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OBJECT

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Organisation: N/A	Key issues: <i>Social impacts, Visual impacts, design and landscaping, Land use compatibility (surrounding land uses), Other issues</i>
Location: New South Wales 2577	
Attachment: N/A	

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To the Members of the Planning Commission,

I am writing on behalf of our community to express serious concerns regarding the proposed Plasrefine plastics recycling facility near Moss Vale, located approximately 200 metres from residential areas. We recognise the importance of effective plastic recycling and the potential for job creation and economic growth. However, we believe that the location of this facility poses unacceptable risks to public health, the environment, property values, and cultural heritage in the area. Below, I outline these concerns, supported by reputable sources, and challenge the suitability of the current site chosen for this facility.

1. Health Risks from Untested Chemicals

The recycling process at Plasrefine reportedly involves chemicals that are untested in Australia. Without long-term data, there is insufficient understanding of potential health effects, especially from emissions and chemical by-products. A report from the Australian Federal Parliament on plastic pollution highlights several risks associated with plastic recycling facilities, including air quality deterioration and health hazards from emissions (Australian Federal Parliament Report on Plastic Pollution).

Internationally, communities near plastic recycling facilities have reported respiratory issues, skin irritations, and other health problems related to exposure. Vulnerable populations, including children and the elderly, may be especially susceptible. Considering these documented risks, we urge the commission to prioritise public health, especially given the lack of comprehensive safety data for these chemicals.

2. Environmental Impact on Local Flora, Fauna, and Water Resources

Moss Vale's biodiversity, including protected species such as platypuses and koalas, is vital to the region. The environmental risks of this facility are substantial, as industrial pollution can degrade ecosystems permanently. Water contamination is a primary concern, given findings in the Australian Plastic Flows and Fates report, which discuss the risks of plastic waste leaching chemicals into groundwater and affecting nearby waterways (Australian Plastic Flows and Fates Report).

The Cecil Hoskins Nature Reserve near Moss Vale, a protected platypus habitat, is particularly vulnerable. Contamination could disrupt water quality and harm platypus populations, which rely on stable, clean waterways. Similar risks apply to the koala population, which depends on eucalyptus habitats that could be negatively impacted by air and soil pollution. Any harm to these protected species would be a major ecological and community loss.

3. Local Aboriginal Heritage and Cultural Significance

The Moss Vale region is home to over 400 Aboriginal cultural sites, including engravings, scarred trees, and ceremonial sites, per the Wingecarribee Shire Council. Nearby, the Nungungungulla (Jubilee Rocks) Aboriginal Place is a declared sacred area, further underscoring the region's cultural importance. Developing an industrial facility close to such culturally significant sites is ethically questionable and risks damaging sacred landscapes, which are central to Aboriginal identity and heritage.



An Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment should be mandatory before moving forward with this project. Building a facility that may contaminate or disturb these culturally rich areas directly opposes efforts to preserve Indigenous heritage and respect traditional custodianship of the land.

4. Impacts on Property Values and Community Investment

Residents in Moss Vale have invested in their homes and community, expecting the area to remain a safe and environmentally healthy place to live. Property value studies consistently show that industrial facilities near residential zones lead to decreased property values, attributed to concerns over safety, noise, and environmental impact. This is echoed in the Australian Federal Parliament report, which outlines the negative effects of plastic pollution facilities on property values (Australian Federal Parliament Report on Plastic Pollution).

The facility's economic benefit through job creation may ultimately be offset by long-term losses in property value, local revenue, and community desirability, making the net economic impact potentially negative.

5. Challenging Pro-Arguments: Jobs and Environmental Claims

While job creation and reduced plastic waste are cited as benefits, these arguments are not without challenges:

- *Job Creation vs. Long-Term Costs: Although the facility may create jobs, the long-term environmental remediation costs could far outweigh the economic benefits. Cleanup, healthcare costs, and the potential loss in property values might impose financial burdens on the community that exceed the benefits of job creation.*

- *Preventing Plastics in Landfill: This facility's operation may not significantly reduce plastic waste in landfills. A 2018-19 Australian plastics recycling survey report revealed that only 11.5% of plastics were recovered through recycling efforts (Australian Plastics Recycling Survey Report). The current recycling infrastructure may not be sufficient to achieve meaningful landfill reductions, raising questions about whether this facility will truly meet its stated environmental goals.*

6. Contradiction with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Climate Commitments

This facility goes against Australia's commitments to sustainable development and net zero emissions targets. Specifically, it conflicts with SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, as it may contribute to environmental degradation rather than sustainable waste management practices. Additionally, NSW has committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2030, and the operation of this facility could increase local emissions, contradicting these climate goals.

The local council's stance on environmental preservation, sustainability, and cultural heritage preservation should guide decision-making on this project. We urge the commission to consider that permitting this facility may undermine Australia's SDG commitments and net zero objectives.

Conclusion and Call to Action

While we acknowledge the importance of plastic recycling and the potential for economic benefits, these must be balanced against the environmental, health, and cultural costs posed by the proposed facility. The current location is unsuitable for a project of this nature, given its proximity to sensitive residential, ecological, and cultural sites.

We respectfully request that the Planning Commission require a comprehensive environmental and cultural impact assessment and consider alternative locations for the facility that better align with community values and sustainability goals. Moss Vale's natural environment, Aboriginal heritage, and community investments deserve protection.

Respectfully,



New South Wales Government
Independent Planning Commission

Caroline Jarvie
