

Submission  
No 1006

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE  
FACILITIES**

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

I am writing to you today as 5<sup>th</sup> generation family farmers, deeply concerned about the proposed 'energy to waste incinerator' in Parkes. Our family have farmed in the Alectown district for over 100 years, and our 4 sons 22, 21, 19 and 17 are now working full-time or actively involved in our farming business. We have been able to build our farming business' size and productivity to where it is today through good stewardship, sustainable farming practices and continued education and learning about our climate, our soils, weather patterns and investing in new farming technologies. Our family is completely invested in our Parkes/Alectown community, be it farming groups, various sports, church, show society, and school. Our children all went to Parkes Christian School, our youngest completing his HSC next year. I have been an active board member of PCS board for 10 years and have been so blessed to be part of such massive growth as the Parkes district has grown and flourished and the need for quality education has become evident.

We are food producers, growing wheat, barley, oats, canola, chickpeas, lupins, faba beans and pastures, and breed merino sheep for wool and fat lambs for meat. The farming sector is heading more and more toward a paddock to plate experience. People want to know where their food comes from, and rightly so. Consumers both local and international, will be demanding to know if our products are safe, knowing the close proximity to the proposed incinerator. Our farming business will be forever associated as being within a toxic threshold, through no fault of our own, and all decisions made were completely out of our control.

We are also passionate about self-sufficiency as much as possible and we have a large orchard and vegetable garden along with free range chickens, eggs and bees. We do not have access to town water, so we are completely reliant on our farm and local creeks run off for water catchment. We have extensively developed our water capabilities as another step to drought proof our business as much as possible. Knowing our food growing practices, I would never hesitate to eat the 'fruits of our labour' but with an incinerator less than 30km from our farm, and absolutely no guarantee of 100% safety, how can we trust the very food that we produce? And how will we be able to sell the food we produce? Even if people wanted to buy commodities potentially tainted with toxins from an incinerator burning 24/7, how can we ethically sell our product knowing it could make people sick?

Even during the raging drought from 2017-2020, our farm business was always productive, even if on a decreased level. This is a testament to the farming area we live in. An extremely reliable food bowl managed by excellent landholders. But being reliable large scale producers means nothing if the food is contaminated. Our sons regard farming as their future. We've always been taught to leave a place better than you found it, and we refuse to leave our sons a polluted farm business, or a town and school where the air is toxic.

The proposed incinerator is also extremely close to Parkes Christian School. The school is growing at a rapid rate (there are waiting lists for classes), evident of the need for quality education in Parkes. The school has just been through a significant extension and renovation and is so optimistic about the future of education in Parkes that another

extension is about to begin, the largest one yet. As a board member and as a parent, I am extremely concerned about the development of an unproven, untested incinerator so close to 100's of young vulnerable children. The number of families and staff that will choose to leave the school if this project goes ahead is nothing short of alarming. The idea that this could even be proposed so close to an educational facility where hundreds of children attend daily is an absolute disgrace, especially as these incinerators have been banned in other areas. How does this make sense?

One of our local councilors has proposed 17 questions to the EPA months ago, with zero response. How will we ever be able to trust or interact with these organizations if they can't be bothered answering questions?

There has been no consultation with the community regarding this project, and some councillors even laughing or shrugging off our very real concerns, treating their ratepayers with contempt. How does this build trust when so many people's livelihoods are at risk?

How does shipping Sydney's waste issue 500km out to our beautiful clean town solve any problems long term? There is NO accountability for their rubbish! Out of sight, out of mind. Our own local tip is 6km away, where we take our **own** rubbish, in our **own** bins, in our **own** vehicles. We know exactly what our rubbish looks like and the volume of it. Does that make us think twice about what we use and waste? Absolutely! How does a 1000km round trip on a train make any 'green' sense?

Leaving this area has never been an option for our family or business until now. The blood sweat and tears we have all poured out into our farm business could be undone by this proposed incinerator. This is our home, and we intend for it to stay that way for many generations to come. Our intention is to keep producing the best quality food, be the best stewards of the land we can be and to leave it better than we came. And we have taught the next generation to do the same.