

PRESENTATION TO INDEPENDENT PLANNING COMMISSION

re

PLASREFINE PLASTICS RECYCLING PROPOSAL

by

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REFER NOW

GOOD EVENING COMMISSIONERS AND CONCERNED CITIZENS OF THE WINGECARRIBEE SHIRE

- I AM GIVING THIS PRESENTATION AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF WINZERO, THE GO-TO ORGANISATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS IN OUR SHIRE WITH A MISSION TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE WHAT GREEN-BETWEEN WE HAVE LEFT IN THE HIGHLANDS
- WE HAVE 80+ MEMBERS AND 800+ SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS IN OUR ORGANISATION AND, IN THIS PARTICULAR MATTER, I ESPOUSE THE VIEWS OF THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THEM
- I HAVE TO SAY AT THE OUTSET THAT WE HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO OBJECTION TO PLASTICS RECYCLING IN PRINCIPLE. IT IS ESSENTIAL TO DEAL WITH THE MOUNTAIN OF SUCH MATERIAL CAST OFF BY OUR WASTEFUL SOCIETY UNLESS AND UNTIL WE DRASTICALLY REDUCE OUR USAGE OF PLASTIC ACROSS THE BOARD
- WE DO HOWEVER STRONGLY MAINTAIN THAT, WITHOUT A SHADOW OF A DOUBT, THIS IS ABSOLUTELY THE WRONG PLACE TO PUT SUCH A FACILITY, AND I WILL TRY EXPLAIN WHY WE THINK THAT *IT IS NOT THE RIGHT SITE!*
- I INTEND TO FOCUS ON THREE AREAS – THE PAUCITY OF OPERATIONAL DETAILS PROVIDED BY THE PROPONENT AND ITS EIS CONSULTANT, THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INNOVATION PARK (OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE SHIP), AND THE VERY DOUBTFUL ECONOMICS OF THE PROJECT
- I COME TO THIS AS A MINING ENGINEER WITH NEARLY 50 YEARS EXPERIENCE IN THAT INDUSTRY – MUCH OF IT IN PROJECT ASSESSMENT AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT IN AUSTRALIA AND OVERSEAS
- I WAS FOR SOME TIME THE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT MANAGER FOR A LISTED MINING COMPANY, AND I SUPERVISED THE LODGEMENT OF AN EIS FOR A SILVER MINING PROJECT IN CENTRAL WESTERN NSW DURING WHICH I MANAGED UP TO 30 CONSULTANTS AND SUB-CONSULTANTS, AND SPENT NEARLY 5 MILLION DOLLARS IN THE PROCESS
- THEREFORE, I FEEL QUALIFIED TO SAY THAT THE ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL PROCESS FOR PLASREFINE LEAVES A LOT TO BE DESIRED. IN FACT, I HAVE NEVER SEEN ANY PROJECT IN MY WORKING LIFE THAT HAS SO MANY RED FLAGS ATTACHED TO IT AND YET STILL GETS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

