

Submission
No 925

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE
FACILITIES**

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Many of Parkes Shire residents strongly support the development of modern, well-regulated energy-from-waste (EfW) facilities in New South Wales and considers the proposal for Parkes to be both timely and strategically important. Australia is facing growing challenges in how it manages residual waste, with landfill capacity rapidly declining and recycling systems under pressure. The current regulatory framework has been effective in setting high environmental and health standards, but it has not kept pace with the scale and urgency of our national waste problem or the opportunities presented by new technology and regional infrastructure. To truly advance a circular economy, the framework needs to evolve so that residual-waste solutions such as EfW are enabled where they make sense particularly in regional centres like Parkes that already play a critical role in managing freight, energy, and waste logistics for the state.

Parkes offers an ideal location for an EfW facility, being situated within the Parkes Special Activation Precinct with strong existing industrial infrastructure, rail and road connectivity, and separation from sensitive land uses. Hosting an EfW facility here would deliver both regional and state-wide benefits, including the diversion of hundreds of thousands of tonnes of non-recyclable waste from landfill, the creation of local employment during both construction and operation, and the generation of reliable, lower-carbon energy. It would also position Parkes as a leader in sustainable regional development, helping to close the loop between waste generation, resource recovery, and energy production in a responsible and transparent way.

The broader policy framework should be refined to recognise the benefits and needs of regional host communities. This includes streamlining approval pathways for projects that meet best-practice environmental and community standards, providing clearer guidance on how residual waste is defined and managed, and introducing stronger incentives for regional investment. It is also important that the framework includes mechanisms for ongoing community benefit and engagement so that local residents share in the economic and social gains of hosting such critical infrastructure.

Energy-from-waste should be seen as a complementary part of the waste hierarchy — a solution for materials that cannot feasibly be reused or recycled. With modern emission controls and performance-based regulation, these facilities can operate safely and efficiently, supporting NSW's transition away from landfill while contributing to energy security and emissions reduction. Parkes has the right location, infrastructure and community readiness to demonstrate how regional Australia can be part of the solution.

In summary, the establishment of an energy-from-waste facility in Parkes and encourages the NSW Government to modernise its regulatory and policy framework to enable this and similar projects to proceed responsibly. Doing so will help address the waste challenges Australia faces today, unlock regional economic opportunities, and ensure that residual waste is managed in a way that protects the environment, benefits the community, and supports the state's circular economy objectives.