

**Submission
No 672**

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITIES

Name: Mrs Judy Cunningham

Date Received: 31 October 2025

Submission Against the Parkes Energy Recovery Incinerator Project (EfW)

Judy Cunningham

Resident of Parkes

This submission is to strongly oppose the Energy from Waste Incinerator coming to Parkes.

I am a parent with 2 children who reside in Parkes. I have lived here nearly all my life, my children grew up here. We love Parkes and that we live in clean fresh air, away from Sydney pollution. This will all change when Sydney starts bringing their plastic garbage up here to burn in an unsafe proposed Energy from Waste Incinerator. No matter how safe they say it is, a number of minute nasty toxic dioxins will be escaping.

How come we of Parkes just learned that this incinerator was coming? We were never consulted. Who in their right mind wants an incinerator 5 kms from their town with dioxins blowing out every hour? How come we were never informed? We were lied to saying it was a Waste Recycle Depo at no time was it stated it was an Energy from Waste Incinerator.

I am also worried that there is not a requirement for 24/7 monitoring of all emissions such as these minute toxic dioxins. It will be too late in 10 years' time when people's health will be effected It also doesn't sound like a good idea for our health as dioxins come out of burning the rubbish will be falling all over Parkes and we will be breathing them in, in a good wind it will be spreading dioxins from the incinerator all over Parkes and up to 120kms away.

The dioxins from the incinerator will blow in to our town water supply which can't be healthy if you drink it. Will we get bottled water supplied by the government? Will the government come and clean our water tanks out daily and refill them with fresh drinking water? The dioxins will land where there are crops thus contaminating the soil and livestock and livestock food. How are we going to sell crops with dioxins in the soil? All our farm land will be compromised by these dioxins. No amount of these emissions are considered acceptable when farmers depend on clean air water and soil to sustain their livelihoods. Take it somewhere away from prime agriculture land and an amazing crop growing belt.

Why can't the plastic rubbish be transported out into the desert where no one lives and bury it there with Fly in Fly out workers like the mine workers do.

Another worry is fearing for the health and safety of their family a lot of people will leave Parkes. Parkes houses will be dropping in price when people start leaving fearing for their health and safety it will cause economic disaster for the town of Parkes.

How will we get doctors, nurses and teachers and dentists to reside in Parkes they will be worried about their health we will be a town without a lot of services.

Thermal energy is being phased out overseas because of concerns for contaminated soil risk and also to people's health. Why are we doing it here? Burning plastic is not a good idea anywhere.

It should up to manufacturers to only pack products in recyclable plastic and be fined for using one time use plastic wrapping. Also why can't manufacturers make packaging out of cardboard instead or some form of packaging that is not plastic.

Greenwashing:

Misleading Claims: Link to Fossil Fuel Industry

Given that **waste to energy incinerators rely on the calorific value of plastic waste** (as a fuel) to be a viable operation, it should be no surprise that fossil fuel, **petrochemicals and plastics industries, would also have interests in waste incineration**. Indeed, the UN Human Rights Special Rapporteur for toxics and hazardous waste, concluded in his final report to the Australian Federal Government that **waste incineration was the “end of the line for fossil fuels” and urged Australia to avoid incineration and choose zero waste polices instead.**

Toxic Free Australia, Greenwashing submission, 2024

Lessons from overseas

Evidence of widespread Dioxin contamination in Europe is increasing. Many countries have now been found to have unsafe levels of Dioxin and other contaminants in the surrounding environment of EU Best Practice waste incinerators. This contamination has polluted the food chain, with evidence of public health impacts are associated.

Waste incineration is identified in at least three international conventions to which Australia is a signatory and obliged to uphold the advice and recommendation of these conventions, Australia’s commitments to them or the details of the chemical pollutants to which they refer.

- 1. Stockholm Convention -wte incineration is classified as a prime source of persistent organic pollutants such as Dioxin.** These pollutants are so damaging because they are toxic, persistent and bio –accumulative, ultimately concentrating in the polar ice caps. **There is no no “safe” level of exposure.**
- 2. Minamata Convention – wte incineration is listed as one of the top 5 industries globally emitting dangerous mercury pollution.**
- 3. Bail Convention – identifies wte Incineration as a prime source of hazardous waste generation.**

Toxics Free Australia, Greenwashing Submission, 2024

Lessons from Overseas

There is nothing pragmatic or essential about waste incineration. **It is an industry in decline globally because of its massive carbon footprint and toxic pollution legacies including millions of tones toxic ash.** The misinformation being peddled by NSW government and industry, looks ridiculous compared **EU Commission recommendation to its member states, in 2017, to not invest in waste incineration, to decommission old incinerators and not build new ones.** Instead, they are incentivizing investment in sustainable Zero Waste models

Toxic Free Australia, Media Statement, NSW Government Rolls Out Red Carpet for Incineration, 23 October 2025

POLLUTION: Promotes plastic dependence

Plastic waste **(a petrochemical and fossil fuel material) is the prime fuel for waste incinerators, including the production of refuse Derived Fuels and Processed Engineered Fuels, which the NSW government is promoting.**

Toxic Free Australia, Media Statement, NSW government Rolls Out Red Carpet for Incineration, Oct 2025.

Waste to energy incineration does not create clean or renewable energy.

Residual MSW – the waste stream for waste incineration in Australia- is primarily non-recyclable plastic wastes and a range of contaminated reusable and recyclable materials. Burning plastic – a fossil fuel – based material – does not create clean nor renewable energy. The small fractions of organic (biomass) wastes contained in the residual waste stream are better managed through the federal and State FOGO policies and clearly have an alternative pathway other than disposal. Waste incineration undermines the safer and more effective outcomes of organics waste management.

Toxic Free Australia, Greenwashing Submissions, 2024

HARM TO HUMAN HEALTH

Newer waste incinerator technologies are claimed to run more cleanly and with less environmental impact. Nevertheless, **pollutants are still produced, with upgraded facilities requiring regular service to maintain emission levels.**

Despite technological advancements, **local and global health impacts from waste incinerators remain a concern for communities where they are being built. Adverse health outcomes in populations near waste incinerators, including cancers and reproductive dysfunction, have been demonstrated in primary studies. 7-12**

New incinerators should be located away from areas of food production.

Food grown near an incinerator should be avoided.

This review shows contamination of food and ingestion of pollutants is a significant risk pathway for both nearby and distant residents. While occupationally exposed principle there is insufficient evidence to conclude that any incinerator is safe. There many years of cumulative exposure, so it is premature to conclude that these newer technologies improve safety.

Account. Early transparent consultation with communities about these facilities is essential.

Australian and New Zealand journal of Public Health, Health impacts of Waste Incineration, 2024

Who made all this red Bin Plastic Waste, Sydney, leave it down in Sydney to burn and do not cart it u hundreds of kilometers up here on diesel burning railway engine trains to burn in an unsafe incinerator in a food producing area.

Please recommend that the Government reject Energy from Waste incineration, to protect the health and future of Regional NSW and our agriculture industries.

Also the community was not consulted when these decisions were made everyone should have the right to say No to the Energy from Waste Incinerator.

Sincerely

Judy Cunningham