

**Submission
No 700**

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITIES

Name: Mr Antony Melhuish

Date Received: 29 October 2025

Submission: Concerns Regarding the Proposed Parkes Energy Recovery (EfW) Facility

From: Antony Melhuish, Resident of Parkes, NSW

My name is **Antony Melhuish**, and I have lived in Parkes for most of my life. My wife Michelle and I have raised our family here, and our roots in this town run deep. Parkes is not just where we live it's where our children grew up, where our friends and family are buried, and where we have built our lives.

I currently work in the **mining industry**, running the **computer systems and data management for the maintenance program**. Through this work, I have a strong understanding of how industrial operations function particularly the importance of accurate monitoring, preventative maintenance, and safety compliance. From experience, I know that even with the best intentions, **complex industrial systems can and do fail**, and when they do, the community and environment often bear the consequences.

Because of this, I have serious concerns about the **proposed Parkes Energy Recovery Facility (EfW)** and the potential risks it poses to our town. The facility will reportedly burn large quantities of waste to generate energy. While this might sound efficient on paper, I worry about **long-term emissions, odours, toxic residues, and the cumulative environmental impact** especially given Parkes' size, geography, and the prevailing wind directions that could carry emissions directly over residential areas.

My wife and I have lived here for decades, raising three children and now watching our grandchildren grow up in Parkes. We have deep community connections through sport, schools, and local volunteering. Leaving Parkes due to health or environmental impacts from this project is not something we ever imagined having to consider but it is something we are now seriously worried about.

From a technical and operational standpoint, I have several concerns:

1. **Monitoring and Maintenance Reliability** – Industrial systems rely on constant maintenance and accurate sensor data. How will the emissions and combustion processes of the EfW facility be monitored in real time, and what happens when equipment inevitably malfunctions or readings are inaccurate?
2. **Transparency and Accountability** – Will the public have direct access to raw emissions data, or will results be filtered through company reports? Residents deserve transparent, real-time information, not periodic summaries that come months later.
3. **Waste Source and Composition** – What types of waste will be burned, and how can the operators guarantee that hazardous or contaminated materials won't enter the feedstock stream over time?

4. **Long-Term Environmental Impact** – The residue and fly ash produced by such facilities can contain heavy metals and dioxins. How will this waste be managed, and where will it go?
5. **Health and Safety for Workers and Residents** – Has there been an independent assessment of the risks to both plant workers and local residents, especially those with respiratory issues or existing health conditions?
6. **Emergency Response and Failure Scenarios** – What systems are in place in case of an unplanned release, fire, or explosion? How will emergency services in Parkes already stretched cope with a potential industrial incident of this scale?

I also worry about the broader **economic and reputational impacts**. Parkes is proud of its clean, open environment and strong community spirit. Farming, tourism, and events like the Parkes Elvis Festival rely on our town's image as a safe, welcoming place. Introducing an industrial-scale incinerator could harm that reputation, discouraging both visitors and future investment.

Recommendations

- **Suspend the EIS process** until the findings of the current state inquiry into waste-to-energy projects are complete and made public.
- **Commission independent, peer-reviewed environmental and health impact assessments**, with local consultation and participation.
- **Guarantee transparent, real-time emissions monitoring** available to all residents, with automatic alerts when standards are breached.
- **Assess infrastructure and emergency response capacity** to ensure the community is protected in case of an incident.
- **Explore safer and more sustainable waste management options**, including recycling and local waste reduction programs.

Parkes has worked hard to build a strong, supportive community and a healthy local economy. The proposed EfW facility risks undoing that progress. As someone who understands both the technical and human sides of large-scale industrial operations, I believe the risks to our town are too high and the benefits too uncertain.

I urge decision-makers to **pause this project**, listen to the people of Parkes, and ensure that no decision is made that compromises the health, safety, and future of our community.

Sincerely,

Antony Melhuish

Resident of Parkes, NSW