New South Wales Government
Independent Planning Commission

OSCAR GREENFIELD	**OBJECT**	Submission ID: 215767

Organisation:	*N/A*	Key issues:	*Social impacts,Land use compatibility (surrounding land uses),Traffic,Other issues*
Location:	*New South Wales 2576*		
Attachment:	*Attached overleaf*		

Submission date: 11/19/2024 3:34:34 PM

My name is Oscar Greenfield. I respectfully oppose the proposed Moss Vale plastics recycling facility proposed by the organisation known as Plasrefine in the strongest way possible. My reasons are listed below.

Health & Microplastics

Plasrefine has been unable to confidently quantify the amount of microplastics that will be released from the facility; nor has it been able to describe in any detail the health impact from microplastics. Whilst there is no definitive answer about the full impact on plastics within the human body, recent scientific articles are concerning. Danopoulos et al., 2021, conducted a meta-analysis of seventeen studies which determined that 'Four biological endpoints displayed MP-associated effects: cytotoxicity, immune response, oxidative stress, barrier attributes,'. PrÃ¼st et al., 2020, concluded in their study on neurotoxicity of micro- and nano-plastics that 'plastic particles can induce oxidative stress, inhibit AChE activity, alter neurotransmitter levels, and change behaviour in several species'. Whilst the impacts of this on overall human function is not yet fully understood, it should constitute enough of a health risk to be concerning. My home is within 10 kilometres of the site. Whilst microplastics may not be in high concentrations at my address on a normal day, high winds have the potential to bring potentially concerning concentrations with them to my home. Residents should not have to remain inside their homes on a windy day because of my concern of the impacts that microplastics have on my health.

It is a reasonable assumption that those who work, go to school or live closer to the plasrefine site will have a greater potential for their health to be impacted by the recycling facility. My high school from which I have graduated, Oxley College, is within eyesight of the recycling facility. Moss Vale town centre is two kilometres away, with the local primary school and St Paul's even closer. Many people live within two kilometres. The health risk for these people, I believe, would be unacceptable for the reasonable person to tolerate.

The site is located within the water catchment that feeds the Wingecarribee river, which flows into the Wollondilly River which makes its way into Lake Burragorang, better known as Warragamba Dam. This reservoir supplies by far the majority of drinking water to Sydney. The EIS cannot comprehensively describe the quantity of microplastics entering waterways that feed into Sydney's water supply. Whilst again, the health effects of microplastics are not fully understood, the planning commission should in my opinion enact a precautionary principle when it comes to dealing with the health of 5 million people.

If such a site is necessary for plastics recycling in New South Wales, it should be constructed away from any residential areas, agricultural areas or areas of environmental significance. I believe that this site is not far away enough from these areas, and therefore poses a significant risk to the health of humans living within the area, as well as those in Sydney.

Tourism & Industry

Tourism is recognised as a significant industry in the southern highlands. Destination Southern Highlands reported that in the year ending in December 2023, total domestic tourism expenditure in the region was $448 million, and international expenditure was $13 million (Destination Southern Highlands, 2024). This expenditure by tourists, in my opinion, is largely due to the natural environment of the Southern Highlands. A plastics recycling facility located close to tourist sites is, in my opinion, unsympathetic to the current tourism industry that exists in the southern highlands. I believe that such a facility would have a significant negative

impact on the highlands' tourism industry. I do not agree that the job opportunities created by the recycling facility would offset job losses due to a decline in tourism expenditure.

Agriculture is another significant industry that is threatened by the proposed plastics recycling facility. Farms adjacent to the proposed facility may need to consider removing their crops or livestock due to the potential risk of microplastics contamination in products for human consumption. Many agricultural businesses in the area are able to charge a premium for their products due to the quality of the environment in which their product has come from. I believe that this ability will be hindered by the recycling facility.

Traffic

Plasrefine has been vague when referring to the ~100 truck movements per day. Whilst I realise that traffic results from any new development, I believe that the current road infrastructure is not suitable for a such a large increase in traffic volume. Additionally, site access is via Berrima Road, Lytton Road and Beaconsfield Road. Lytton Road and Beaconsfield Road run through low-density residential areas. For people who live along the transport route, the disruption due to traffic movement will likely make their address unliveable. Berrima Road is an already congested route during peak hours, and this increased volume will push this road past its capacity.

With consideration for traffic, a different site should be chosen that minimises the amount of traffic movements needed. A site with heavy rail connection would be suitable for this. The current chosen site is not.

Environment

Whilst I recognise that plastics recycling is necessary to reduce carbon emissions in the short-term, the phasing out of short-use plastics in New South Wales should be prioritised. Plastic recycling still requires some virgin material in the recycling process, and often produces a lower-quality polymer than a completely new plastic product. The plastics recycling process therefore is not a closed loop, rather it is a reduction in the amount of new material required to make a product.

The recycling facility would also result in the release of some pollution into the air because of the recycling process. Such pollution would include some amounts of vapourised plastics. The proximity of residential sites should be more carefully considered in relation to the airborne pollution than what was stated in the EIS.

The organisation that has submitted the proposal is known to have a tainted track record overseas when it comes to environmental concerns. This has not been addressed in the EIS. This track record should be investigated by the commission before any recommendation(s) are given.

Conclusions

There is overwhelming community opposition to this project; of the 685 submissions as of 19 November at 3pm, over 660 were against the project. My opposition is a genuine concern for health, our tourism industry, traffic impacts and impacts on the environment. I, however, am not a nimby. I support development in the highlands where it has a net positive impact, such as more medium density housing, more commercial and tourism-oriented business and better community amenities. While the Southern Highlands region will inevitably grow over the coming decades and change with this growth, the inclusion of the plastics recycling facility is a step in the wrong direction for the Southern Highlands. I therefore respectfully oppose the proposed recycling facility and believe that under no condition it should be built on the site proposed.

I would like to thank the commission for the ability to make a submission and for the consideration of this objection.

References

Danopoulos, E., Twiddy, M., West, R., & Rotchell, J. M. (2021). A rapid review and meta-regression analyses of the toxicological impacts of microplastic exposure in human cells. Journal of Hazardous Materials, 427, 127861. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhazmat.2021.127861

Destination Southern Highlands. (2024). Southern Highlands Tourism Snapshot. Destination Southern Highlands Research. https://d32u4bcfuuhhgy.cloudfront.net/uploads/2024/10/Tourism-Snapshot-Year-Ending-December-2023.pdf

PrÃ¼st, M., Meijer, J., & Westerink, R. H. S. (2020). The plastic brain: neurotoxicity of micro- and nanoplastics. Particle and Fibre Toxicology, 17(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12989-020-00358-y

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