

**Submission
No 801**

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITIES

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Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Proposed Parkes Energy from Waste Incinerator

Address:

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Date: 31/10/2025

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Introduction

I appreciate the opportunity to provide this submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the proposed Parkes Energy from Waste (EfW) Incinerator. I am a long-term resident of the region, and my husband is a fifth-generation farmer on prime agricultural land that has supported our family and community for decades. I write to express my **strong opposition** to the proposal, due to the serious and long-lasting risks it poses to our environment, public health, and continual viability of rural communities.

Environmental Impacts on Prime Agricultural Land

The Parkes region is home to highly productive agricultural land that contributes significantly to the state's food security and rural economy. Locating a waste incinerator in proximity to such land poses unacceptable risks of contamination through airborne pollutants, ash deposition, and potential waterway contamination.

Once the integrity of agricultural soil is compromised by toxins such as dioxins, heavy metals, and other by-products of incineration, it cannot be easily remediated. The potential loss of viable farmland would have devastating long-term consequences for local families and for NSW agriculture more broadly.

Health Concerns for Current and Future Generations

Scientific studies have raised legitimate concerns about the health impacts of waste incineration, including the release of persistent organic pollutants and fine particulate matter linked to respiratory, cardiovascular, and developmental issues.

As a mother of five daughters, I am deeply worried about the effects of long-term exposure to toxins on children and future generations. I work hard to maintain a lower-tox lifestyle to safeguard their wellbeing, but projects like this remove the ability of families to choose clean air and a healthy environment.

Being a rural community, we already face challenges accessing healthcare. We simply do not have the medical resources to deal with the fallout of the myriad of health issues that will stem from the introduction of an EfW facility. This will further burden an already stretched system and exacerbate health inequities between rural and urban populations.

Economic and Social Impacts

Property values in proximity to large industrial waste facilities almost inevitably decline, affecting residents' financial security and the long-term viability of rural communities. People who have invested generations into building their farms and homes stand to lose both economically and emotionally.

Should the incinerator proceed, our family will heavily consider leaving the very town that both my husband and I grew up in and intended to raise our 5 daughters in. Rural towns cannot afford to lose families like ours – those involved heavily in the community. Our school cannot afford to lose such a large number of students in one hit, not just our children but others I know of, who also have expressed that they will leave should the incinerator go ahead.

The perception of environmental risk alone can deter new families and businesses from settling in the area, undermining local development and community confidence.

Equity and Responsibility

If this incineration technology is deemed “safe,” it is fair to ask **why Sydney's waste problem is being shifted onto regional communities**. Waste should be managed at its source, not exported to rural areas where populations are smaller and political voices are more easily ignored.

Country people are not disposable. Our environment, health, and livelihoods matter just as much as those of city residents.

The equitable solution is for Sydney to take responsibility for their waste and invest in **true circular economy solutions**. We urgently need to prioritise **investigating alternative waste management solutions** that support long-term sustainability—solutions that do not harm human health or the environment. The potential risks to our land, soil, water, air, and human wellbeing are too great to comprehend how anyone could consider this project an appropriate or ethical solution.

This proposal seems to embody an “out of sight, out of mind” mentality adopted by government in an attempt to solve Sydney's waste crisis.

Upholding the Values of the NSW EPA

Finally, I wish to reference a statement from the **NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA)** website, which clearly states that its role is to *“protect and enhance the quality of the NSW environment and reduce risks to human health.”*

I ask: **how does the approval to build an Energy from Waste incinerator uphold those fundamental values?** Allowing such a facility to proceed in Parkes contradicts the EPA's stated mission and undermines community trust in government decision-making processes.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, I **strongly oppose** the Parkes Energy from Waste Incinerator proposal. It poses unacceptable risks to our farmland, community health, property values, and regional sustainability.

I urge the Inquiry and decision-makers to protect rural NSW from becoming a dumping ground for metropolitan waste and to prioritise genuine long-term, sustainable waste management practices that respect both people and the environment.

Sincerely,
Katie Kerin