

**Submission
No 716**

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITIES

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Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Energy-From-Waste Parkes

We are a family farming business located 15km northwest of Parkes. We are Donald, and sons Tom and Chris. We work together every day on our small patch of ground that we call home. We farm merino sheep, angus cattle and grow cereal grains and legume crops. We cut hay to get us through the dry spells and try to make the most of the rain when it comes. Over the years we have dealt with many challenges like most small family farming operations. Both my Grandfather and Grandmother grew up on different properties within a few kms of where we currently farm and live.

As a farm business we have all agreed that we are absolutely opposed to the energy from waste incinerator proposed for Parkes.

Every year in the spring, we send our prime lambs to either Forbes livestock exchange, or direct to the processor.

The Forbes livestock exchange has an annual average throughput of 1.4 million sheep annually. 78,000 head of cattle. 16,000 pigs. This industry is worth a lot of money to the region. These animals end up on dinner plates all over Australia as well as exported overseas. As do the grain crops we go. Why would the state government risk doing something that might adversely affect our agricultural industry like this? What will happen if contaminants from the incinerator make their way into our food system? Will farmers be compensated if we lose market access and therefore our livelihoods? Will there be compensation if property values go down? To leave our farm at this stage of our lives and to give up the dreams we have for our children here would be devastating.

Farming families spend their entire lives on their farms working to improve the land for the next generation. We were raised on our farms.

This proposal has caused our family and others in this area a lot of anxiety. (I am writing this to you after putting four young children to sleep, before we all get up early and put in a long day on the farm tomorrow as we are about to begin harvest).

The township of Parkes sits directly in the prevailing wind direction, and the entire town is within 10 kms. This is causing people a lot of anxiety and frustration. The EPA has said they cannot guarantee 100% safety.

After reading about the EPA's handling of the lead contamination in Broken hill:

(https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-10-02/belubula-river-community-unhappy-with-epa-response-on-pfos-pfas/105694456?utm_campaign=abc_news_web&utm_content=link&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_source=abc_news_web).

As well as their handling of the PFAS in the Belubula River:

(https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-09-17/broken-hill-lead-poisoning-cover-up-mudgee-silver-mine-fears/105775230?utm_campaign=abc_news_web&utm_content=link&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_source=abc_news_web), I and many other country people have serious concerns in regard to the EPA being able to protect the community from industry caused pollution.

Chris Bowen, our current Minister for Climate Change and Energy said not very long ago when an incinerator was proposed for his electorate that, "it is literally a dumpster fire". That proposal was rejected for Western Sydney by the planning commission because of the air quality impacts and the risk to human health. Why is it any different for the residents of Parkes? How are we supposed to feel? Are our lives less important?

We send the city food; they send us their red bin rubbish. The NSW waste management strategy states that rubbish should be managed as close to its source as possible. Parkes is 500 kms away from Sydney. If the incinerator is safe, why isn't it built closer to the source? This is Sydney's rubbish. Not ours.

I feel the community has not been properly consulted. The first we heard about this was a few months ago. Suddenly it seems that writing this submission is our last chance at stopping this. Our local member Phil Donato sent out flyers to the people of Parkes. As of yesterday, the 29/10/25 he released via social media that he had only received 800 responses. Out of 5 households in my family living in the Parkes local government area only 1 household received the survey. Phil did say for anyone who hadn't received one to contact his office on social media but how many people don't even know about the survey? He has 1.7k followers on Facebook. I imagine most of these live people live in Orange. There are over 14000 people who live in the Parkes local government area.

In conclusion, please do not build an Energy-From-Waste incinerator in our electorate, we do not want this.

Thank you for considering our submission.

Tom & Chris Orr