



REBECCA DUDLEY

OBJECT

Submission ID: 212227

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

Submission date: 11/7/2024 11:39:42 AM

07 Nov 2024

Submission - Moss Vale Plastics Recycling Facility

Re: Objection to the Proposed Soft Plastics Refinery Near Residential and Agricultural Areas

I am writing to formally object to the proposed construction of a soft plastics refinery near residential and farming properties in the Southern Highlands. After carefully investigating the potential impacts of this facility on both the local environment and the health and well-being of the community, I believe this development poses unacceptable risks to our land, air, water, livestock, as well as, human health.

Soft plastics refining involves chemical processes that release pollutants into the air, soil, and water. Given the proximity of the proposed refinery to residential homes and agricultural land, the potential for harmful emissions, such as volatile organic compounds (VOCs), particulate matter, and other hazardous air pollutants, raises serious concerns. These pollutants can contaminate local air quality, adversely affecting the health of nearby residents and the surrounding ecosystems.

The proposed refinery site is located not far from valuable agricultural land. The risk of soil contamination from chemical spills, improper waste disposal, or leachate from industrial processes could severely affect local farming. If toxic chemicals enter the soil, they could compromise crop growth, damage soil health, and ultimately lead to long-term economic losses for farmers.

I am also concerned about the health impacts to humans. The operation of a soft plastics refinery involves the processing of plastic waste materials, which could produce harmful emissions or release toxic substances into the environment. Studies have shown that prolonged exposure to chemicals such as benzene, styrene, and phthalates common byproducts of plastic processing can cause a range of serious health issues, including respiratory problems, neurological damage, and even cancer.

For those living in close proximity to the proposed site, the risk of chronic health conditions caused by long-term exposure to pollutants is concerning. Children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing health conditions are particularly vulnerable to air and water contamination from such industrial activities.

My worry also relates to the impacts on livestock and our local agricultural practices. Farmers and agricultural operators in the area are concerned about the impact of the proposed refinery on livestock health. The release of chemical compounds into the air could lead to contamination of grazing pastures, potentially harming livestock through ingestion or exposure to polluted air. Livestock are highly sensitive to changes in air quality, and pollutants from industrial operations can lead to respiratory diseases, reduced fertility, and other health issues in animals.

Additionally, there is the risk that chemical runoff could pollute nearby water sources. Irrigation water contaminated with hazardous chemicals poses a direct threat to crops, as well as the animals that rely on the land for grazing. Such contamination could affect the entire agricultural ecosystem, leading to reduced yields, crop failures, and potential long-term damage to the soil.

Attention needs to be drawn to the lack of adequate buffer zones between the proposed refinery and residential and agricultural areas. Industry best practices recommend substantial buffers to protect



communities from the harmful effects of industrial pollution. The proximity of this facility to homes and farms does not meet these basic safety standards and exposes the local population and environment to unnecessary risk.

While the development of a soft plastics refinery may be seen as a solution to the growing issue of plastic waste, it is vital to consider the broader environmental and social consequences of such an industrial facility. There are alternative solutions that can more effectively manage plastic waste without jeopardising the health of local communities and the environment. Investment in more sustainable waste management practices, such as recycling programs, waste reduction strategies, and the development of cleaner technologies, should be prioritised over the establishment of new industrial facilities that may have lasting negative impacts.

Furthermore, if this is considered the most practical solution to the plastics problem, then I would suggest that a more appropriate location needs to be found. One, which is not in a region with unique biodiversity and natural beauty, or that plays a crucial role in supporting local communities, agriculture, the broader ecosystem, and ecotourism.

The Southern Highlands is renowned for its natural beauty, with picturesque landscapes, national parks, forests, and heritage sites attracting visitors from across Australia and internationally. It is not the right place for a plastics recycling facility. A better location must be found.

In light of the above concerns, I strongly urge the Council to reject the proposal for a soft plastics refinery near residential and farming properties in our beautiful Southern Highlands. The potential environmental and health risks far outweigh the perceived benefits, and there are better, more sustainable approaches to addressing the plastic waste problem.

I respectfully request that the decision around this development be based on a thorough, independent environmental and health impact assessment, that takes into account the risks to human health, agriculture, and the local environment.

Thank you for considering my objections.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Dudley

Moss Vale Resident
