



JANE IRONS

OBJECT

Submission ID: 218503

Organisation: N/A	Key issues: Social impacts, Other issues
Location: New South Wales 2577	
Attachment: Attached overleaf	

Submission date: 11/25/2024 4:45:22 PM

I've lived in the Highlands for over 50 years. Four generations of my family have enjoyed the Wingecarribee River and its beautiful environment. We have enjoyed fishing, canoeing and swimming in the Wingecarribee River and taking long walks along its banks for half a century. My husband used to regularly photograph the river in all its seasons too. My children and grandchildren also live in the area today. Indeed, my grandson attends the Southern Highlands Early Childhood Learning Centre, which is 700 metres from the proposed Plasrefine site.

I understand and fully support waste management as essential to the protection of the environment, human health and the quality of life for current and future generations. However, the detrimental effects of microplastic pollution on water quality and the impacts on our social connection to the river are my key concerns about the Plasrefine site.

Water Quality points

- Spills and mishandling are the main cause for plastic feedstock entering the environment. Feedstock ends up in stormwater systems, waterways and drinking water for human consumption, thereby entering our food chain and impacting human health. Once plastic materials get into the environment, removal is time consuming, expensive, and never entirely successful.*
- Operation Clean Sweep NSW (NSW Environment Protection Authority Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy initiative, 2023) contains guidelines to manage plastic feedstock loss and pollution. However, the manual notes that plastic loss cannot be eliminated entirely (Operation Clean Sweep, Program Manual, p.26).*

Why would NSW Department of Planning, Housing & Infrastructure (DPHI) approve a plastic refinery within a water catchment when the NSW Government and plastics industry know that microplastics entering the environment and waterways are inevitable and cannot be eliminated entirely?

- The NSW Government is undertaking a Broadscale Microplastic Assessment (BMA, 2024) of estuaries and catchments to provide a dataset for microplastic water contamination, as microplastics are a high-priority threat item. One of the aims of the assessment is to determine which plastics are contributing to microplastic contamination for NSW. At this time, the Wingecarribee Catchment is not on the targeted list of estuaries and catchments.*

However, why would the DPHI approve a plastic refinery in a water catchment when the catchment is not a current assessable microplastic contamination area? Keep our catchment clean!

- Our shire falls within the Wingecarribee Catchment and WaterNSW requires that all proposed developments in this catchment have a neutral or beneficial effect (NorBE) on water quality, including through the construction and operation phases. Further, State Significant Developments require the preparation of an EIS [Environmental Impact Statement], which involves undertaking detailed technical studies in accordance with relevant Government guidelines.*

How can the Plasrefine site go ahead when the DPHI decision will contravene NorBE water quality and government guidelines?



New South Wales Government
Independent Planning Commission

The effects of inevitable microplastic pollution from the Plasrefine site in the Wingecarribee Catchment will have a detrimental impact on water quality, on the people who live and work here and on my family who has enjoyed the water quality of the Wingecarribee River for four generations.

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