



BABETTE HAYES OAM

OBJECT

Submission ID: 218520

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: N/A	

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To Whom It May Concern,

I object to the proposed plastic recycling refinery in Moss Vale on the following grounds:

It is too close to residential areas, within approx. 200 metres from peoples homes “ high risk of human, residential and animal/wildlife loss in event of fire. The proposed site is in a high risk fire zone. The information they submitted was not current with regard to the current fire zoning.

Too close to riparian zones “ only 10m approx., either side of the building, to streams that feed into the Wingecarribee River. Potential water run-off containing microplastics may enter the Wingecarribee River, which feeds into the Warragamba Dam (which provides Sydney and Goulburn™s drinking water). Greatest risk may be from failure of water filtration processes. Uncertain long-term risk of microplastics but certainly theoretical potential for multiple medical health issues.

Too close to schools, with several schools and childcare centres within an approx 2 km radius. Potential risk/harm to human health in event of fire/explosion, failure of water/air filtration processes.

Increased heavy vehicle traffic creating noise pollution, air pollution, dust, vibration, potential accidents, potential fatalities of wildlife, increased degradation of roads.

Increased vehicular traffic from worker light vehicles entering and exiting the site creating noise, dust, potential accidents, vibration, etc.

Potential environmental impact of air pollution from the tacks™ (or vents) that may be released from the ventilation system in the event of a malfunction/failure of the current air filtration processes. In the event of a failure of process, these fumes could include volatile organic compounds (VOCs) or other hazardous toxins that may be harmful to health.

Removal of habitat for the endangered species such as the microbat recorded by the EPA “ this bat is on the red list for endangered species. Potential disturbance to platypus habitats during building and operation of site. Run-off may increase water sedimentation and cause riverbank erosion diminishing habitat of local downstream platypus. A state government grant of \$500,000 to Wingecarribee Shire Council was recently received to monitor and collect data on our platypus population, another endangered species (Southern Highlands Platypus Conservation Project).

Other potential biodiversity loss includes removal of tableland swamp meadows, removal of mountain grey gums, removal of habitat for southern myotis and large bent winged bat “listed as endangered and vulnerable, respectively. Other direct and indirect impacts due to vegetation removal on birds, insects, frogs, reptiles, koalas and kangaroos, and eastern long necked turtle (chelodina longicollis).

Plastic recycling refineries are usually classed as heavy industrial, due to risk of air/water pollution in event of failure of safety processes and extremely high fire risk. There have been over 19 devastating fires associated with plastics facilities since 2019 in Australia alone. The question of fire is not if, but when. We do not have the fire fighting ability to respond and take control if a fire should break out. Our local fire services are very small. Moss Vale station is unmanned and entirely voluntary, with only one fire truck. There are only 4 trucks and 1



hazmat vehicle in the Highlands “ others are 76km away at Campbelltown (50 mins in no traffic), Goulburn (45 mins in no traffic) or further at Shellharbour. And as mentioned previously it is in a high risk fire zone.

It should not be placed in an area renowned for its viticulture, agritourism and close to the most preserved Georgian village (Berrima) on mainland Australia. It will be detrimental to the local tourist industry.

Chemicals in plastic are potent environmental pollutants “ how will these emissions be safely monitored? What will be done if they are found to be over safe limits?

The safe acceptability limit for Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in drinking water is currently being reviewed in many countries around the world. The NHMRC (National Health and Medical Research Council) is the Australian Government™s primary health and medical research funding agency “ it is critical in influencing policy decisions made by the federal and state governments of Australia. The NHMRC recently released proposed new drinking water guidelines for public consultation, which recommend lower values for PFAS in drinking water across Australia, which the NSW Government has welcomed (NSW Government welcomes NHMRC proposed guidelines on drinking water and PFAS | NSW Government).

Do residents have to live with odours which may be carried by winds as far as Bowral, Berrima and beyond?

Psychological impacts and property devaluation “ the proposed buildings will be the size of Bunnings stores and there is no buffer zone for the nearby residents. This will have a negative impact on their property values and enjoyment of their properties, potentially causing stress and subsequent mental health issues. The plastic recycling refinery in Parkes NSW has a buffer zone of at least 7km.

Human rights “ it is a basic human right to have access to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Australia was, until recently, the only liberal democracy in the world that did not have a national act to protect its citizens™ basic rights. However, in an Australian first, a new human rights (healthy environment) amendment bill to the legislative assembly was passed on 26 October 2023. This law obligates the government to address harm and to fulfil the rights to health, clean air, safe water, non-toxic environments to live in and a healthy ecosystem. Other states will follow. How will the NSW State government address this seemingly paradoxical issue “ will it close Plasrefine once it has already been built? A copy of the bill and the explanatory statement is available at https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/b/db_68569/

In terms of safety, being approx. 200m from residential homes, 50m from the ABR and 10m away from key riparian zones is too close “ THIS IS SIMPLY NOT THE RIGHT SITE from a risk perspective.

Plastics can generally only be recycled 2-3 times, with increasing hazardous chemicals building up with each recycling process. At the end of this 2-3 x cycle, plastics will end up in landfill (so recycling is not a good long-term solution, as it only delays the landfill issue).

We should focus on reducing plastic waste by rejecting plastic packaging in the first place “ putting pressure on large supermarket chains, the government and companies to reduce plastic packaging at the core of the issue. This is actually where the government needs to focus their attentions, not by allowing millions of plastic bottles/packageing to be produced with no good solution for dealing with the consequences.

Yours Sincerely,

Babette Hayes OAM
