

**Submission  
No 645**

## **INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITIES**

**Name:** Ms Angela Cibiras

**Date Received:** 31 October 2025

---

To the Members of the Select Committee on Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities,

I write to express my strong opposition to the proposed waste-to-energy incinerator at Tarago. While I recognise the need for sustainable waste management in New South Wales, this proposal represents a clear step backwards — environmentally, economically, and socially. The project fails to meet the principles of the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, the precautionary principle, and the NSW Government’s own commitment to circular-economy outcomes.

### 1. Public Health and Air Quality Risks

The proposed facility intends to process approximately 380,000 tonnes of mixed municipal, industrial, and construction waste annually, producing emissions of nitrogen oxides, sulphur oxides, dioxins, furans, and PFAS. These pollutants are proven to cause respiratory disease, cancer, and developmental issues in children. International evidence shows that even “best practice” incineration plants emit harmful particulates and ultrafine dust not adequately captured by filters. Tarago’s proximity to residential zones, farms, and water catchments makes this risk unacceptable.

### 2. Impact on Agriculture and the Sydney Water Catchment

Tarago and Bungendore are part of an active agricultural district producing high-quality meat, wool, and crops. The proposed facility’s proximity to the Sydney drinking water catchment creates a systemic environmental hazard. Contaminants from emissions or leachate could infiltrate soils, groundwater, and rainwater tanks, undermining decades of clean-farming credentials. This would not only harm the livelihoods of farmers but also erode consumer confidence in NSW’s regional produce and export markets.

### 3. Detrimental Effect on Property Values and Regional Growth

Multiple studies in Australia and abroad demonstrate that industrial waste facilities significantly depress local property prices — often by 10–20 percent. Prospective buyers avoid regions associated with odour, pollution, and industrial waste activity. For Bungendore, Tarago, and the surrounding Lake George region, this would erode household wealth, diminish council rate bases, and undermine long-term regional development plans. It is inequitable for local residents, who have invested heavily in their properties and communities, to bear such irreversible financial losses for a project that primarily benefits metropolitan waste producers.

### 4. Poor Environmental Justice and Governance

This project epitomises environmental injustice — placing the burden of Sydney’s waste on a small rural community. Local residents have repeatedly raised legitimate concerns about health, safety, and transparency, yet consultation has been perfunctory and dismissive. Veolia’s past compliance record, including leaking trucks, odour breaches, and poor waste containment, does not inspire public confidence. Rural communities should not serve as the dumping ground for metropolitan waste through projects that fail to meet even baseline environmental safeguards.

### 5. Unsustainable Waste Policy Direction

Globally, nations such as Germany, Denmark, and the United Kingdom are phasing down incineration, recognising that it undermines recycling and waste-avoidance efforts. Energy-from-waste plants require a guaranteed waste feedstock for decades, locking in a “burn rather than recycle” model inconsistent with NSW’s Net Zero and Circular Economy strategies. Investment should instead prioritise recycling

innovation, composting, and waste reduction at source — solutions that create jobs without polluting air, land, or water.

### Conclusion

In summary, the Tarago incinerator poses unacceptable risks to public health, water security, agriculture, and property values, while undermining NSW's environmental and economic objectives. I respectfully urge the Committee to recommend against approval of this facility and instead support regional investment in recycling, composting, and clean-energy innovation that protects rural communities and the natural environment upon which they depend.