

Submission
No 1000

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE
FACILITIES**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 31 October 2025

Partially
Confidential

Subject: Objection to Proposed Energy-from-Waste Incinerator at Woodlawn Eco-Precinct, Tarago NSW

Dear Committee,

I am a long-term resident living within approximately 6 kilometres of the proposed Woodlawn Energy-from-Waste (EfW) incinerator near Tarago. I am writing to strongly object to this development on environmental, social, health, and planning grounds.

While I understand the need for responsible waste management, I believe this facility is inappropriate for our rural community and poses unacceptable risks to our health, environment, and way of life.

1. Air Quality and Public Health

The incineration of mixed waste produces harmful emissions, including dioxins, furans, heavy metals, fine particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10), and nitrogen oxides. These pollutants are linked to respiratory illnesses, cancers, and developmental disorders, particularly in children and elderly people.

Tarago and its surrounds are known for clean air and open farmland. Any deterioration in air quality would represent a major decline in local environmental standards. Once airborne pollutants settle on soil, crops, and water, they can persist for years, entering the food chain and affecting livestock and produce.

2. Water, Soil, and Agricultural Impacts

Our region relies on groundwater, creeks, and rainfall capture for stock and domestic water. The potential for leachate, ash, or chemical residues from this facility to contaminate surface or groundwater is deeply concerning.

The Woodlawn site has a history of environmental issues, including odours, leachate spills, and truck leaks. Given that record, it's difficult to have confidence in the operator's ability to manage a far more complex incineration process.

Rural Tarago supports farms, small-scale producers, and local markets. Any contamination—real or perceived—could damage the reputation and viability of local agriculture for decades.

3. Traffic, Noise, and Safety

The proposed increase in heavy truck movements on rural roads is incompatible with our area's infrastructure and safety. Local roads were not designed for frequent waste haulage and ash transport. Increased traffic will lead to road damage, noise, dust, and heightened accident risk for residents, school buses, and wildlife.

4. Rural Amenity, Landscape, and Property Values

The proposed incinerator's stack, industrial lighting, and odours will dramatically alter the rural character of Tarago. This project conflicts with the community's expectation of a peaceful, agricultural, and scenic environment.

Property values in the surrounding area are likely to decline due to the stigma of living near an incinerator and concerns about pollution. This would be an unfair burden on residents who have invested in this area for its lifestyle and clean environment.

5. Climate and Circular Economy Concerns

Incineration is not a sustainable or climate-friendly solution. Burning waste produces large quantities of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases. Rather than encouraging waste reduction and recycling, incineration locks councils into contracts that require ongoing high waste volumes for decades.

This approach runs contrary to the NSW Waste Hierarchy and circular economy principles, which prioritise reduce, reuse, and recycle before energy recovery or disposal.

6. Inadequate Community Consultation and Transparency

Many residents feel that consultation around this proposal has been insufficient, rushed, or poorly communicated. The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) does not provide adequate reassurance about how emissions will be monitored or what contingency plans exist if pollution controls fail.

The community has already experienced issues with odour, gas leaks, and non-compliance at the existing Woodlawn facility. We therefore have serious doubts about the operator's track record and ability to manage additional risks.

7. Precautionary Principle and Long-Term Risks

This project involves irreversible environmental risks. Pollutants such as dioxins and heavy metals persist in ecosystems for generations. If the government cannot guarantee that emissions will not harm people, animals, crops, or water, the project must be refused under the precautionary principle of the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

8. The Precautionary Principle

Under both the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and the Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991, decision-makers must apply the precautionary principle when there is a threat of serious or irreversible environmental harm.

The evidence presented so far does not demonstrate that emissions and by-products from the Woodlawn EfW facility can be safely contained or monitored. In the absence of such certainty, approval would be inconsistent with this legislative obligation.

Conclusion

I respectfully ask the Committee to:

Recommend against approval of the Woodlawn Energy-from-Waste facility in its current form.

Review the suitability of rural and agricultural locations for heavy industrial waste infrastructure.

Require full public transparency of emissions data and independent environmental monitoring for all EfW facilities.

Commission an independent health impact assessment for communities within 20 km of the Woodlawn site.

Prioritise investment in recycling, composting, and waste-reduction initiatives that align with NSW's net-zero and circular economy goals.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Yours sincerely,

Resident, Tarago NSW