

Submission  
No 1011

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE  
FACILITIES**

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

## **Submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Energy from Waste (EfW)**

**From** , Parkes NSW

### **Introduction**

I thank the Committee for the opportunity to express our concerns on behalf of myself, my partner and our three children. We are writing to convey strong opposition to the EfW project. Our family settled in Parkes in 2020 and have admired the Parkes community since our arrival. Our children transitioned seamlessly into Parkes Christian School, participate in many sporting teams and extra-curricular activities, we've developed a supportive social network and my partner and I have been fortunate to acquire jobs that we enjoy that support a family/life balance. We have been so content with living in the area that we purchased a residential rental property in 2023. My employment position is within a business in the agricultural sector, dependent upon the health of our land, clean air and safe water.

Since hearing about the EfW project at the beginning of the year, however, we've experienced a shift in the way we feel about our community and the leadership by Parkes Shire Council. The thought of 600,000T/annum being transported by rail to our region for incineration is deeply concerning and distressing, making us question our health and safety and our decision to move to Parkes. Below are summarised key areas of concern for our family, which we believe are relevant to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.

#### **1. Terms of Reference (b) the spread of emissions predicted by the quality of emissions to be generated.**

The EfW proposal threatens the capacity of the region to produce high quality commodities that are safe and free of pollutants. This is not only a risk to individuals consuming products produced in our area, but further, the economic viability of agricultural centred businesses in the area, just like the business that I am employed by. The agricultural sector holds significant importance to Australia's financial stability, and exporting unsafe, contaminated food sources has the potential to tarnish our reputation in global markets.

The Chief Scientist and Engineer's report on Energy from Waste facilities highlights the importance of avoiding proximity to food production areas. It recommends that human health risk assessments consider food as a potential exposure pathway.

A recent systematic review by Tait et al. (2020) further supports a precautionary approach, showing links between incinerator emissions and adverse health effects, and reinforcing the need to account for food as an exposure pathway.

[https://researchportalplus.anu.edu.au/en/publications/the-health-impacts-of-waste-incineration-a-systematic-review?utm\\_source](https://researchportalplus.anu.edu.au/en/publications/the-health-impacts-of-waste-incineration-a-systematic-review?utm_source)

#### **2. Terms of Reference (d) impacts on human health including on regional town drinking water, rainwater harvesting and soil contamination.**

The EPA cannot adequately obtain baseline data of furan, dioxin, and other 'forever chemical' quantities, meaning that comparative data in time to come is not a true reflection of pollution implications caused by the EfW facility. Our family rely on rainwater tanks as a sole source for domestic water for consumption, cooking and bathing. This, along with our environment; fauna,

flora, watercourses and soil health, are at risk of contamination to some degree. The EPA's track record in managing environmental contamination provides little confidence that the situation would be any different here. The ongoing legacy of lead contamination in Broken Hill demonstrates the long-term failure to protect communities from heavy metal exposure, while the detection of PFAS in the Belubula River at Canowindra highlights the inability to contain or remediate persistent pollutants once they enter the environment.

The long-term health impacts of dioxins, furans, microplastics, and toxic ash are well-established, including links to cancer, reproductive issues, immune system damage, and hormone disruption. While these effects may not be immediately apparent, evidence shows that exposure can have devastating consequences for multiple generations. We should not be asked to risk our children's health or their future, particularly when Sydney itself has rejected such proposals. It is unreasonable to impose these risks on regional communities, especially when authorities have acknowledged that such facilities are considered unsafe for most of NSW. Treating regional communities as secondary or expendable is both unfair and unjust.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1753-6405.12939>

Our three children attend Parkes Christian School which is located approximately 4km from the proposed EfW precinct. Our children spend more than 30 hours per week playing, learning and participating in outdoor activities. It is of grave concern to us that our children will be exposed to airborne emissions from an incinerator in the immediate vicinity of their school. The long-term health risks associated with such exposure, including respiratory issues, developmental impacts, and chronic disease, are well-documented. The health and safety of these students must be given absolute priority over the convenience of locating industrial infrastructure near sensitive community sites. The presence of an incinerator so near a school is not just irresponsible; it is a direct threat to the wellbeing of our children and our community.

### **3. Terms of Reference (i) alternative solutions to reduce and manage residual waste produced by Greater Sydney.**

We acknowledge that Sydney's waste crisis must be addressed, however, burning it in regional NSW is not the solution. We urge the Committee to pursue genuine alternatives, including:

- Waste reduction and improved packaging reform;
- Reuse and recycling initiatives;
- Cold or non-thermal waste treatment technologies such as anaerobic digestion and mechanical-biological treatment.

### **Conclusion**

We made the choice to move to Parkes to live a more peaceful, slower paced life with access to fresh, clean air. We minimise our residual waste and participate in reuse and recycling initiatives. We don't deserve to be burdened with anxiety around pollution from burning Sydney's waste in our backyard. On behalf of my family, I sincerely hope that our concerns are fully acknowledged, and that the proposed Parkes Energy from Waste facility is permanently stopped. Our children and the longevity of the Parkes community depend on this.

Yours sincerely,