

**Submission
No 628**

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITIES

Name: Miss Katie Cheney

Date Received: 26 October 2025

To whom it may concern,

My name is Katie Cheney, and I am a Psychologist, mother, sister, partner and daughter born and bred in Parkes NSW on Wiradjuri country. I am writing to you today to express my concern and strong opposition to the proposed energy from waste incinerator.

I care deeply about the community that I grew up in and have been lucky enough to call home for 34 years. Parkes is a close knit rural town, where citizens look out for one another, and there is always someone willing to lend a hand when needed. It has been my greatest joy to raise my children here on my home soil, with clean air, friendly faces, space to roam and excellent local education, health and recreational facilities.

Unfortunately, should the energy from waste incinerator proposal be approved, my family and I, along with our large extended family, will be forced to leave our rural homeland. And the reason is simple, I will not place the health of my children at risk. And on a human level, I know you too would make the same decision for your family.

I am proud of where I'm from, and I work hard to give back to the community that has given so much to me. I work in a very under resourced and under staffed industry, and no where is this more evident than in the bush. I worry about the impact that the incinerator will have on the mental wellbeing of local residents. Parkes is built on agricultural farm land, specifically harvesting crops of wheat, barley and canola. There is real angst amongst the farming community regarding the impact this proposal will have on the quality of future produce and the land they have farmed for generations. I am also concerned that if approved, the incinerator would further disadvantage the mental health sector as a whole in a number of ways. Firstly, professionals already practising in Parkes and surrounding townships, like myself, will leave. Secondly, it will be harder to recruit health staff to the area. And finally, the need and demand for services will increase beyond capacity if the proposal goes ahead.

I'm also deeply alarmed about the way this project has been communicated, or rather concealed from the community. The minimal information that we have received has been confusing, and often contradictory. There has been limited opportunity for meaningful consultation with the powers that be and I find this unethical and unfair.

Quite frankly, it has felt like we have been ambushed. I suspect however, that this was the strategy all along. To wait until 'the deal was done' in an attempt to limit the opportunity for resistance or push back. It is a tactic that has been used throughout history to corner others into submission or compliance. What ever happened to concepts like 'local problems, local solutions' or 'nothing about us without us'?

On a practical level, it seems illogical that the solution to Sydney's waste problem is to freight garbage over 360km inland. With all of the resources in metropolitan areas, surely the infrastructure could be built closer to the source of the problem (that being Sydney). But again I suspect the reason for this is simple, small communities like ours are vulnerable because we simply do not have the man power to resist it. The people of Sydney would reject this proposal, and rightly so. Who could blame them? And people would listen, because how could they not? The power imbalance at play is impossible to ignore and it feels very much like we are being bullied to comply with something that we don't just disagree with, but that is potentially harmful.

The implicit message is that we (people in rural Australia) don't matter. Our views? Irrelevant. Our health? Not important. Our community? Good for nothing. Maintaining Sydney's aesthetic? Paramount. Their health? Not negotiable.

For us out here in the country, we can make all the noise we want. But will anybody listen? Maybe. Hopefully. That's why I am using my voice to implore you to move this facility elsewhere. Somewhere where it won't affect the health or disrupt the livelihood of whole communities. Because it's the right thing to do.

The thing about country folk is that we are built tough. We fight for what's fair and we stand up for what's right. I ask you to do the same.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Sincerely,
Katie Cheney