



**ERNIE MARTON**

**OBJECT**

Submission ID: 218399

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 2576	
Attachment: N/A	

Submission date: 11/25/2024 3:53:10 PM

*Thank you for giving me the opportunity to make my position known on the proposed Industrial Facility Plasrefine in Moss Vale.*

*My concerns and objections are extensive. After much research which also included listening to the presentations made at the recent meetings in Bowral at the Memorial Hall where the NSW Independent Planning Commission was listening to members of our community speak about their concerns.*

*I am very concerned that the proposed 7.7-hectare site is less than 250 metres from homes and farmland, with a development footprint of 6 hectares and a building footprint of 3.24 hectares. It includes two massive buildings, one as tall as a five-storey structure, and a new 1,050-metre-long north-south access road. This site is far too close to residential areas (within approximately 200 metres) and puts residents at high risk. There is a very real concern about the risk of human, residential and animal/wildlife loss in event of fire as toxic smoke will spread through the whole highlands community because of prevailing winds. The facility is also too close to schools, with several schools and childcare centres within an approximate 2 km radius. There is massive potential risk/harm to human health in event of fire/explosion, or failure/malfunction of water/air filtration processes. The industrial-scale operation will erode the area's rural charm, natural beauty, and tourism appeal. It also conflicts with the Southern Highlands Innovation Park master plan objectives. This is an area renowned for its viticulture, agritourism and close to Berrima which is the most preserved Georgian village on mainland Australia. Also it will be detrimental to the local tourist industry as information about the risks associated with this industry, especially the untested proponents and processes, spreads like micro plastics. "The proposed amount of traffic is also very concerning. There will allegedly be up to 100 large truck movements daily, one every seven minutes, along with 280 light trucks and staff vehicle movements, raising issues about noise, congestion, and road safety. Increased heavy vehicle traffic creating noise pollution, air pollution, dust, vibration, potential accidents, inevitable fatalities of wildlife, potential importation of weeds from other areas, along with hugely increased degradation of roads at ratepayers expense.*

*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 (which has happened at established plastics reprocessing facilities), these fumes would include volatile organic compounds (VOCs) or other hazardous toxins that may be seriously harmful to health. Why on earth are there massive exhaust stacks and vents anyway if waste, fumes and byproducts are supposedly safe and contained?"*

*There is also the matter of the proximity to the Garvan Institute (the ABR, Australian BioResources facility), which is only 50m away, which will be a high risk to human and animal loss in event of fire, the noise and vibration is highly likely to disrupt the breeding cycle of the research mice. The ABR is a world class state-of-the-art facility for breeding and holding mice critical for medical research into the fields of cancer, mental illness, arthritis, asthma, heart disease, diabetes, obesity and genetic conditions. It seems totally unreasonable to allow a facility to be built that could cause a risk to an established, important business such as the Garvan Institute.*

*We must also consider the environmental risks presented by this facility. It will be located in Sydney™s drinking water catchment zone, the facility poses risks of plastic particle pollution, endangering water quality, wildlife, and public health. I am concerned about the removal of habitat for the microbat recorded by the EPA, this bat*



is on the red list for endangered species and the inevitable 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 remaining platypus population, another endangered species (Southern Highlands Platypus Conservation Project). I have been privileged to see a platypus on more than one occasion and I feel that this opportunity to see platypus in their natural environment is extremely important for future generations and should not be put at risk by an ill-advised and dubious siting of a major industrial facility. 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 which are 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. This complex is far too close to riparian zones approximately 10metres either side of the building, these streams 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. The greatest risk may be from failure of water filtration processes. Also uncertain long term risk of microplastics but certainly theoretical potential for multiple medical health issues.™™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. 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 brigades are 76km away at Campbelltown, 50 minutes away at best and Goulburn which is 45 minutes away when there is no traffic, or even further at Shellharbour. The fires that occur in these facilities are common, with temperatures reaching 1000 degrees centigrade (see information on Hume, ACT fire in December 2022). It is usual for much smaller facilities to require 80+ firefighters, 15 pump trucks and 6 hazmat vehicles and still they are unable to extinguish them, having to let them burn out in their own time with toxic plumes billowing for days. In the interim, residents, schools and businesses must evacuate due to the thick black toxic fumes and smoke which is hazardous to health, if not potentially lethal. Fires fuelled by plastic waste may release dioxins, benzene, hydrogen cyanide, cyanide, chlorine, carbon monoxide and VOCs into the environment. Breathing in these fumes has the potential to cause asthma deaths, potential sarcoidosis, cancer, nervous system disorders, genetic impacts, developmental impacts, leukaemia and reproductive disorders down the time-line. This is of particular impact to the vulnerable, namely elderly and very young residents, also those with respiratory illnesses.

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

Chemicals in plastic are potent environmental and biological pollutants “ how will these emissions be safely monitored? What will/can be done if they are found to be over safe limits? This facility should not be in the Southern Highlands Innovation Park (SHIP) precinct. This future developmental area was earmarked for biotech industries, research, agri-research, light industry and the like, and was set to become a major economic driver for our shire and future employment. It will be detrimental to the long-term plan for the SHIP as it will deter the SHIP from attracting innovative, sustainable businesses (particularly in the Research & Advanced Manufacturing sub-precinct who will not desire to set up next to a complex with potential huge fire risk, large numbers of heavy vehicles coming and going on the shared roads and potential air/water contamination in the event of compromised filtration processes. Important participants have already withdrawn from the SHIP



*due to the increasing threat of the Plasrefine debacle being rammed through.*

*Residents are being asked to live with odours which may be carried by winds as far as Bowral, Berrima and beyond. This facility will adversely affect residents in many ways. There will be psychological impacts and property devaluation has been brutal already, the proposed facility 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 property values and enjoyment of properties, potentially causing stress and subsequent mental health issues to property owners. The plastic recycling refinery in Parkes NSW has a 7 kilometre buffer zone.*

*Surely 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 the ACT. How will the NSW State government address this paradoxical issue, will it close Plasrefine once it has already been built with taxpayer funding?*

*When the recycling facility closes, will Plasrefine remediate the land at their cost or do we the taxpayer™s have to foot the bill twice, once to set it up and secondly to clean it up? In terms of safety, being approx. 200m from residential homes, 50m from the ABR and 10m away from key riparian zones is too close from a risk perspective. "*

*The general public has been lead to believe that recycling is what should be undertaken, however public service announcements state, œrefuse, reduce, reuse, recycleœ. Recycling is the very last thing we need to be doing, Australians need to reduce their consumption of plastics and we need the government to find a new way forward, we have started to ban some single use plastic but it is not enough and the replacement for single use plastic can sometimes be more problematic. We should focus on reducing plastic waste by rejecting plastic packaging in the first place, by 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/packaging to be produced with no good solution for dealing with the consequences. 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 and multiplies the amount and effect of micro/nano plastics released into our environment).*

*Thank you again for this opportunity.*

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