

Submission
No 803

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE
FACILITIES**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 30 October 2025

Partially
Confidential

Why are we concerned about the proposed Parkes Energy-from-Waste facility?

● Double Standards

The NSW Government's own regulation states that Energy-from-Waste incinerators are not suitable for Sydney due to health and environmental risks. The NSW EPA ban on Energy-from-Waste in NSW uses the "precautionary principle" of prohibiting Energy-from-Waste "where there is a greater risk of harm to human health due to proximity to high population areas (now and in the future)". Yet those same risks are apparently acceptable for regional towns like Parkes.

The regulation is not equitable. The risk thresholds are being selectively applied based on geography rather than objective health criteria. Placing such a project in Regional NSW, does not eliminate the risk, it just redirects the risk to a population perceived to be of lesser value, visibility and political power.

● Health Risks

Energy-from-Waste production generates toxic byproducts, including both air and ash emissions of toxic gases, heavy metals, and persistent organic pollutants (POP's) like dioxins and furans. Some forever chemicals (PFAS) are resistant to high temperatures and are also emitted. These pollutants can travel long distances, posing a risk to human health, agriculture and the environment. Australia's commitment to the Stockholm Convention emphasises the need to minimise such emissions.

● Insufficient Testing

World's best practice emissions testing does not require continuous monitoring of toxic heavy metals, PFAS, and persistent organic pollutants (POP's) like dioxins and furans.

Biomonitoring studies around the world have shown contamination in the environment and agriculture around Energy-from-Waste incinerators.

● Poor Consultation

Despite the significant risks, local residents were not properly consulted during the Parkes Special Activation Precinct planning in 2019, which included plans for the Energy-from-Waste incinerator, or during the NSW EPA Energy-from-Waste framework review that made Parkes exempt to the Energy-from-Waste ban in NSW. Many in Parkes first heard about the project in 2025 after key decisions had already been made. The process has lacked transparency, community involvement, and respect for social license.

● Over 500km from Waste Source

The NSW EPA seeks to "maximise efficiencies in infrastructure, waste management, innovation and energy recovery". Yet Energy-from-Waste is banned in Sydney and designated appropriate in Parkes, over 500km by rail (via Cootamundra) from the intended fuel source (Sydney's landfill waste). This is not efficient waste management due to unnecessary transportation costs and emissions.

Waste contracts can also change in the future. Overseas, Energy-from-Waste facilities have been forced to import waste from other countries to remain operational.

● Environmental Damage & Risk to Culturally Significant Areas

Energy-from-Waste incinerators contribute to air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and produce ash laden with harmful chemicals. Locating one near culturally significant areas and farming communities threatens not only biodiversity and soil quality but also the reputation of our regional produce.

● Burning Waste isn't Clean or Green

Thermal EfW production is not an efficient or renewable method of electricity production when using finite resources as fuel (like plastic which is made from coal, natural gas and crude oil). Compared to other energy sources, waste incineration yields relatively low energy output while emitting higher levels of greenhouse gases, undermining efforts to combat climate change.

The electricity that will be created by the project is being promoted as powering 80,000 homes each year, however, the energy created will not be used to power homes, it will be used in the Special Activation Precinct to attract other 'hard-to-place' industry.

● Better Alternatives

Methods such as composting and anaerobic digestion offer environmentally friendly alternatives to manage waste, producing energy without the harmful emissions associated with incineration.

● Global Transition Away from EfW

EfW production requires waste to be generated so that it can be used as a fuel source, using a linear, 'take, make, dispose' economic model. This destroys valuable resources and their embodied energy, and undermines efforts to move to a circular 'reduce, reuse and recycle' economy.

Countries like Wales have phased out large scale Energy-from-Waste facilities in their transition to a circular economy, as projections show that they will not generate enough waste to keep them operational throughout their operation life as they reach waste reduction and recycling targets.

Energy-from-Waste incinerators have long contracts of 30-40 years. This commitment to waste production for fuel undermines the Australian Government's, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water 'Australia's Circular Economy Framework' goals of reducing landfill waste.

● Precautionary Workforce Departure

The facility is being promoted as providing only 50 long term jobs for our community, while 54 farmers, 42 healthcare workers, and 32 educators have stated they will take the precautionary step of moving away from Parkes if the proposed Energy-from-Waste incinerator is approved.

Workforce confirmed as leaving per preliminary survey, 26th April 2025.