

Submission
No 726

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE
FACILITIES**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

To the Select Committee on Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities,

I thank the Committee for the opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry into Energy-from-Waste. I have been a resident of Parkes for 47 years. We relocated from Sydney so that we could be closer to family here. I am so grateful to have grown up, and to live, in this beautiful community.

I write to express my strong opposition to the proposed \$1.5 billion Energy from Waste (EfW) incinerator in Parkes, NSW. While I support innovation and sustainable infrastructure, this project poses unacceptable risks to public health, environmental integrity, and regional equity. The decision to locate this facility in Parkes, one of only four approved sites statewide, raises serious concerns about the marginalisation of regional communities and the double standards applied to environmental protections.

Key Concerns

1. Health Risks and Outdated Technology

The proposed facility would process 600,000 tonnes of waste annually, including residuals from Sydney. Evidence from similar incinerators globally links EfW emissions to cancer clusters, birth defects, and respiratory illnesses. The community has not been adequately assured that the technology proposed, despite claims of being “state-of-the-art”, meets contemporary health and safety standards. If the technology is “so safe” then the facility should be built in the city. A similar facility was proposed for Eastern Creek in Sydney in 2018, however, the Independent Planning Commission rejected the proposal due to health concerns. In 2022, the NSW government passed legislation banning waste-to-energy facilities in all but four locations across the state, with Parkes one of those exceptions. If it’s been banned in Sydney and Eastern Creek because it is too dangerous for the community then how can it possibly be seen to be safe for MY community?

2. Environmental and Agricultural Impact

Parkes is home to thriving agricultural industries and culturally significant landscapes. The incinerator threatens air quality, soil health, and water systems critical to farming and biodiversity. The NSW EPA has deemed such facilities too risky for metropolitan Sydney, yet Parkes is expected to absorb this burden. Furthermore, the proposal to transport up to 60 freight trains of residual waste from Sydney to Parkes each year introduces a significant environmental burden. While rail is more efficient than road freight, diesel-powered locomotives still emit substantial greenhouse gases, including CO₂ and nitrogen oxides, contributing to climate change and regional air pollution. Communities along the 365 km corridor may face increased noise, vibration, and exposure to diesel particulates. This long-distance transfer undermines circular economy principles and places the environmental cost of Sydney’s waste squarely on

regional shoulders. With Parkes being the central meeting point for four major rail lines, I have concerns that should this proposal go ahead, it will not just be Sydney's waste that is transported to my community for disposal. The carbon footprint of transporting waste inland, rather than processing it closer to source, raises serious questions about sustainability, equity, and responsible infrastructure planning.

3. Regional Equity and Procedural Fairness

The Parkes Clean Future Alliance has highlighted the lack of genuine community consultation and transparency in the approval process. Regional communities deserve the same environmental protections as urban centres. The decision to site this facility in Parkes reflects a troubling pattern of environmental dumping in rural areas.

4. Alternatives Ignored

Modern waste management should prioritise circular economy principles—reduction, reuse, and recycling—not incineration. Investment in regional recycling infrastructure, composting programs, and education would yield safer, more sustainable outcomes.

Recommendations

I respectfully urge the Parliament to:

- Suspend approval of the Parkes EfW incinerator pending an independent health and environmental impact review.
- Mandate equitable environmental protections for regional communities, aligning standards with those applied in metropolitan areas.
- Redirect funding toward sustainable waste reduction initiatives that empower local economies and protect public health.

Parkes is a proud, resilient community that deserves investment in its future, not exposure to industrial risks rejected by urban centres. I call on Parliament to uphold its duty of care to all Australians, regardless of postcode, and reject this proposal in favour of safer, smarter alternatives.

Respectfully submitted,

A concerned citizen of Parkes.