



SARAH UTHER

OBJECT

Submission ID: 211842

Organisation: N/A	Key issues: Social impacts, Traffic, Other issues
Location: New South Wales 2576	
Attachment: N/A	

Submission date: 11/5/2024 8:06:28 PM

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to formally object to the Plasrefine plastic recycling plant proposal in Moss Vale. As a resident of this town for the past three years, I have witnessed the growth and transformation of Moss Vale, and I believe this project is incompatible with the social, economic, and environmental interests of the Southern Highlands region.

I strongly support efforts to reduce plastic production, minimize plastic wrapping, and encourage a wider, more effective circular economy. I am concerned that the proposed plastic recycling plant does not adequately address the potential environmental risks associated with toxic emissions, water contamination, and other unintended consequences of this industrial process.

Site Suitability

Moss Vale is a vibrant, growing town that has flourished in recent years, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has prompted many families to relocate here and take advantage of the flexible work-from-home arrangements. In the three years since my family moved here, I have seen a significant transformation of the town. Moss Vale is no longer a quiet, low socio-economic area as suggested by the proponent's Social Impact Assessment; rather, it has evolved into a thriving community of families. Our town now boasts sophisticated retail outlets, a popular wine bar, a paddock-to-plate organic café, and a small but elegant hotel, to name just a few of the new business ventures that have contributed to the local economy.

Moss Vale is also known for its innovative and unique educational offerings. Local schools have embraced an outdoor education model that includes activities such as biking, animal husbandry, honey harvesting, tree climbing, and campfire cooking.

I believe that recent population growth in the region, which may not be fully captured in the most recent census data, will only continue to contribute to the vibrancy of our town. Due to the increased number of school aged children there's been a burgeoning economy of local businesses from sporting clubs to dance and music schools. Plus the local health sector has grown with new services dedicated to children's health and wellbeing.

In addition, Moss Vale has numerous sporting grounds that will be impacted, including Eridge Park, which hosts thousands of children and their families each week for a variety of sports, including rugby, soccer, netball, athletics, and OzTag. The park is located just 3.5km from the proposed plant site, in the direction of the prevailing westerly wind.

Social and Economic Impacts

The proposed plastic recycling plant could have a range of negative social and economic impacts on our community, including:

- **Health Risks and Environmental Concerns:** The potential for toxic emissions to escape into the air and waterways is a significant concern. Plastics contain harmful chemicals that could be released into the environment during the recycling process, negatively affecting local water supplies, soil, and air quality. Emerging technologies designed to mitigate these risks are still unproven, and there is significant evidence that



recycling plants are major emitters of toxic pollution, as highlighted in multiple recent studies. The long-term health risks for local residents, particularly vulnerable populations such as children, cannot be overlooked.

- *Impact on Property Values: The presence of a plastic recycling plant is likely to result in a decrease in property values in the surrounding area. Many families and businesses have chosen to settle in Moss Vale due to its scenic beauty, growing community, and family-friendly environment. The introduction of an industrial facility that poses health and environmental risks could dissuade potential buyers, leading to a decline in property values and long-term economic harm for local homeowners.*

- *Traffic and Road Safety: The construction and operation of the proposed plant would lead to increased traffic, including large trucks transporting waste materials and plastic products. This increase in heavy vehicle traffic poses risks to the safety of local residents and visitors, particularly considering the proximity to local schools, daycares, and sporting facilities. It would also put undue pressure on our already-busy local roads, which were not designed to accommodate such a high volume of industrial traffic.*

- *Disruption to Local Businesses: Moss Vale's main street, Argyle Street, is home to numerous small businesses that have thrived due to the town's growing appeal as a lifestyle destination. The negative health and environmental impacts associated with the proposed plant could undermine the success of these businesses, particularly those in the food and tourism sectors.*

Conclusion

I implore the Commission to carefully consider the social, economic, and environmental impacts of this proposal. The potential harm to the health and wellbeing of the local community, the disruption to local businesses, the decrease in property values, and the increased traffic and pollution risks all present significant challenges to the sustainable growth of Moss Vale and the Southern Highlands. The region's long-term success depends on balancing development with the preservation of the unique qualities that have made it an attractive place to live and invest.

I urge you to reject this proposal and prioritize alternative solutions that align with our collective vision for a healthier, more sustainable future. Thank you for considering my submission.
