

**Submission  
No 673**

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

**Name:** Mrs Suzanne Powrie

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## To Committee on Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities

I strongly object to the proposed toxic “waste to energy” incinerator at Woodlawn near Tarago.

I have lived here for over 39 years & provide my own water, sewage treatment, waste disposal & power supply, ran a cattle stud & commercial herd and a legal business & raised my children here.

My reasons for objecting include, inter alia:

\* Veolia currently operate the “bioreactor” at Woodlawn. By its own admission, & as a matter of record, Veolia has breached operating conditions numerous times & been fined for such failures.

\*Internationally as well, Veolia’s reputation/record is appalling- yet propose to build & operate a toxic incinerator, in our rural location, to burn toxic waste from Sydney (& probably Canberra).

\*Before even considering the potential physical impacts of such a proposal - the legal implications at state, federal & international levels should be thoroughly investigated. Government obligations at all levels would appear to negate consideration of such a proposal.

\*The inequitable application of health protection legislation. Proposed sites specifically excluded from those protections & fines for breaching emission limits are very low in comparison with city & suburban areas for same breaches.

\*The NSW government (Energy from Waste report) acknowledges that such incinerators impact human health- “there is no safe threshold of impact” it admits.

Legal remedies will be pursued in the future should this proposal be approved.

\*The fallacious depiction of “ energy from waste” in the context of incineration is difficult to sustain in the face of scientific evidence from overseas sources. There, governments & populations are rejecting such unsustainable & dangerous concepts. It is dirtier than coal-fired power burning fossil fuel products (eg plastics). In light of ongoing climate crises, adding 140,000 tonnes of CO2 each year to the atmosphere is not viable.

\*Since at least 2017 the EU Commission recommends against the continuation or increase in incineration of waste- it’s toxic, counterproductive, uneconomical & discourages the reduction of toxic waste (particularly plastics).

\*The UN regards hazardous waste incineration as the “end of the line for fossil fuels” & urged the investigation of better, safer alternatives.

\*State & federal governments would also be ignoring a number of obligations owed to its own & world citizenry to ensure safety & health for all.

\*The proposal makes no sense at even a commercial level. A coal-fired power plant with equivalent emissions produces 876,000MW - the projected output of the proposed incinerator - 30MW.

\*Despite “technical advances” in design such facilities still send toxins into the air, soil & water.

\* The cost of dealing with Sydney’s (& Canberra’s) waste in such a way would be greater than better collection & sorting methods. Safer, cheaper & more effective technologies are available.

\*Pollution from such incinerators is linked to asthma, lung disease & other breathing difficulties, an increased risk of miscarriages, stroke, cancer, & heart disease amongst other harmful & avoidable health impacts.

\*Even Veolia admits that the proposed facility would exceed current NSW government safety standards.

The proposed incinerator would emit an anticipated 380,000tonnes of acid gases, dioxins, furans, PFAS, lead, mercury, arsenic & other toxic heavy metals into our air, water & soil. This represents unacceptable (& preventable) risks to agriculture, viticulture, animals(commercial, domestic& native), eggs, home produce & water supplies, & human life.

\*It would have a massive carbon footprint, in addition to millions of tonnes of toxic ash.

\*Risks to water supplies are especially unacceptable in a rural setting, we rely on rainwater exclusively- this is not a matter of choice)- to drink, bathe, wash, grow food, water stock & pets. Scientific evidence states that all such uses should be avoided in face of the predicted pollution.

\*The proposed location is at the head of the Sydney Water Catchment & would pollute the city's water supply with the potential to affect the 5.5 million residents.

The points above, by no means exhaustive, are representative of the scientific & socially impactful reasons to refuse Veolia's proposal.

\* Many councils have already rejected the building & operation of such toxic incinerators because they value the health & safety of their regions & people.

Ironically, NSW Environment Minister Penny Sharpe campaigned against waste incinerators in Sydney, but is happy to push them into rural areas.

If, as she said, "the challenge of waste is something we all have to deal with", then demand Sydney stops producing waste at an unsustainable rate & deal with its own waste sustainably & responsibly.

Do not shift that responsibility onto rural & regional communities, Tarago & elsewhere.

As with the "bioreactor"

Sydney & Canberra "get rid" of their waste

Goulburn gets the "Veolia Basketball Stadium"

&

My community gets pollution, toxic air, soil & water, destroyed roads, loss of wildlife, loss of rural amenity, anxiety & grief.

All will be made even worse if this ill-advised, toxic, uneconomical proposal is approved.

I do not accept that the health & quality of life of myself, my family & wider community are of lesser value than those of Sydneysiders.

NOT SAFE. FOR. SYDNEY?

NOT SAFE HERE or ANYWHERE

Yours faithfully

Suzanne Powrie BA LLB