

Submission
No 752

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE
FACILITIES**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

To whom it may concern,

I write to vehemently oppose the proposed Energy from Waste (EfW) incinerator project (“Parkes Energy Recovery”) planned for the Parkes Special Activation Precinct, Parkes NSW. Despite acknowledging the challenges of waste management and the pursuit of sustainable energy, this project poses severe and unacceptable risks that far outweigh any claimed benefits. I urge decision-makers to reconsider this reckless proposal immediately—failure to do so will force many, including myself, to seriously consider relocating away from Parkes to protect our health and wellbeing.

Grounds of Strong Opposition

1. Severe Health Risks^[1]_[SEP] There is overwhelming evidence linking incineration of waste with grave health

consequences, including clusters of cancers, respiratory diseases, birth defects, and other chronic illnesses. Proponents’ assurances of filtered emissions and modern technology are dangerously misleading; “not zero risk” means that toxic ultrafine particles, heavy metals like lead and mercury, and carcinogenic pollutants such as dioxins will inevitably be released. These toxins accumulate in the environment, causing long-term harm, especially to vulnerable groups—children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing conditions—who will bear the brunt of these health threats.

2. Irreversible Environmental and Agricultural Damage

The toxic fallout from this incinerator will degrade soil, contaminate water catchments, and harm biodiversity. This jeopardises the entire agricultural sector in Parkes, which relies on a clean environment and a reputation for safe produce. Even the mere perception of contamination could devastate local farmers by destroying market confidence and export potential. Additionally, hazardous ash byproducts present further pollution risks and require secure disposal, compounding environmental concerns.

3. Profound Cultural and Heritage Harm

The Parkes site is Wiradjuri country. The Wiradjuri Elders and community have made it clear that this project desecrates sacred lands and irreparably damages cultural heritage—something that cannot be mitigated by technical or regulatory measures. Disrespecting these connections is unacceptable and must not be ignored.

4. Injustice to Regional Communities

It is blatant discrimination that EfW plants are banned in metropolitan areas like Sydney due to health and environmental risks, yet one is being foisted on a regional community with far less political power. Parkes cannot and will not be treated as a “sacrificial community” forced to accept undue risk and harm so others can avoid it.

5. Insufficient Transparency and Community Consultation

The consultation process has been inadequate and lacks crucial information—emissions modelling is incomplete, transport impacts from waste trucks and trains remain unaddressed, and water catchment effects are unclear. Without full disclosure, the community cannot properly assess the risks, which is unacceptable for a project of this scale.

6. Additional Carbon Emissions and Transport Hazards

Transporting waste over 300 kilometers from Sydney will increase carbon emissions, infrastructure wear, and accident risks, undermining any climate benefits the facility claims to offer. The true environmental cost is hidden when factoring in all lifecycle impacts, further discrediting the project.

7. Contradiction to Waste Reduction and Circular Economy Principles

Long-term contracts locking in waste supply for decades encourage dependence on waste incineration rather than genuine waste reduction, recycling, and sustainable resource use. This project flies in the face of progressive waste management strategies that should be prioritized instead.

8. Regulatory Failures and Monitoring Doubts

Even with the strictest standards on paper, enforcement and real-time transparent monitoring are critically lacking. Any regulatory failure could allow dangerous emissions to go undetected, exposing the community to ongoing harm.

9. Socioeconomic Harm Outweighs Job Creation

The minimal employment benefits this facility might generate do not compensate for the broad health, environmental, and economic risks to residents, farmers, and producers. Declining property values and increased healthcare costs threaten to burden the community unfairly.

10. Double Standards and Regulatory Inconsistency

If the NSW Government deems EfW facilities too dangerous for cities like Sydney, there is no justification for permitting them in Parkes or other regional areas. The community demands consistent protection under the law, not second-class treatment.

The people of Parkes refuse to be sacrificed. If this project proceeds despite overwhelming opposition and evidence of harm, I and many others will be left with no choice but to leave Parkes to safeguard our families' health and futures. This is a warning the government must heed—our community's wellbeing is non-negotiable.

I call on all responsible authorities to halt this project immediately and invest in truly sustainable, transparent, and community-supported waste management alternatives.