



GLYNDA ANDREWS

OBJECT

Submission ID: 215820

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 2576	
Attachment: Attached overleaf	

Submission date: 11/19/2024 5:29:34 PM

I would like to preface my submission by emphasising the fact that trust in the political elite and bureaucracies is at a low ebb and it is in fact extraordinarily unjust to coerce concerned locals into spending years of their time and enormous effort to perform tasks which should have been democratically settled at the outset and which should never have seen the light of day. The Wingecarribee Shire Council could have no input at the time of the initial proposal as it was under administration. For GHD to now regard the efforts of local residents to spread awareness of this project as 'toxic' reporting and a 'social media frenzy' is arrogant and insulting. The concerns of the local population are more than justified, in fact it would be remiss of local residents to unflinchingly accept a proposal of this magnitude, which carries such risks to health, waterways and air, the repercussions of which would be felt beyond the boundaries of the Highlands and affect Sydney itself.

I list and discuss below, the following reasons why I consider this site to be completely unsuitable for this facility:-

1. LOCATION OF SITE

The most significant issue regarding this facility is the proximity of the site to:-

Nearest residential area - 250 m;

Nearest child care centre - 650 m

Riparian zones to the east and west of the facility - 10m

Moss Vale town itself - 2-3 kms

This very proximity poses a threat to the almost 10,000 residents of Moss Vale itself but extends way beyond this and potentially affects surrounding towns and, indeed, Sydney itself, as I will argue below. The current so-called buffer zone between the facility and residential sites is laughable, comprising nothing more than minimal superficial landscaping.

The proximity of the facility to the above areas will impact air quality, water quality, local traffic, increase fire risks, the devaluing of current properties in the area of the facility, stress and health risks to, not only the population of Moss Vale but, indeed, to the several towns comprising the Southern Highlands and beyond.

As well as the incorrect siting of this 3 hectare facility, the actual processing of 120,000 tonnes of plastic waste annually poses the following significant problems:-

2. AIR QUALITY

The processing of 120,000 tonnes of plastic waste annually poses significant problems to both air and water. The emissions from the smoke stacks as well as the lack of real and effective containment of the plastics within the facility, are a major issue. The effect of the emissions from the smoke stacks has been based on the ludicrous assumption that the smoke will rise vertically upwards. All residents of the Southern Highlands are well aware that this is a ridiculous assumption. The Highlands are notoriously windy with strong prevailing westerly winds. Emissions comprised of microplastics from these stacks will therefore be dispersed over a very large area affecting inhabitants for many kilometres from the site. Furthermore, the dispersal and settling of



these microplastics will result in an ever-increasing accumulation of these toxins in the Southern Highlands, not just in Moss Vale and environs.

The Plasrefine report astonishingly, advises that ‘people living near the site would be able to manage their exposure to air quality impacts, through minimising time spent outdoors.’ Not only is this a ludicrous suggestion where an outdoor lifestyle is valued and the very reason why families have chosen to live in an area of clean country air, but it is an admission by Plasrefine itself of the potential effects of poor air quality caused by the facility!

There has also been extensive research by the local community into the potential pollutants released not only through the smoke stacks but from the facility itself when the roller doors are open. As regards the roller doors, trucks are estimated to arrive every 6-7 minutes over an 11 hour period 7am - 6 pm. GHD has said the doors would be open for a minimum of 5 hours in that 11 hour period. The door would be open around 27 minutes of every half hour based on the truck numbers and hours of arrival. This is a considerable length of time that the roller doors of a supposedly enclosed plastics facility are open. There is understandable concern that this exposure from the open roller doors will contribute substantially to the particulate matter circulating outside of the facility.

Emissions of microplastics during the plastics processing and released into the air could have enormous health risks over time particularly to babies and young children who are more vulnerable to pollutants. There has been and continues to be global research into these pollutants and their effects on human health and it has been established that there are risks to the respiratory system, endocrine system, reproductive system as well as the possibility of the development of cancers, to name but a few of the conclusions of current research. Because the effects are often not immediate, should there be ‘clusters’ of health problems into the future, residents are well aware that the proponents and advocates of this project will NEVER take responsibility for their ill-advised scheme, and, indeed, the local residents would in effect covertly be used as guinea pigs.

3. WATER POLLUTION AND CONTAMINANTS

As stated above, there are riparian zones in close proximity to the east and west of the facility. The chemicals used during the processing of the plastics, and waste from the plastics themselves will be released into this riparian zone which flows into the Wingecarribee River and thence to the Warragamba Dam with disastrous results to, not only the local area but to the water supply of Sydney itself. With the recent scandal of the high PFAS levels in the Medlow and Greave Creek Dams in the Blue Mountains, the effects of chemical cocktails released ultimately into the Warragamba Dam should justifiably cause enormous concern.

As regards water and airborne pollutants, both the DPHI’s risk assessment and GHD’s EIS are unacceptable, sketchy, peppered with numerous waivers and disclaimers and require further rigorous research by an independent body, such that residents of the Southern Highlands are assured that such pollutants are DEFINITELY not a risk to public health. If such assurance cannot be provided by both the DPHI and the EPA, it will stand as proof that there are indeed significant risks and that the outcry against such a project is more than justified.

