

**Submission
No 720**

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITIES

Name: Mr Thomas Martin

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The chair,

My name is Thomas Martin, I am a third generation sheep farmer from lake Bathurst, 30k south of Goulburn. My family has been in this Valley since WW2. We produce wool, prime lambs, lucerne and cereal grains. I am also a father of two, perhaps one day they too may work this land.

Our produce is sold domestically and is part of the international supply chain. Our business is sustainable in the long term growing high quality food and fibre in both an ethical and environmentally correct fashion as demanded by our customers and supply chain.

It is absolutely our view that our business is part of the circular economy, contributing to a better Australia on a local and national scale. Waste to Energy (WTE) is a direct and clear threat to the ability of agriculture in the Tablelands to perform its duties into the future.

The inevitable spread of furans, dioxins and PFAS into the soil and water of the area creates a direct link between our customers and the pollution that WTE will emit.

As producers we are expected to 'stand by what you sell', by regulators and provide produce free of pesticides and contaminants, when we sell we provide signed declarations that this is so.

If WTE goes ahead and emits the expected pollutants we will no longer be able to guarantee our produce.

The American meat supply chain regularly tests for PFAS, huge markets for Australian Beef and Lamb are at risk due to WTE.

Tarago and Lake Bathurst are in the Sydney water drinking catchment, a hugely important resource for millions of people. The Catchment already has issue with PFAS, WTE will only add to this.

Already the EPA has found levels of PFAS and heavy metals leaching from the current facility at Tarago. Ground water contamination is also an issue, we are awaiting test results now.

The tablelands climate in the area offers a high rain fall zone (HRZ), and a long cool spring. This combination is not found in many areas of Australia and offers year round production and high yielding crops. As the climate changes and yields in the interior pastoral area fall, areas such as this will be vital for Australia's food production in the future (i.e. food security).

WTE is a linear process driven by large multinational waste companies for their own benefit not for the benefit of Australia as it is now or into the future.

WTE removes incentive to reuse and recycle and encourages a society to be wasteful in its attitude as waste is no longer seen as an issue. Other technologies to aim for zero waste are often ignored by government because the big players in the waste industry are so entrenched in the current system and so heavily relied by councils and cities to deal with waste. As a result, the business model of WTE is front and centre in the debate over waste and is favoured by government.

To expect a small community such as Tarago to endure 30 plus years of WTE after 20 plus years of Sydney's waste is both un-Australian and unfair. The children of the Tarago Pre-school (I attended in the 80;s) are forced on a daily basis to endure the odour from the current waste facility. The loss of amenity in the lives of the people who live in the village is huge.

Its should also be noted that the Government's moratorium on WTE in the Sydney basin but not outside has created two classes of people, and indicates the State government values the long term health outcome of city people more highly than those who live in regional areas.

Australia is forced at this point to decide its future. Are we to be a country who aims for zero waste is sustainable and circular in our production methods and the way we live, mindful of our environment and the way we interact with it.

The other option is WTE, where as long as the red bin is emptied at the end of every week, we shut our eyes and look the other way. In this world our food bowls and drink water catchments are eventually polluted, our image as a nation, producing clean, sustainable produce gone. All to suit the bottom line of multinational waste companies.

WTE has no place in Tarago and no place in the Australia I want for my children.

Yours Sincerely,

Tom Martin