

Submission
No 738

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE
FACILITIES**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
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Submission to the 2025 Parliamentary Inquiry into Proposed Energy-from-Waste (EfW) Facilities

From:
Resident of Trundle 2875

Date: 07 October 2025

Introduction & Statement of Concern

We brought our daughter out to Trundle in 2003, and we bought a house in Trundle. Then we bought another house and moved to Trundle permanently in 2009. We established businesses here in Trundle.

I submit this statement because I have serious and deeply felt concerns for the health, safety, and future of our local community, our farmland, and the natural environment. I believe citizens must not be treated as passive recipients of risks, especially when the evidence on EfW and incineration remains contested and uncertain. I urge the Committee to examine these proposals rigorously, transparently, and with the precautionary principle foremost in mind.

Below I raise questions and issues that I request the Committee investigate under the Terms of Reference.

Key Questions / Issues for Inquiry

1. Why propose an incinerator here when comparable facilities in Sydney were closed (or rejected) for health reasons?

- In Sydney near Botany, communities reportedly experienced health complaints, and concerns over emissions and impacts led to pressure to close or limit waste incineration activity. If health risks were sufficient to compel community action in Sydney, what has changed in science, technology, or regulation to justify proposing such a facility in a rural or regional setting that has far fewer protections and more exposure?
- On what basis is it claimed that the health risks that made an incinerator unacceptable in Sydney are now acceptable (or manageable) here? Has a full comparative risk assessment been done to show that this site is materially safer?

2. Is long-distance transport of waste safe — to people, to roads and rail corridors, and to intermediate communities?

- The proposal involves transporting large volumes of waste over long distances (e.g. from Sydney) to the incinerator location. What safeguards will

be in place for the communities and environments along the transport routes (road or rail)?

- What is the risk of spillage, odour, dust, leachate or contamination during transport, loading/unloading, and interim handling?
- Will those intermediate communities bear health or environmental burdens — for which there is no compensation or monitoring?
- Has the full carbon, pollutant emission, and environmental cost of long transport been accounted for in the viability and “clean energy” claims?

3. Will the incinerator be safe for our community and surrounding farmland?

- Incinerators are known to emit persistent organic pollutants (POPs), heavy metals, dioxins, furans, ultrafine particulates, and possibly PFAS residues. How will the proposed facility ensure that none of these escape into the air, soil, groundwater, or surface waters?
- What emission standards will it have, how stringent will they be, and how will compliance be assured (continuous monitoring, independent audits, public reporting)?
- Could contaminants drift, deposit on crops or pasture, or degrade soil and water quality? Will agriculture (crops, livestock, produce) be tested for contamination pre- and post-operation and during operation?
- In my personal case, I already struggle with health conditions that I believe are aggravated by local environmental and water quality issues. I fear this facility will exacerbate those conditions. Has health modelling been done (baseline + incremental effect) for vulnerable people (the sick, children, elderly)?

4. What if a load of waste is contaminated or out-of-spec?

- I was told that only certain waste streams would be permitted (i.e. waste suitable for incineration). But no system is perfect. If a contaminant (e.g. toxic chemical, industrial waste, PFAS, halogenated compounds) is found in a load, will that load simply be rejected?
- If rejected, where will it go? Will it be sent to a landfill, be reprocessed, or illegally dumped? What safeguards will prevent “stockpiling of bad loads” near the facility? Or just being dumped in our local waste facility?
- Who will bear the cost of rejecting or remediating bad loads? Will those costs shift to ratepayers or local taxpayers?

5. Will additional costs be loaded onto our council rates or local taxpayers?

- Who finances the infrastructure, monitoring, and remediation costs over the facility’s lifetime (which may be decades)?

- If design, construction, or operation budgets overrun or unanticipated remediation becomes necessary, will the local council or community be forced to pick up the tab?
- Will there be ongoing burden on local government (e.g. health studies, environmental monitoring, managing community complaints) without compensation?

