

Submission  
No 1015

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE  
FACILITIES**

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date Received:** 31 October 2025

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Partially  
Confidential

## **Submission to the NSW Select Committee on Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities**

Submitted by: (19 years old)

Law student (Wollongong University, NSW)

**31 October 2025**

Dear Committee Members,

My name is . I am a 19-year-old First Nations woman studying law in Wollongong (NSW). I grew up in Wiradjuri Country, and I have family and forever ties to Forbes and would hate to imagine their health being placed in jeopardy by the proposed Waste (WtE) to Energy facility near Parkes. My younger brother, by twelve years, will spend many years in Forbes. If a facility is approved in Parkes, only thirty minutes away from Forbes, I worry deeply about his future.

Our people already face higher rates of illness and disadvantage. Projects like this risk worsening those inequalities and damaging the Country that sustains us. I therefore write to the inquiry to express my strong opposition to the proposed WtE facility near Parkes. In doing so I will address some key Terms of Reference of this inquiry.

### **Health and Water Concerns**

As reported by the ABC, residents fear serious health risks from the proposed incinerator, including exposure to toxins and fine particles that can cause cancers and respiratory diseases. Even “modern” facilities still emit pollutants. Clean water is sacred to us. If the water we drink becomes contaminated, what will be left for future generations? Recent PFAS contamination in the Belubula River shows how easily harmful chemicals spread and persist in the environment.

Relevant Terms of Reference:

- (d) Impacts on human health including on regional town drinking water, rainwater harvesting and soil contamination.
- (b) The spread of the emissions predicted and the quality of emissions to be generated.

## **Environmental and Cultural Impact**

Our lands are not dumping grounds. Rural and First Nations communities should not be treated as 'sacrifice zones' for industrial waste. Once our soil, air, and waterways are harmed, they cannot simply be repaired. Water is life, and it holds deep spiritual and cultural meaning for my people. Protecting it means protecting our identity and future.

Relevant Terms of Reference:

- (e) The impact on agriculture locally and across the wider region.

## **Practical Alternatives to Waste-to-Energy**

There are cleaner, safer and more sustainable ways to manage waste than incineration. These include:

- Reducing waste at the source – encouraging smarter packaging, raising consumer awareness, and reducing single-use material.
- Improving recycling and reuse systems – investing in local recycling infrastructure and supporting circular-economy initiatives.
- Holding producers accountable – requiring companies to be responsible for the waste their products create, through stronger producer-responsibility laws.
- Composting and anaerobic digestion – turning organic waste into valuable resources such as compost, soil-enhancers and biogas.
- Upgrading sorting and recovery technologies – improving systems to separate materials more effectively and keep valuable resources out of landfill.
- Supporting community education and innovation – empowering households, schools and businesses to reduce, reuse and recycle more effectively.

These practical approaches align with the waste-hierarchy and reflect the inquiry's scope of 'alternative solutions' under (i) above. Together, these approaches create local jobs, reduce pollution and build a cleaner, more sustainable circular economy for the future.

## **What I Ask**

- Reject the proposal, or at the very least require a full independent health and environmental assessment focusing on First Nations communities. (d) and (b)
- Guarantee real-time public monitoring of air and water, with community oversight. (h)
- Ensure genuine consultation and decision-making power for Traditional Owners and residents. (j)

## **Conclusion**

I write this not just as a student, but as a young Wiradjuri woman worried for the world we will inherit. Progress should never come at the cost of people's health, our water, or our Country. Thank you for listening to my voice — and the voices of those who will live with the consequences should this go ahead.

## **References and Sources**

- ABC News (15 May 2025). 'Parkes locals fear health impacts from proposed waste-to-energy facility'. ABC Australia.
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- Environmental Protection Authority NSW (EPA). (2024). 'Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2021–2030'.
- Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (2025). 'National Waste Policy Action Plan'.