

Submission
No 976

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE
FACILITIES**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Dear Members of Parliament,

My partner and I write alongside concerned residents of Parkes and the surrounding region to express our firm opposition to the proposed waste incinerator development. There is overwhelming sentiment within the community – it is clear: **we do not want it, and we do not consent to it.**

Despite repeated assurances from developers and government representatives, there remains a deep sense of unease that this project will proceed regardless of community objections. Such an approach is not consultation – it is imposition.

The people of Parkes should not be forced to bear environmental and health risks that higher-socioeconomic areas of New South Wales have the privilege to refuse. Even if proponents claim that incineration technology is “safe” based on outcomes elsewhere, or that it will create local employment, the **health, agricultural, and environmental risks remain significant** – both in the short and long term.

The facility’s proposed location, just 4.7 kilometres from town, places residents directly within the exposure radius of fine particulate emissions, dioxins, and heavy metals – substances that accumulate in the body and contribute to chronic illness and impact one's quality of life.

I work in the health sector and can attest that Australians are already living **longer but sicker lives**, with increasing rates of respiratory illness, cardiovascular disease, and cancer. Establishing an incinerator so close to a regional population will only worsen this trend – creating a damaging feedback loop that exposes a community already burdened by health inequities to further preventable risks.

This would place additional strain on an already stretched rural healthcare system: **a local hospital, four general practices, and a limited workforce** serving a growing and aging population. Recruitment and retention of general practitioners in rural areas are already challenging; the potential rise in chronic conditions resulting from long-term environmental exposure is simply not something our system can absorb.

Beyond the human cost, this development would threaten the livelihoods of long-standing farmers and local industries. Airborne toxins and particulates will contaminate soil, pasture, and water sources, undermining the safety and reputation of our agricultural exports – including beef, canola, and wheat – which are foundational to the Parkes region’s economy.

Consent matters. Proceeding against the will of the community, without appropriate community elected decision makers - undermines the very principles of representative democracy. Yet that is precisely what this proposal feels like: an unwanted intrusion being forced upon us, despite loud and unified objections.

We also cannot ignore the broader pattern across New South Wales. The four proposed waste-to-energy incinerators – including this one in Parkes – are all sited in **lower-population, lower-socioeconomic regional areas** such as Lithgow. This raises serious ethical concerns about environmental justice and equity. It gives the appearance that rural and working-class communities are being treated as **sacrifice zones** – where public health, environmental safety, and quality of life are considered expendable for urban convenience and corporate gain.

Parkes deserves investment in **sustainable, transparent, and community-endorsed initiatives**, not industrial developments that erode public trust and pose lifelong health and environmental risks. This proposal raises critical questions that deserve public answers:

- How will the facility maintain environmental compliance over time?
- Will comprehensive baseline monitoring of community health, soil integrity, and water quality be undertaken and made publicly available before construction begins?
- Who will be accountable if contamination or illness arises years later?
- Who will be accountable for impacting the livelihoods of our farmers and their livestock?

Parkes has been a new beginning for my partner and me. It is a beautiful, vibrant, and family-friendly town – a community we are proud to call home. We want to do our part, to keep it that way for present and future generations to live, thrive, and enjoy the same clean air, water, and safety that make Parkes what it is today.

We respectfully urge the Parliament to **reject the proposed Parkes incinerator development** and prioritise policies that genuinely support rural health, environmental stewardship, and community consent.

Respectfully,

Two Parkes Shire Residents