

Submission  
No 612

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE  
FACILITIES**

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
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## Submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Energy from Waste (EfW) 2025

From: \_\_\_\_\_, Resident of Parkes, NSW

23 October 2025

To the Inquiry Committee.

I am writing as a long-term resident of Parkes, a small rural community that I love deeply and that I believe deserves better than to be burdened with Sydney's waste. While I acknowledge that the Energy from Waste (EfW) proposal will have widespread community and environmental impacts, I am focusing here on how this proposal personally affects me and my family. I know that may sound self-focused to some, but this is my reality—how this proposal weighs on me every single day as someone living with complex mental health issues; Bipolar, Major Depressive Disorder, Generalised Anxiety Disorder. I am officially regarded as chronic, severe and fluctuating between stable and relapse. I also help care for two family members who rely on me. The thought of this incinerator going ahead fills me with anxiety, fear, anger, and despair.

I am disgusted that in 2025, a major city like Sydney has still not managed to develop and implement effective, sustainable waste management strategies. It is beyond comprehension that, rather than confronting its own waste problem, the city's solution is to ship it hundreds of kilometres away to be burned in a small regional farming community. **This approach feels outdated, lazy, and deeply unjust. Australia should be leading the world in circular economy initiatives**, in true waste minimisation and recycling, not regressing into incineration as a stopgap solution that will cause new irreparable environmental and social harms.

It deeply disturbs me that Parkes—a small agricultural town known for its clean air, open spaces, and hard-working people—is being viewed as a convenient dumping ground for Sydney's problems. There is something profoundly wrong in that logic. It says a lot about our society, about how rural and regional communities are valued—or rather, not valued. To me, it demonstrates that economic convenience is being placed far above human health, community wellbeing, environmental protection and the nation's food security. It feels as though the decision-makers in the city think our health, our homes, and our livelihoods are somehow worth less than theirs. And that is heartbreaking.

What has made this entire experience worse is the **shocking lack of transparency and genuine community consultation**. It feels as though this proposal was dropped on us without any real warning or discussion. There has been no meaningful opportunity for the people who live here—the ones who will be most directly affected—to have their say in whether this facility should be built. There's been no clear information about the risks, no open forums where residents can ask questions and receive honest answers, and no genuine attempt to earn community

**trust. It feels like a decision that has already been made behind closed doors, with locals being told to simply accept it. That is unacceptable.**

I strongly believe that major infrastructure projects with potential long-term health and environmental consequences, like this incinerator, should not proceed without the explicit consent of the local community. There should be a vote of the local electorate—those of us who own property, pay rates, and live/work our daily lives in the shadow of this proposal. We deserve the right to decide what is built in our backyards.

Waste-to-energy incinerators are known polluters. Even when operated within regulatory limits, they emit harmful particulates, heavy metals, dioxins, and other toxins that can settle on soil, crops, and water supplies. For a farming region like Parkes, that is a direct threat to our way of life. These pollutants will fall on our paddocks where livestock graze and crops grow, contaminating the food chain. They will be carried by wind and rain into our creeks, dams, and rivers—our vital water sources, we are part of the Murray-Darling Basin. They will also settle on rooftops in both town and rural areas, contaminating rainwater that many households rely on for drinking, cooking, and bathing. This is not hypothetical; it is a real and documented risk seen in other parts of the world where incinerators have been built.

Beyond the physical pollution, this proposal also impacts our mental and emotional wellbeing. For those of us who already live with mental health challenges, the constant stress and uncertainty surrounding this project is incredibly harmful. I already live with anxiety and depression, and the thought of this incinerator being built just kilometres away from where I live keeps me awake at night. I worry about my family's future, about my role as a carer, about the health of my loved ones. The mental load of all this is enormous. It's cruel to expect already struggling regional families to bear the weight of city-generated pollution on top of everything else.

There are also lifestyle impacts that might not seem significant to outsiders but mean a lot to us here. Many locals, including myself, grow our own vegetables, collect rainwater, and keep backyard chickens. These simple, grounding activities support both our physical health and our mental wellbeing. But if this incinerator goes ahead, I don't think I'd feel safe doing those things anymore. The idea of consuming food or water that might be contaminated with industrial toxins is unbearable. It would take away one of the few remaining ways we can live sustainably and affordably in a cost-of-living crisis. That is another loss—small, perhaps, to policymakers, but deeply personal and painful to us, it is a death by a thousand cuts.

Our local wildlife and natural ecosystems will not be spared either. Parkes is home to many native species, including birds, reptiles, and small mammals that rely on clean water and unpolluted land. Once toxins enter the food chain, the effects ripple through every level of the ecosystem. The damage could be irreversible.

I have also learned that the materials most sought after for burning in these incinerators are often recyclable items like paper and plastic. So rather than reducing waste, this technology risks undermining existing recycling efforts. What happens to the materials that can't be burned? Will they still end up in landfill? Are we simply moving the problem rather than solving it?

There are economic consequences too. Anecdotal evidence already suggests that property buyers are reconsidering purchases in Parkes after hearing about the proposed incinerator. There has been at least one instance where a buyer pulled out of a sale agreement because of this project. That alone speaks volumes about the impact on our community's reputation and future growth. As homeowners, this means the value of our homes—the single biggest investment for most families—will plummet through no fault of our own. The modest home we raised our children in, the one we hoped would one day help provide them with a financial boost, may lose much of its value. That is not fair or just.

Health is my biggest concern. I have family members with autoimmune diseases and respiratory conditions, including COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease). The air quality impacts of an incinerator could have severe consequences for them and others like them. I myself suffered from childhood asthma when we lived in Sydney. My parents moved us to Parkes in search of cleaner air and a better quality of life. And now, 40 years later, the pollution from Sydney threatens to follow us here. It feels like history repeating itself—but worse, because now it's not just me. It's my children, my family, my community, and everything we've built over a lifetime.

In conclusion, this proposal is wrong on every level—morally, environmentally, and socially. It disrespects regional communities, disregards our health and wellbeing, and undermines the principles of sustainable living. I urge the committee to recognise that Parkes is not a dumping ground. We are people with lives, families, and hopes for a clean, safe, and prosperous future. Sydney must take responsibility for its own waste and invest in smarter, cleaner, and more innovative waste management solutions.

**Burning waste in the heart of rural NSW is not progress—it is regression, and I oppose construction of an Incinerator near Parkes and anywhere in NSW.**

Resident and carer