

**Submission  
No 818**

## **INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITIES**

**Name:** Ms Sally May  
**Date Received:** 31 October 2025

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I am writing as a deeply concerned citizen, parent, and grandmother regarding the proposed Energy from Waste (EfW) incinerator in Parkes. I urge the Council to reconsider support for this project due to the serious health risks, environmental impacts, and long-term consequences it poses for our community and the generations who will inherit this land.

### 1. Health Impacts on Our Community

Scientific studies from around the world show that waste incineration releases toxic pollutants such as dioxins, furans, heavy metals, and ultrafine particles — substances known to harm human health even at very low concentrations.

Children, pregnant women, and the elderly are especially vulnerable. Exposure to these toxins has been linked to respiratory diseases, cancers, hormonal disruption, developmental issues, and damage to the nervous system.

As a grandmother, I cannot stay silent knowing the air my grandchildren breathe and the soil our food grows in could become compromised by preventable industrial pollution. Parkes deserves clean air and a healthy environment — not one traded for corporate profit or short-term convenience.

### 2. Regional Impacts: Communities within 150 km

This proposal does not only affect Parkes. Atmospheric emissions, ash transport, and increased heavy-vehicle traffic have the potential to impact surrounding communities well beyond the town boundary — including Condobolin, Dubbo, Geurie, Orange and many smaller towns and rural properties within roughly a 150 km radius.

- Air dispersion and long-range transport: Pollutants from combustion and particulates can travel significant distances depending on wind patterns and weather conditions. This means towns and agricultural land downwind could experience increased airborne toxins and particulate matter.
- Agricultural and food-safety impacts: The Central West and surrounding regions rely heavily on agriculture. Deposition of contaminants on soil, pasture, and crops would risk local produce, livestock health, and the reputation of regional food systems that local families and farmers depend on.
- Community health burden across the region: Increased respiratory and chronic health risks would not be confined to Parkes; vulnerable populations in nearby towns — including children, older residents, and those with pre-existing conditions — could be exposed.
- Traffic, transport and accidents: Constant truck movements to and from the plant (waste delivery and ash removal) would traverse regional roads, increasing wear, accident risk, noise, and dust across many townships.
- Cumulative and cross-jurisdictional effects: The region already faces environmental pressures; adding a major industrial emitter increases cumulative risk. Many surrounding communities may not have adequate resources to monitor or respond to contamination or health complaints, creating inequity in who bears the risks.

Because the potential effects reach across a broad rural region, this decision requires regional-scale assessment, public consultation that includes Condobolin, Dubbo, Geurie, Orange and other affected communities, and independent modelling of pollutant dispersion and cumulative impacts.

### 3. Environmental and Agricultural Concerns

Parkes is known for its clean skies, open landscapes, and thriving agricultural base. An incinerator of this kind threatens to undermine the very qualities that make our region special.

Toxic emissions can settle on farmland and water sources, contaminating soil and crops. This puts at risk not only our environment but also the reputation and safety of local produce that our farmers work so hard to sustain.

The concept of burning waste to create energy may sound appealing, but it contradicts genuine environmental sustainability. Incineration discourages recycling, creates toxic ash that must still be landfilled, and releases greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change.

#### 4. Social and Ethical Responsibility

As a small community, Parkes should not be used as a testing ground for projects that larger cities have rejected. The social and emotional wellbeing of our residents — especially children and future generations — must come before corporate and political interests.

Communities around Australia and internationally have successfully said no to these facilities, instead investing in zero-waste systems, advanced recycling, and composting initiatives that create more jobs, protect the environment, and strengthen local economies.

#### In Closing

As a parent and grandmother, my deepest wish is that my children and grandchildren inherit a town and a region that values clean air, safe water, and community wellbeing over industrial experimentation. Decisions that may affect Condobolin, Dubbo, Geurie, Orange and the wider Central West must be made transparently, based on independent science, and with the voices of all affected communities heard and respected.

I respectfully call on Parkes Shire Council to reject the proposed Energy from Waste incinerator and to explore cleaner, safer, and more sustainable waste management alternatives that protect our community now and into the future.

With sincerity and concern,

Ms Sally May

Parent and Grandmother