were made. Many of us only became aware once the proposal was already progressing.

We were told by the Council that they had no control over this project that it was a "State matter." However, I understand there may have been opportunities to **oppose or prevent the facility back in 2019**. If that is true, the community deserves an explanation.

Questions:

- Why were Parkes residents not informed or consulted properly before the SAP and incinerator were approved for planning consideration?

- Did Parkes Shire Council have the ability to object or prevent this proposal in 2019, and if so, why didn't they?
- Who is accountable for ensuring that local voices are heard and respected?

Recommendations:

- The NSW Government and Parkes Shire Council must **pause all development** until full and **transparent community consultation** is conducted.
- Provide a **public timeline and clear answers** about what decisions were made, when, and by whom.

Health and Air Quality Concerns

As the mother of two asthmatic daughters, I am extremely worried about the potential **air pollution and health impacts** from this facility.

Incinerators produce fine particles, heavy metals, and toxins that can increase respiratory diseases, heart conditions, and cancers. We already live in a regional area with limited healthcare services adding more risk to our community's health is unacceptable.

Questions:

- What safeguards are in place to protect residents from emissions, particularly children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing respiratory conditions?
- Has an **independent health impact study** been conducted for Parkes, and will results be made public?
- How will air quality be monitored in real time, and will residents have access to that data?

Recommendations:

- Require a **comprehensive, independent health and air quality assessment** before any approval is granted.
- Establish **strict emission standards** that are publicly monitored and enforced.
- Create a **community health support plan** for anyone affected by pollution exposure.

Environmental and Agricultural Concerns

Parkes is a region that **relies heavily on farming and tourism** for its economy. Our **clean environment and fertile land** are the foundation of both industries.

Transporting and burning **Sydney's rubbish** hundreds of kilometres away in a regional, agricultural community makes no environmental or economic sense. It increases **train congestion, safety risks, carbon emissions, and pollution**.

If this facility contaminates the **soil, air, or water**, it could cause long-term harm to farming productivity and damage the reputation of our region's clean, safe produce.

Questions:

- How will the project ensure that no pollutants contaminate our soil, crops, and water systems?
- Has a **full agricultural risk assessment** been carried out for this proposal?
- Why is this facility being placed in a **major food-producing region** rather than near the source of the waste in Sydney?

Recommendations:

- Require a **comprehensive environmental and agricultural impact report**.
- Ensure **independent monitoring of water, soil, and air** near the facility.
- Ban the transport of Sydney waste to regional NSW for incineration waste should be handled **at the source**.

Social and Economic Impacts

If this project proceeds, it will **damage community morale, local business confidence, and population growth**.

People will **leave Parkes** to protect their health and safety. Businesses will **downsize or close**, particularly if housing values fall and tourism declines. This will hurt small business owners, workers, and local families who have built their lives here.

Questions:

- Has a **social and economic impact study** been completed to measure how this project will affect local families, housing, and businesses?
- What support will be provided to residents and small business owners who suffer financial or emotional distress as a result of the project?

Recommendations:

- Conduct a **full independent social impact study** before any approvals are issued.
- Establish **mental health and financial assistance programs** for affected residents.

- Reassess whether the project aligns with the **long-term social and economic sustainability** of Parkes.

Fairness and Common Sense

It has been widely reported that **waste incinerators have been banned** in **Goulburn, Lithgow, and the Richmond Valley** due to health risks. If they are not considered safe in those regions, **why are they being forced on Parkes and other rural communities?**

If Sydney produces the waste, **Sydney should manage and process it responsibly**, not send it hundreds of kilometres west for disposal. This project sends a clear message that regional people are seen as less deserving of clean air, health, and safety.

Recommendations:

- Prohibit **waste incineration** in regional and agricultural zones.
- Focus government investment on **recycling, waste reduction, and circular economy initiatives**.
- Ensure all future infrastructure decisions include **genuine community participation** and **respect for regional wellbeing**.

Conclusion

This proposal is not what Parkes needs, and it is not what regional NSW deserves. It threatens our **health, environment, economy, and sense of community**.

If approved, it will push people away from the place they love and call home myself included. The sadness of possibly leaving my parents' resting place, my friends, and the town where I was born and raised breaks my heart.

I strongly urge the **NSW Government, Parkes Shire Council, and the Parkes Energy Recovery Project** to **withdraw this proposal** and protect the long-term health and future of our community.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Norman
Parkes Resident