

Submission
No 789

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE
FACILITIES**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Submission to Waste to energy Inquiry.

Lack of social licence

Why is this not being constructed in an area close to Sydney, in order to reduce our 'carbon footprint', in a similar way to how we would reduce our 'food miles' on the way to our homes. Many Australians take note of how far our consumables travel to reach our homes, but not how far our garbage travels after it leaves our control.

Back to the overarching question above: 'Why are these facilities not being constructed in an area close to Sydney, where the waste is being produced?'

If the answer is that it is not safe, why is that so?

If the answer is that the local communities would reject it, why is that so?

If the answer is potential pollutants, why is it acceptable in one area but not another?

What could be the reasons be aside from hard scientific evidence, previous reports damning these projects from the chief scientist, lack of social license? Is it the concentration of voters who would reside within the predicted plume range?

Long term outlook:

So, if the Danish are so good at this, and Veolia would like to model their operations off of that scenario, it is imperative that we consider the whole picture.

The Danes have managed to reduce their waste to a level below what is required to effectively run their Incineration plants.

Whilst we can't turn back the clock and be producing less waste in our current time, everyone walking this planet knows we need to work towards producing less waste. Period.

So what happens once various levels of government has offered contracts and financial incentives to get this project running, and in future, we achieve a level of waste far below projected outcomes (as can be seen in other studies)?

Does the taxpaying waste producer need to keep the incinerators full? Do we remove targets of waste reduction because we 'need to keep these facilities running'? Who is left to pick up the bill once these multi-national corporations aren't making the profit they signed up for? The fact that we are even contemplating these projects in this century is mind boggling.

What would our waste economy look like if the total investment in these projects was redirected toward recycling or waste reduction projects? What if it was invested in waste reduction strategies and policy such as the single-use plastics ban, which has proven very effective.

Pollutants:

The Tarago incinerator would be within the Sydney drinking water catchment. It is absurd that the folks who have been elected to represent their constituents are even considering this project in this area.

It is well documented and known that improper burning results in PFAS and other dioxins escaping these facilities.

With PFAS recently found in other Sydney water catchments, what is Sydney's fall-back plan once water from the southern region is contaminated? Do we raise the allowable concentration and pretend there's no issue?

You could argue that there will be strict operating conditions or regulations placed on the operator. Seems fair enough doesn't it? HOW IS THIS OPERATOR MANAGING ITS CURRENT

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL? Terribly. The answer is that there has been a significant number of breeches (of which the EPA are aware of). How could an operator with this track record even be considered suitable for such an environmentally significant project?

Local businesses:

As a local mixed farming and agritourism business, we stand to lose much more than the average resident in the state due to this project at Tarago.

What happens when the domestic and/or international market ban our produce for fears of contamination, or worse, due to found contamination? Who will compensate the local farmers for loss of income and loss of property capital value? Will we be in a big puddle of debt with no way to make income on a property with no value?

As an agritourism operator, will our potential clients want to leave Canberra or Sydney to spend their money in a small community when they know that they won't be breathing fresh country air with blue skies? No. I don't blame them, I wouldn't.

Quick numbers suggest that the cost to replace income and remunerate landholders for a loss in property value very quickly makes investment in waste redirection look cheap.

This isn't a case of the wrong project in the wrong place, it's a tortoise in a horse race. Why are we even considering an 1800's model of waste disposal in the 2000's? If our country is so concerned about our environmental outcomes, why are we surrendering to waste management when it suits?

And don't even consider wrapping this as 'green energy'.

Thanks,