

Submission
No 1013

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE
FACILITIES**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 31 October 2025

Partially
Confidential

Submission to the Select Committee on Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this important inquiry.

I would like to submit the following points for your consideration:

1. The Energy from Waste document produced by the NSW government needs careful fact checking by the committee https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-01/J0022-EFW-fact-sheet_web2.pdf. Careful attention needs to be paid to:

- Whether the information is factual. The claims in relation to remaining ash being suitable for use on roadworks, and the claim that leaf-blowers produce many times more particulates per hour than energy from waste stand out to me as being without evidential bases.

The committee should ensure that the document is thoroughly checked by scientific experts familiar with independent research of waste industry technologies and practices internationally. The committee's findings should be made available to the public. Should inaccuracies be found the document should be replaced by a factual document.

- How the restriction of materials to genuinely "residual" waste would be implemented, and who would be responsible for determinations of whether a form of waste is able to be recycled.

These responsibilities should be undertaken by the government on the basis of public health and ecological expertise and best practice in the development of recycling and reuse projects. The waste and construction industries input to policy development should be strictly limited because of their overwhelming conflicts of interest.

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2. Public Health

The inquiry needs to consider the independent research of public health experts who have published on the risks to human health of energy from waste incinerators. For example *The health impacts of waste incineration: a systematic review in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health 2020 vol.44 No. 1*. This extensive research concluded that "contamination of food and ingestion of pollutants is a significant risk pathway for both nearby and distant residents." It suggested that newer technologies may be less harmful than older ones, but that there is insufficient evidence to conclude that any incinerator is safe.

Industry advocates for energy from waste are claiming that the newer technologies have greatly reduced the health risks of incinerators and the contamination of soils and the food chain that has been documented with earlier versions of incinerator technology. The evidence of contamination continues to surface in Europe, where the newer incinerators are in use. See for example <https://zerowasteurope.eu/project/the-true-toxic-toll/>

Again, the justification of incineration technologies should not be based only on the evidence of those with vested interests. This doesn't just include industry vested interests, it could also include politicians and officials needing a perceived quick fix to the problem of our almost-full landfills.

I express the hope that the committee will listen to the concerns of the Parkes and Tarago communities. The community groups opposing energy from waste facilities being imposed on their towns have researched the operations of energy from waste facilities internationally. I respect and admire the work done by community volunteers in these communities and ask that the committee take on board their concerns and rejection of burning Sydney's waste in their backyards.

The town of Tarago has already borne the brunt of the massive dump of Sydney's waste near their town and the odour problems that have affected their wellbeing for many years. I say as a Sydney-sider it's just not fair - they need a break, not more toxic waste.

These two communities should be supported to develop clean industries, with value adding to the agricultural industries. These avenues would be blocked off to them if they were to become energy from waste hubs for the foreseeable future.

Alternative solutions

The inaction of NSW governments to put into action alternative solutions to waste does not make the use of incinerators inevitable.

There has been some progress by the current government in implementing alternative strategies for avoiding, reusing and recycling waste. These initiatives need to be rapidly developed further.

The strategy of making the producers of waste responsible for its life cycle is commendable. The NSW government's proposed mandatory government-regulated approach to managing the life cycle of batteries deserves strong community support as an important step towards product stewardship.

A strong push to reduce the amount of waste produced by Sydney industries and residents will help avert a crisis, and should be linked to stronger policies to make the producers of waste responsible for it.

What is important for future generations is that the state does not allow incineration of waste to get a foothold. Landfills are bad but they are not as bad as burning toxic waste.

Energy from waste developments are not a solution, in fact they are the reverse. They would lock in a perceived quick fix, and could create vested interests in increasing the supply of waste to keep incinerators burning 24/7.

What we need instead are policies and initiatives that would genuinely lead to a circular economy and to zero waste policies as soon as possible.

Sincerely,