

Submission
No 833

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE
FACILITIES**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 22 October 2025

Partially
Confidential

My name is _____ and I am a resident of Parkes, New South Wales. I am making this submission as a concerned community member and parent. I do not support the proposed Energy-from-Waste (EfW) facility being considered for Parkes due to the unknown long-term health risks associated with this type of development and its potential to negatively impact our community, environment, and agricultural industries.

This submission addresses the Terms of Reference relating to community health, environmental protection, and the fairness of regional policy exemptions.

1. Health and Environmental Concerns

There is significant uncertainty surrounding the long-term health impacts of emissions from thermal waste facilities. Pollutants such as dioxins, furans, heavy metals, and fine particulate matter (PM2.5) have been linked in various studies to respiratory disease, developmental disorders in children, and in some cases, cancer. Modern technology may reduce emissions, but it does not eliminate them entirely. The risk to public health remains, especially during equipment failure, maintenance, or unplanned releases.

Children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of air pollution due to their developing lungs and immune systems. As a parent, I am extremely concerned about potential long-term health impacts that may not become apparent for many years. The unknown and cumulative risks of such exposure make this proposal unacceptable to me.

Parkes is also an agricultural region. Many residents rely on tank water, and any contamination from airborne particles settling on roofs or soil could compromise water safety and affect food production. Even the perception of contamination could damage local agricultural markets and our town's reputation as a clean, safe food-producing region.

2. Lack of Equity and Inconsistent Regulation

Thermal Energy-from-Waste projects are prohibited in the Sydney Basin and other metropolitan areas due to health and environmental risks. However, the current regulation allows them in four regional locations, including Parkes. This approach is inequitable and unjust. Regional communities deserve the same health protections as those in metropolitan NSW. Allowing projects that are banned elsewhere creates a two-tiered standard that places rural families and farmers at greater risk.

3. Consultation and Transparency

There has been inadequate consultation with the Parkes community regarding this proposal. Many residents were unaware of the project until after significant planning steps had already been taken. Meaningful consultation requires transparency, open communication, and genuine community participation in decision-making. The scale and potential impact of this project demand a level of consultation that reflects its long-term consequences for local residents.

4. Unsustainable Waste Management

Transporting Sydney's waste more than 500 kilometres to Parkes is not a sustainable or efficient solution. It simply shifts the problem from one region to another. This project locks regional NSW into a long-term waste generation model rather than encouraging waste avoidance, recycling, and resource recovery. True sustainability means reducing waste at the source, not burning it in regional communities.

5. Economic and Social Impacts

Many residents and business owners in Parkes are concerned that the introduction of a large waste incinerator will affect property values, tourism, and the town's attractiveness to new families and skilled workers. The perception of Parkes as a clean, safe place to live is at risk. Once a community is associated with waste burning or potential pollution, it can take decades to recover that reputation. Additionally, the stress and uncertainty this project creates within the community can have mental health consequences that should not be overlooked.

6. Recommendations

I strongly oppose the approval of the Parkes Energy-from-Waste proposal. The potential and unknown health risks are unacceptable, and the burden of Sydney's waste should not be shifted to regional communities.

If, despite community objection, the project proceeds, I request that the following conditions be imposed:

Implementation of 24/7 independent emissions monitoring, including for dioxins, furans, and fine particulate matter, with all data made publicly available in real time.

Establishment of a community health and compensation trust, funded by the project proponent, to monitor long-term health outcomes and provide compensation for proven impacts.

Independent baseline and ongoing air, soil, and water testing by an accredited organisation, with reports made publicly available.

Provision of town water connections or filtration systems for all residents currently reliant on tank water.

Funding for community mental health and wellbeing support services.

Relocation or protective measures for nearby schools and childcare facilities.

Independent audits of environmental and safety reports, conducted regularly and made available to the public.

7. Conclusion

I do not support the proposed Energy-from-Waste facility in Parkes due to the significant unknown health risks, potential environmental damage, and inequitable treatment of regional NSW communities. Parkes deserves sustainable industries that promote health, safety, and long-term growth — not projects that carry risks that may affect future generations.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission. I would appreciate being kept informed of any future hearings or decisions regarding this proposal.

Sincerely,

22/10/2025