6. Why must our region deal with Sydney's waste problem?

- It seems unfair that regional/rural areas are being asked to accept the risks of handling Sydney's residual waste (i.e. what remains after recycling) while Sydney itself is prohibited from hosting such large-scale EfW under current NSW policy. emmconsulting.com.au+2parkes.nsw.gov.au+2
- There is a perception of environmental "dumping" of Sydney's waste burden onto less powerful regional communities. If the science supports it, that should be shown transparently and equivalently applied (i.e. if safe enough, build in Sydney; if not, don't build anywhere).
- Are there alternatives to long-distance export of waste (e.g. more recycling, waste avoidance, small-scale facilities closer to source) that have been fully evaluated?

Additional Points for the Committee to Consider

- The NSW EPA announced in 2025 a review of the EfW Framework, and there is uncertainty about whether the current regulation is sufficiently protective (emission limits, acceptable wastes, monitoring regimes) emmconsulting.com.au.
- The 2018 Parliamentary Committee that formerly inquired into EfW made many recommendations (e.g. applying the "proximity principle" to avoid interstate or long-distance transportation of waste, stronger public transparency) Norton Rose Fulbright. Have all those recommendations been fully adopted?
- Community groups in similar proposals (e.g. Parkes, Tarago, Goulburn) have raised fears of health, environmental contamination, agricultural reputation damage, and inadequate consultation ABC+2parkescleanfuture.org+2.
- In particular, farmers in regions near proposed sites have expressed concern that if contamination is perceived or detected, their agricultural produce may lose market trust, leading to financial harm even absent actual contamination. Condobolin Argus+2ABC+2
- The monitoring regimes in many jurisdictions do not continuously monitor for all toxic compounds or persistent pollutants and sometimes rely on snapshot testing which may miss episodic emissions or spikes. Communities should be assured of continuous, real-time, independent, publicly reported monitoring

including for dioxins, heavy metals, PFAS, ultrafine particulates, and vapor-phase organics.

Requested Outcomes and Recommendations from this Submission

I respectfully request that the Committee:

1. Demand from the proponent and relevant agencies a full, independent health risk assessment (baseline + incremental) specific to our community and vulnerable populations, with transparent public review.
2. Require an independent analysis and comparison of alternate waste management pathways (reduction, reuse, recycling, small-scale local processing) — not simply assuming incineration is the only option.
3. Insist on rigorous, continuous, independent emissions monitoring with full public reporting; require “trigger points” and enforceable penalties if emission thresholds are exceeded.
4. Require a robust transport safety and risk management plan (for routes, loading, spills) that includes compensation and protective measures for all communities along the transport corridor.
5. Mandate that no additional financial burden falls on local ratepayers or councils for operating, monitoring, remediation or health compensation costs.
6. Demand guarantees and remedies for farmers and landowners in case of contamination or reputational damage (e.g. testing of produce, compensation, buyback, market assurance).
7. Apply the precautionary principle: if there is doubt or uncertainty about long-term health or environmental risks, the proposal should not proceed until resolved.
8. Ensure community consultation is meaningful, not token, with full access to data, capacity for community peer review, and genuine ability to question assumptions.
9. Compare any proposal’s rationale carefully with the restrictions on EfW placement (e.g. the NSW framework bans EfW in Sydney) and justify why regional areas are being singled out.
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Conclusion

I submit these questions and recommendations out of genuine fear that this proposed facility, if built, could further harm my health, the health of my neighbours, and the productivity and safety of our farmland. We are not “sacrificial zones” to absorb metropolitan waste burdens. The burden of proof must be on the proponents and the government — not on us, the affected communities, to live with unproven assurances.

I trust this Inquiry will give serious weight to the lived experience, the gaps in scientific certainty, and the need for the highest standard of protection.

If I have not already made this clear, I oppose the construction of an EfW facility in Parkes or any other locality in NSW.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,