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- KEY ISSUES ARE:
 - IN THE MINING PROJECT I REFERRED TO, WE WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO GET AWAY WITH SUCH A GENERAL **PROCESS DESCRIPTION** AS THAT PRESENTED HERE – NO DETAILED EQUIPMENT DESCRIPTION AND/OR SPECIFICATION, NO ANALYSIS OF THE LIKELY FEED MATERIALS, CHEMICAL ADDITIVES OR IN-PLANT MATERIAL FLOWS, NO DETAILING OF THE LIKELY FLUE GAS STREAMS AND RESULTANT EMISSIONS OR DUST MANAGEMENT ETC, ETC.
 - WE ENGAGED A PROCESS ENGINEERING FIRM TO DO A PLANT DESIGN THAT WOULD ALLOW US TO SIZE EQUIPMENT AND SPECIFY ITS PERFORMANCE TO ENABLE US TO ASSESS INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS, ESPECIALLY THE LIKELY POWER DRAWS, PROCESS WATER REQUIREMENTS AND WASTE AND EFFLUENT STREAM QUANTITIES AND QUALITY
 - WE THEN HAD TO DO AN IN-DEPTH **RISK** ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT, AND PRESENT ROBUST PREVENTION OR MITIGATION STRATEGIES FOR AT LEAST THE HIGHER PROBABILITY/HIGHER SERIOUSNESS ONES. I HAVE SEEN LITTLE SIGN OF ANY SUCH ASSESSMENT IN THE PLASREFINE DOCUMENTATION
 - THEREFORE, I AM AT A TOTAL LOSS TO UNDERSTAND HOW PLANNING AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS CAN MAKE A REASONABLE ASSESSMENT WITHOUT SUCH DETAILS. THERE ARE FAR TOO MANY EXAMPLES OF **"SHE'LL BE RIGHT ON THE NIGHT, MATE"** ON THE APPARENT ASSUMPTION THAT A PROPONENT WITH ABSOLUTELY NO TRACK RECORD IN THE INDUSTRY WILL BE ABLE TO WORK ALL THIS OUT IN A TIMELY AND EFFECTIVE MANNER STARTING FROM GROUND ZERO
 - MY MAIN CONCERN ON THE INFRASTRUCTURE FRONT IS THE **POWER SUPPLY**. MY ENQUIRIES TO THE GRID OPERATOR, ENDEAVOUR ENERGY, SUGGEST THAT, WHILE THEY ARE WORKING ON UPGRADING THE SIZE OF THE FEED SYSTEM TO THE SHIP, THEY HAVE HAD NO DEFINITIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH PLASREFINE REGARDING THEIR ACTUAL NEEDS. WHAT IF THERE IS NOT ENOUGH POWER SUPPLY FOR PLASREFINE, LET ALONE FOR ANY OTHER EXISTING AND NEW SHIP OCCUPANTS?
 - THE SECOND BIG OVERALL PROBLEM I HAVE WITH THE PROJECT IS THE INCOMPATIBILITY OF A PLANT LIKE THAT PROPOSED HERE WITH THE STATED OBJECTIVES OF THE WINGECARRIBEE SHIRE COUNCIL'S OVERARCHING **MASTER PLAN FOR THE SHIP AND THE WINGECARRIBEE LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN (LEP)**
 - WINZERO HAS WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM TO DEVELOP THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOME IN THE SHIP – BOTH FOR THE SHIRE AS A WHOLE AS WELL AS NEARBY RESIDENTS AND OTHER SHIP OCCUPANTS. THE FOCUS HAS BEEN ON LOW-IMPACT, INNOVATIVE AND REGENERATIVE INDUSTRIES, EDUCATIONAL AND RESEARCH ESTABLISHMENTS, AND OTHER LIGHT INDUSTRIAL OPERATIONS LIKE THE CURRENT DATA CENTRE AND BIORESEARCH FACILITIES

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- IT CERTAINLY DOESN'T ENVISAGE A POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS AND POLLUTING OPERATION LIKE PLASREFINE. HOW AND WHY CAN THE STATE GOVERNMENT IGNORE THE DESIRES OF THE COUNCIL AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY BY RECOMMENDING SUCH A PROJECT – PARTICULARLY AS THE STATE PROVIDED SIGNIFICANT FUNDING TO THE COUNCIL TO FACILITATE THE DRAFTING OF THE AFORESAID MASTER PLAN?!
 - FINALLY, THE **ECONOMICS OF THE PROJECT**. I CAN'T BE DEFINITIVE IN MY STATEMENTS ON THIS DUE TO THE LACK OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE, BUT I HAVE SERIOUS DOUBTS THAT IT CAN EVER BE AN ECONOMIC BUSINESS FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS:
 - GIVEN THE PLANT DESIGN IS SO SKETCHY AND RECENT CONSTRUCTION COST ESCALATION SO HIGH, THE BASE COST WILL BE SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER IN THE END THAN THE ORIGINAL GUESSTIMATE OF \$88 MILLION
 - ALL OF THE CONSTRAINTS THAT ARE LIKELY TO BE PLACED ON THE OPERATION BY THE OUTSTANDING INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS AND THE LIKELY CONDITIONS OF ANY APPROVAL WILL UNDOUBTEDLY ESCALATE BOTH CAPITAL AND OPERATING COSTS
 - THE MARKET IN AUSTRALIA FOR THE LIKELY PRODUCTS IS VERY LIMITED, SO A SIGNIFICANT PORTION WILL HAVE TO BE SHIPPED OVERSEAS, IF NOT DUMPED
 - BECAUSE OF THE SEEMINGLY INDECENT HASTE TO GET THIS PROJECT APPROVED, THERE IS NO TIME FOR US TO GET AN EXPERT ANALYSIS DONE OF THE BUSINESS CASE. HOWEVER, IN MY PROFESSIONAL OPINION, EVEN IF LARGE GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES ARE AVAILABLE THIS PROJECT IS HIGHLY LIKELY TO FAIL IN THE NOT-TO-DISTANT FUTURE AND THUS BE AN ENDURING BLOT ON THE SHIP LANDSCAPE
 - **IN CONCLUSION, I URGE YOU NOT TO APPROVE THIS PROJECT FOR THREE REASONS:**
 - **THE INADEQUACY OF THE APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS,**
 - **THE LIKELIHOOD OF EARLY CLOSURE DUE TO POOR ECONOMICS, AND**
 - **ITS COMPLETE INCOMPATIBILITY WITH THE OBJECTIVES OF THE WINGECARRIBEE LEP AND THE COUNCIL'S MASTER PLAN FOR THE SHIP**

PLEASE DON'T SINK THE SHIP!!

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