

Submission
No 968

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE
FACILITIES**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 31 October 2025

Partially
Confidential

I am a Parkes local, a mother of school aged children, a health professional (Dietitian) and part of a farming family that grows crops such as wheat, barley and canola for human consumption. I also hold a Master of Public Health.

I object to the proposed Parkes Energy from Waste facility and this submission is to address some of the terms of reference and share my concerns of the likely impact of this facility on the health and wellbeing of people living in the Parkes Shire. I am also concerned about the potential impact on our farmers and the broader implications for the Australian food industry.

I am worried about the long-term health impacts from toxic emissions like dioxins and fine particles. Western NSW has higher rates of chronic diseases and related mortality than the rest of NSW, particularly for cardiovascular disease, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), and diabetes. These higher rates are linked to factors like socioeconomic disadvantage, geographic isolation, lower access to health services, and higher rates of risk factors such as obesity, smoking, and inadequate physical activity. In Western NSW hospitalisations for COPD are higher than the state average indicating potential issues with access to primary and preventative care. The incidence of certain cancers including lung cancer is also above the national average in parts of Western NSW. I am concerned that building an Energy to Waste Facility in the local area will place additional pressure on our already limited health care resources.

I am worried that there is not a requirement for 24/7 monitoring of all emissions such as dioxins and feel that the incinerator will potentially lead to increased rates of chronic disease, in particular respiratory related diseases and cancers hence adding to the burden of disease for people living in the Parkes Shire and further widening the health gap already experienced by people who reside in rural areas.

I am part of a farming family who grow wheat, barley and canola. Parkes is a major food producer. This project threatens our clean air, water and soil quality. Contamination, as well as any perceived risk threatens our agricultural sector. Farming families already do it tough. Suicide and depression are already a concern and something that affects farming families far too often. It is my personal experience that building a waste incinerator in the Parkes area is already causing stress for the farming community and if it goes ahead it will be yet another source of unnecessary stress on our primary producers who are only trying to make a living for themselves and their families and do their bit to ensure an adequate food supply for Australia.

Transporting waste over 500km and destroying valuable resources is not a sustainable or efficient waste solution. It does nothing to reduce waste generation and undermines waste reduction, reuse and recycling initiatives. Transporting waste adds to air pollution, utilises fuel and increases the amount of heavy vehicle traffic on our roads, with the potential for an increase in road accidents and fatalities.

It concerns me that Parkes is to be burdened with Sydney's waste problems. Burning waste from Sydney in regional NSW unfairly burdens our community with Sydney's waste and the associated environmental, health and economic concerns. Rural people are already disadvantaged by reduced access to healthcare, higher rates of chronic disease and socioeconomic disadvantage. We have the same rights to public safety as people living in Sydney. The regulation that prohibits thermal energy from waste in NSW but excludes four regional areas is not equitable. Everyone deserves the same health protections, especially those people that are already more vulnerable. If the Waste Incinerator is unsafe to operate in Sydney, then I fail to understand how it could be decided that it is safe to operate in Parkes. Thermal energy from waste is prohibited in NSW and the ACT due to the health risks and is being phased out overseas. Perhaps we should be learning from the mistakes of others and not repeating them.

The proposed location of the facility is surrounded by farms and residents who are reliant on tank water. It is not possible for the incinerator operators to give a 100% guarantee that drinking water will not be impacted. Nor is it possible to know all the potential implications for crops and livestock. This incinerator could have a massive negative impact on our local primary industries and community in general, as is often the case with these types of projects many of the negative impacts aren't realised until decades later when several generations have been impacted.

The potential risks to the health and wellbeing of residents and to the sustainability of our primary producers are just too great. As such I recommend that the Government reject Energy from Waste incineration, to protect the health and future of Regional NSW and our agriculture industries. Parkes deserves sustainable safe industries and investments, that drive economic growth and value add to our agricultural sector and the community. Parkes does not deserve to have its economic and agricultural future threatened or compromised by Sydney's waste.

I believe that marketing communication from industry and government that have mislead the community should be investigated. I also feel that the community was not adequately consulted when key decisions were being made. Consultation requirements should not be tokenistic. Consultation is not telling people what is going to happen. Consultation is a two-way collaborative process which should be equal to the size and magnitude of the development.

My family and I oppose the proposal and request that alternative waste management solutions are investigated that do not pose a risk to the environment or human health, and do not cause distress or physical and mental anguish to host communities.