

**Submission
No 656**

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITIES

Name: Mr Michael Pilbrow

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NSW Legislative Council Select Committee on Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Committee members

Submission to the Selection Committee on Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities

“INNOVATION NOT INCINERATION”

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission. I do so as a resident in the Yass Valley; a former President of the Yass Valley Business Chamber; a long-time volunteer in local community, sport, education and health organisations; a recent Labor candidate for the state electorate of Goulburn; and a member of the Goulburn-Mulwaree Cross-Party Working Group on Waste Incinerators. I write in solidarity with my neighbours in Tarago and surrounds, a community that has been unfairly put into the firing line of this issue due to the Veolia Woodlawn waste incineration proposal, and my neighbours the other direction in Parkes who have also been put in the firing line.

I urge the Committee to strongly oppose the commencement of any energy from waste facilities anywhere in NSW. I support the decision not to allow such facilities in Sydney – following strong community campaigns in Western Sydney and the eastern suburbs – and propose that extending this ban to the whole of NSW would be an entirely fair and logical step. If it is not okay to burn rubbish in Sydney, then surely it is not okay to burn it outside Sydney.

No.1 priority: Maintaining protections for human health and the environment

While the recently released *NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan* has been presented as providing a pathway to energy from waste, in fact it makes a persuasive case against such technology up-front.

In the Minister’s message (p.4) it says that NSW Government agencies will work together with industry and local councils to:

“enable energy from waste, where doing so will...maintain protections for human health and the environment”

The precise words here are very important in discerning the message:

- “Maintenance” is a timeless concept – now and forever
- “Protection” is an absolute concept – there is no grey area
- “Human health and the environment” are the most precious assets we have

In fact, the message couldn't be clearer. Without 100% assurance that there will be not even the tiniest failure in protection of human health and the environment, this new Plan actually rules out energy from waste. The burden of proof is on the proponents – and to date no evidence has been presented to the community that would provide assurance that the proposed energy from waste facilities would “maintain protections for human health and the environment”.

Recommendation – A Waste Innovation Summit

While the responsibility for dealing with Sydney's waste challenges should not be a burden on people in regional and rural NSW, everyone everywhere should be encouraged to come up with alternative ideas. There are outstanding innovators in our state, across the country and internationally working on or already delivering scientific solutions to deal with waste that don't involve burning and incinerating. We would be doing a disservice to current and future generations not to allow these innovations to come forward, be tested and for the best innovations to flourish.

I therefore recommend that:

- The NSW Government convene a **Waste Innovation Summit** to harness the best ideas from around the state, the nation and the world
- And that all work towards energy from waste be stopped pending the outcomes of the Waste Innovation Summit

Let's make NSW the state that innovates, not the state that incinerates!

I would be very happy to discuss my submission further with the Committee.

Your sincerely

Michael Pilbrow