

Submission
No 865

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE
FACILITIES**

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Partially
Confidential

Opposition to the Parkes Waste-to-Energy Project

As a contaminated land scientist with 30 years experience in hydrogeochemistry and environmental risk assessment, I strongly oppose the proposed Parkes Waste-to-Energy (WtE) facility. The project poses unacceptable risks to air quality, soil integrity, and the long-term health of our community and ecosystems.

I oppose this project strongly as a parent of two children at _____, next to the project.

I oppose this project as a Scientist and as a resident of Forbes.

WtE incineration is often promoted as a “green” solution to landfill, but in practice it merely transforms solid waste into atmospheric and residual contamination. The by-products—bottom ash, fly ash, and filter residues—contain persistent pollutants including dioxins, furans, and heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, and mercury. These substances are well-documented carcinogens and bioaccumulative toxins that persist in the environment long after combustion has ceased.

Parkes is a region characterised by sensitive agricultural land, variable groundwater systems, and a semi-arid climate that limits natural dilution of contaminants. Any emissions or leachate from ash storage, transport, or accidental release could compromise local water resources and soil quality essential for farming and food security. The site’s geology and prevailing wind patterns further heighten the risk of off-site dispersion and cumulative exposure.

Furthermore, the project undermines the principles of circular economy and waste reduction. True sustainability lies in resource recovery, composting, and product redesign—not in burning recyclable and organic materials. WtE plants create a perverse incentive to generate waste and lock councils into decades-long feedstock contracts that discourage genuine waste minimisation.

As scientists, we are ethically bound to apply the precautionary principle where evidence of harm exists. In this case, the data on incinerator emissions, health outcomes, and contamination pathways are unequivocal. The Parkes community deserves clean air, clean soil, and a future founded on renewable, not combustible, energy.