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OBJECT

Submission ID: 214700

Organisation: N/A	Key issues: <i>Social impacts, Visual impacts, design and landscaping, Land use compatibility (surrounding land uses), Traffic, Other issues</i>
Location: New South Wales 2029	
Attachment: N/A	

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To the Independent Planning Commission,

Subject: *Opposition to the Proposed Plasrefine Plastics Recycling Facility in Moss Vale*

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed Plasrefine plastics recycling facility in Moss Vale. As a member of this community (property owner in Berrima), I am deeply concerned about the significant and very real negative impacts that this project WILL have on our environment, health, and local economy. Below, I outline the key reasons for my objection.

1. Environmental Impact

The proposed facility poses serious risks to the local environment and broader Sydney catchment.

- Plastics recycling operations can generate hazardous by-products, including volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and microplastics, which are highly likely to contaminate the surrounding air, soil, and water.*
- The practicality of containing these emissions, particularly with the constant opening and closing of roller doors, is doubtful, and GHD appears to be unable to state exactly how the logistics will work in this regard.*
- I am also concerned about the proposed technology and materials used to wash the plastic (what exactly does the 'patented formula' contain? Is it oil-based? What guarantee can the facility - or the government - provide that it won't go into our waterways?). What history does the operator have in this space? More importantly - what environmental breaches have been committed by the operator in the past?*
- The site is on bushfire-prone land, significantly raising the risk of toxic pollutant release during fires that could affect large areas. It should be noted that plastic recycling facilities have seen numerous devastating fires in recent years, with temperatures reaching up to 1,000 degrees Celsius and involving extensive resources to manage, often necessitating evacuation of residents due to toxic fumes.*
- Air pollution from malfunctioning vents poses further risks, potentially releasing VOCs and other hazardous substances.*

2. Community Health, Safety, and Infrastructure Concerns

The health and safety of residents of not only the Southern Highlands but the greater Sydney catchment must be a priority.

- The movement of trucks 24/7 along Taylor Avenue introduces major safety issues, increasing the likelihood of accidents, noise pollution, and air quality degradation. Such heavy vehicle traffic disrupts daily life and can have long-term effects on the community's well-being. Taylor Ave is frequently covered in potholes, which will worsen and create a more dangerous situation with increased heavy traffic.*
- Residents of New Berrima will be significantly affected, and as most of these are young families, there are real safety issues for young children who live there.*



- The local fire services are limited, with Moss Vale station being volunteer-based and equipped with only one fire truck. The distance to the next significant firefighting resources further compounds safety concerns in the event of a major incident

3. Impact on Sydney's Drinking Water

The facility's proximity to critical water catchment areas presents an unacceptable risk to Sydney's drinking water supply.

- Any potential leaks or runoff from the plant could lead to contamination, threatening the health of millions and necessitating costly clean-up measures. The Wingecarribee River, only about 10 meters from the site, feeds into the Warragamba Dam, a key source for Sydney and Goulburn's drinking water. How can anyone possibly guarantee that the water supply for millions of people won't be contaminated by this??

- The uncertain long-term effects of microplastics on human health exacerbate these risks, making this project unsustainable for the region

4. Loss of Habitat for Endangered Species

The development area contains habitats essential to endangered species.

- Building the facility would destroy habitats crucial for species such as the microbat (on the endangered list) and the southern myotis. Other vulnerable species, including platypuses and mountain grey gums, would also be at risk.

- The ecological damage would undermine conservation projects, including the government-supported Southern Highlands Platypus Conservation Project

5. Economic Impacts

While proponents may argue for economic benefits such as job creation, these must be weighed against highly likely negative effects on existing businesses and property values.

- The Southern Highlands' reputation as a scenic community will no doubt be diminished by such heavy industrial development, affecting local enterprises and property markets reliant on its peaceful character.

- Tourism (which the region heavily relies on) will suffer, small businesses will suffer, and the character of the area will change with many locals reluctantly deciding to leave if this proposal proceeds

6. Transparency and Public Consultation

According to various community groups, there has been insufficient transparency and public engagement in this project's planning process.

- Concerns about oversight in air and water quality monitoring, particularly emissions containing pollutants like PFAS, underscore the inadequacies in the project's safety measures

- The community's trust has been further eroded by limited public consultation, raising doubts about the thoroughness of the project's risk assessments

Conclusion - Plasrefine is NOT in the public interest

Given the extremely high likelihood of environmental damage, community disruption, increased traffic risks, threats to biodiversity, and water contamination - all of which I have described in my submission above - I strongly urge the Independent Planning Commission to reject the Plasrefine proposal. Protecting the Southern Highlands' bucolic environment and the health and safety of its residents is paramount. Moreover, the broader implications for Sydney's water supply and future generations cannot be ignored or minimised.



This is not merely a NIMBY submission; characterizing the objections of the local community in such a way would be wrong. This site is truly NOT the right location for such heavy - and risky - industry. Approval of this project will irreversibly damage one of the country's most beautiful regions, affecting current residents, tourists (on whom the area relies), and future generations. Again - the potential impact on the water supply is simply scary.

To approve this proposal would not only be a tragedy for the environment and the community but a decision that would no doubt be remembered for generations as a profound mistake. Common sense must prevail, and Plasrefine should NOT be anywhere in the Southern Highlands. The proposed location being next to the Garvan Institute is the stuff of dark comedy. If the IPC approves this, one wonders what sort of ridiculous - and dangerous - precedent it will set - a coal fired power station in the Sydney CBD next??

The government needs to do better to protect its citizens. This might sound like an emotional plea - and I don't deny that it is. Anyone with a conscience can see approving this is wrong. However this plea is supported by very real facts that CANNOT BE IGNORED.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Regards

Catherine De Giorgio