In a recent EPA report (NSW Plastics: The Way Forward), the EPA stated, and I quote, ‘While evidence is emerging to indicate that microplastics and the chemicals in them may have detrimental impacts on the environment and human health, the nature, extent and severity of these impacts is unknown. However, given the widespread distribution of microplastics in the environment and their ability to enter and accumulate in the food chain, the risks they may pose are concerning’..To ensure we can safely use recovered materials and protect our waterways, plants, animals and communities, we need to take a precautionary approach.’ Why then, are Plasrefine, and the NSW State Government, enabling and proposing a facility which is the furthest removed from a precautionary approach?

4. THE SHIP



With further regard to the unsuitability of the site for the Plasrefine facility, the submission to NSW IPC of 5 November 2024 by the Wingecarribee Shire Council, should be noted. While Plasrefine falls in the E4 General Industrial zone, such compliance does not necessarily justify its suitability within the confines of the SHIP. In fact, the nature of Plasrefine compromises and deters those businesses which were envisaged as being suitable for the SHIP and, as such, will have a detrimental effect on the development of the SHIP. The intention of the SHIP was to be a 'Research, Training and Advanced Manufacturing precinct, building on proximity to existing industries and research and training opportunities. This precinct is anchored by the Garvan Institute Medical research Facility and Southern Highlands Data Campus that are established and functional.' WSC concludes that the establishment of Plasrefine within this precinct undermines 'Council's State-funded strategic framework' for the SHIP to foster an emerging biotechnology sub-precinct at that location.'

5. TRAFFIC

We have been advised that this facility will generate 100+ truck movements per day, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. While there have been modifications to the access route of such trucks, one issue is abundantly clear. There will be an enormous increase of trucks over the entire area, including Douglas Road and Beaconsfield Road, and with heavy truck movement through the residential area along Braddon Road. There are currently 30 dwelling there, and further lots are anticipated. Heavy vehicle traffic will therefore be constant, noisy and relentless through a substantial residential area. Should Plasrefine go ahead, these properties as well as others in the area will be significantly impacted and, should residents choose to sell up and leave, their properties will have been significantly devalued.

6. FIRE

Such facilities are notoriously prone to fire. Recently, a fire burning at the Kempsey recycling plant took several days to be extinguished even with 18 fire units in attendance. With plastics recycling plants, the risk of fire is not a rarity, in fact, a fire occurring in such a facility is not a matter of 'if' but 'when'. The Southern Highlands has woefully inadequate resources to fight such a fire and would need assistance from Campbelltown a good 45 minutes away. Other submissions will no doubt provide the actual statistics of the resources available for fire-fighting on this scale. However, it is clear from spoken and written submissions that the Southern Highlands is not equipped to deal with such a fire.

7. VISUAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

One of the stipulations of the SHIP was to provide an industrial precinct which had minimal adverse visual impact by encouraging buildings with sensitive design, moderate footprints, generous landscaping and buffer zones. Plasrefine will occupy a building with a huge footprint of over 3 hectares. Furthermore it will be 4 storeys high. GHD's design drawings do not include the facility's stacks which will rise 18-22 metres into the air and will be seen from innumerable viewpoints within the Southern Highlands. A plant this unsightly seriously detracts from the renowned beauty of the Southern Highlands and, combined with the desecration of the equally valued clean, country air and water, will have a critical economic impact on the Southern Highlands. Many of the businesses depending on the tourists and visitors from surrounding cities who gravitate towards the area because of its renowned beauty and 'clean' products, will be dramatically affected.

8. SOCIAL IMPACT

For the past four years, the members of the group, Moss Vale Matters, have fought fiercely to oppose this proposal. The recent sudden decision by the NSW State Government to push this proposal through has caused extreme stress within the community, used many hours of dedicated effort by local residents (particularly the Moss Vale Matters group) to mobilise efforts to oppose this ridiculous project, and has caused some residents to re-think their decision to settle in the Southern Highlands. Hours of time by so many residents have been spent opposing this scheme with both spoken and written proposals. This should never have been forced into the hands of local residents with the accompanying stress and anxiety. And this is all prior to the project going ahead, with its CLEAR attendant risks to air, water and hence, health. Should this project be allowed to go



ahead, the community will experience further stress for many years while they fight a legal battle to stop this madness. It would be advisable for all governmental authorities to be reminded of the determination of local residents in the much smaller Southern Highlands community, Berrima, during the 10-year 'Battle for Berrima'. In that particular case, the battle against a Korean Coal Mine was halted. NO-ONE in Moss Vale or in the extended Southern Highlands community will allow the Plasrefine project to go ahead.

9. THE PROPONENTS

Wendy Tuckerman, after her spoken presentation to the IPC, was reprimanded by the Commissioner for expressing her criticism of the proponents of Plasrefine, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] However, I feel compelled to include my objection to these proponents as part of my submission. The credentials of these proponents are such that there is minimal faith or belief in their ability or concern or interest in maintaining the stringent controls which would be necessary for such a project. I feel that these proponents, the very persons who would be responsible for the entirety of the project, are ill-equipped to undertake such a scheme as they have no experience with plastic recycling, and, furthermore, [REDACTED]. We, the local residents who will be subjected to the outcome of their efforts, are expected to simply accept that such proponents will have the best interests of the community at heart. This is a nonsense. A complete nonsense. How such proponents could have been given licence to walk into a local community, propose to build a huge hazardous facility with no experience in the functions of such a facility, using tens of millions of dollars of state government grants, just beggars belief. NSW State Government, shame on you,

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