



NAME REDACTED	OBJECT	Submission ID: 215074
Organisation: N/A	Key issues: Social impacts, Visual impacts, design and landscaping, Land use compatibility (surrounding land uses), Traffic, Other issues	
Location: New South Wales 2577		
Attachment: N/A		

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The purpose of this submission is to object in the strongest possible terms to the Plasrefine plastic recycling proposal, SSD-9409987. I am not a member of the Moss Vale Matters 'No to Plasrefine' group. I am simply an anxious local resident whose heart aches for the life we have known and the future we anticipated.

I have read the transcript of the zoom meeting held on 22/10/24 involving GHD representatives and the IPC panel and my purpose here is to address a number of statements made by GHD which I consider to be factually incorrect.

Firstly GHD states that the Southern Highlands community and especially Moss Vale comprises a 'silent majority' in support of the proposal. Every interaction that I have had in the town in the weeks since the announcement of the recommendation by the DPHI has, without exception, affirmed opposition to the proposal.

It is curious that this supposed silent majority has not found its voice, despite three opportunities to speak at the public meetings convened by the IPC (and for which we are most appreciative) as well as the option of communicating confidentially via written submissions. It is obvious to me that this is sheer mischief because no such silent majority exists.

As for the statement that some residents living close to the site have felt uncomfortable speaking out in support of the proposal, possibly fearing backlash from their 'sensitive receiver' neighbours and friends, I suggest that this is nothing more than a desperate grasping at straws and is quite honestly beneath a firm of the calibre of GHD. Apart from the fact that our community respects our democracy and the right of others to hold a different opinion, residents of my acquaintance in Moss Vale can hardly be described as shrinking violets. They are known to speak their mind plainly and the image of them cowering in a corner is absurd.

Secondly our property is located on the other side of the railway line and backs onto paddocks belonging to the charity Legacy House. Disadvantaged youth from Sydney regularly spend weekends and holidays here in our unspoiled rural setting, away from the temptations of the city.

The first my husband and I heard of this proposal was approximately eighteen months ago, when we noticed several 'NO to Plasrefine' signs near the centre of town. Contrary to GHD's assertion, most Moss Vale residents were unaware of the proposal until recently. In other words, we were not informed of the application by the proponent. As we understand it, only the residents and facilities in immediate proximity to the site were directly contacted via the now infamous letterbox drop of Christmas Eve 2020. It is another untruth to imply that the applicant has engaged with the entire community.

Thirdly the GHD representative for social engagement, or PR, cites 'toxic social media' as having had a negative impact on the progress of the proposal, through 'fear mongering'. Social media has been an important forum for the dissemination of information, which as previously mentioned was not forthcoming from the applicant. Describing it as such is a subjective perspective, with which I do not concur. I consider the NO campaign contributors to have been remarkably measured in their posts and I am thankful to have had access to salient details which were lacking in the pedestrian proposal. Of course it has also been used to galvanise opposition, as is our right, but it is too simplistic to dismiss our use of social media as fear mongering. The use of that term also suggests that the issue is petty or insignificant, neither of which apply to a plastic recycling factory.



Fourthly I take personal umbrage at the accusation that our various community groups have been 'vindictive' toward the applicant. Unfortunately the all important trust was broken at the meeting held in Exeter, where security guards were in attendance at the applicant's initiative. Emotions intensified when attendees were told to write their questions on post-it notes and only a small selection would be answered. When some attendees politely stood to pose a legitimate question or make a comment, the guards advanced in a menacing manner, presumably to intimidate the audience. This was the event which set the tone for future engagement.

On reflection, however, I'm now of the opinion that blame should actually be attributed to GHD. Their brief is to advise their client and formulate and implement strategy. I see GHD's hand behind the guileful letter box drop, micromanaged to ensure residents had no recourse until January 2021. I see their hand behind the confrontational meeting which turned even the most open minded individual into a sceptic. I see their hand behind desperate statements which have been broached in this submission.

We were proud of the NO speakers who addressed the panel. Rather than generalise them as angry NIMBYs, I saw many passionate individuals, sometimes overcome by emotion, but always courteous. It should be no surprise that this application has lead to high emotion in our community.

During Covid when Australians endured lockdown, we were encouraged by health authorities to take regular activity outdoors. This was to be done safely, by maintaining appropriate distance from others. Exercise, we were told, would lessen the mental health issues associated with enforced confinement. Safe outings out of doors in green open spaces were indeed uplifting for mind and body.

Sadly in Moss Vale, we have quite the turnaround now. In response to a sincere question concerning mitigation of health impacts, GHD advised those with respiratory problems to 'stay indoors'. This will go down in infamy as the quote of the campaign. The stupidity of this statement is boggling. And more importantly it also shows that GHD accepts that the process of recycling is intrinsically harmful, despite statements to the contrary. This is what my son would describe as an 'own goal' and was picked up last week by the timely report on A Current Affair in Sydney.

So are Moss Vale residents now to be condemned to a lifetime of isolation, loneliness and mental ill health? Are we to be knowingly discarded as collateral damage because of a foreign owned company's desire to make more money? Are we to be sacrificed by a Labor government driven by a desire to improve its green credentials?

My husband, amongst others, is perplexed that this application has made it this far. Given the overwhelming opposition, the unsuitability of the site, the expert scientific opinion confirming the dubious nature of the process and related health impacts, the fact that it will impact Sydney and Goulburn's water supply, the sloppiness of the proposal, the absence of any significant economic advantage for Australia etc etc, one could be forgiven for expecting the proposal to be declined. I cannot help but suspect that the public has not been made privy to the whole story surrounding this application and for this I hold the [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. Plasrefine does not pass the pub test and our incumbent state government is an accessory.

When we purchased our property in 2006, a relative high up in the corporate world warned that regional areas were often targeted for projects considered undesirable in the city. Our response belied our naivety, as we could not reconcile an area as beautiful as the Highlands and so close to Sydney ever being saddled with noxious heavy industry. It was inconceivable. And yet here we are in November 2024.

I respectfully appeal to the IPC to decline this proposal.

Thank you.
