



DONNA COOPERTHWAITE

OBJECT

Submission ID: 216615

Organisation: <i>Southern Highlands Motor Group</i>	Key issues: <i>Social impacts, Traffic, Other issues</i>
Location: <i>New South Wales 2577</i>	
Attachment: <i>N/A</i>	

Submission date: 11/21/2024 11:28:55 AM

Dear Commissioners

I am writing to express my strong opposition to application SSD-9409987.

The PlasRefine development, which will process up to 120,000 tonnes per annum of mixed plastic matter, represents a threat to residents of the Southern Highlands and Sydney. My key concerns relate to health and environmental risks arising from microplastic and other toxic pollution.

It is clear from Australian and international research that plastic recycling contributes significant quantities of microplastics to the surrounding environment, even when best practice mitigation measures are adopted. The science is still emerging, but microplastics have been linked to cancer, asthma, liver and lung disease, dementia and infertility, with children being especially susceptible to health effects. Furthermore, microplastics act as vectors for PFAS, BPA and other toxic chemicals, worsening their health risks.

This site is located near residents, schools and water catchments. The nearest resident is less than 200m from the site, the nearest early childhood centre is 750m and the site is located in a flood-impacted area adjacent to a riparian corridor that runs into Sydney's drinking catchment.

Even if PlasRefine could contain microplastic pollution from the site (which the research suggests is impossible), it cannot prevent the catastrophic pollution that would result in the case of a fire. Fires are common in plastics recycling facilities due to the high flammability of plastic products. A fire at this site would result in major microplastic and other toxic pollution that would ultimately impact Sydney's drinking water due to the site's location.

The development also sits next door to Australian BioResources (ABR), a not-for-profit organisation making a unique contribution to biomedical research in Australia. I note that ABR has expressed concern about the potential impacts of noise, vibration, and particulate and noxious gas emissions on its mice. Any threat to this world-leading research is unacceptable.

This is clearly not the right site for a development of this nature and scale. Given the significant risks arising from microplastic and other toxic pollution, plastics recycling facilities need to be thoughtfully located in appropriate industrial precincts with adequate buffers from residents, schools and drinking catchments.

In this case, the threat of environmental damage is both serious and irreversible. The Commission should apply the precautionary principle and refuse the application as proposed.

No amount of mitigation measures can resolve the fundamental flaw presented by the lack of site suitability. This is quite simply not the right site.