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OBJECT

Submission ID: 217942

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 2034	
Attachment: N/A	

Submission date: 11/25/2024 7:22:55 AM

RE: DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION FOR MOSS VALE PLASTICS RECYCLING FACILITY

### Introduction

I am a resident of Sydney, NSW and a frequent visitor to the Southern Highlands. My family has several close friends who live, attend school and work in the area. I regularly visit the area to catch up with friends and enjoy weekends away in the heritage towns, to attend festivals, local events and concerts, to enjoy the tourist attractions and boutique shopping, and to experience the beautiful surrounds, native rainforests and iconic lookouts and waterfalls that the Southern Highlands has to offer. I strongly object to the current Development Application (DA) proposal for a PlasRefine plastics recycling facility in Moss Vale NSW, because of the severe adverse effects it will have on the locals, tourists and wider community. I have studied the documents related to the proposed development, and conclude that there are too many unknowns and public safety issues for the NSW Independent Planning Commission and State Government to reasonably accept this Development Application. My concerns are outlined below:

#### 1.0 Location, Character and Context

Moss Vale is the enchanting rural centre of the Southern Highlands. An historical town with a population of 9,497, Moss Vale is nestled among rolling farmlands, vineyards, and picturesque gardens. It boasts breathtaking scenery, culinary delights and historic architecture.

The sheer scale and bulk of the proposed plastics recycling facility is not appropriate to its context and will appear grossly out of character when viewed in its context of historical buildings and residential properties in the vicinity. It is also in conflict with the desired future character for the locality and will appear jarring and incompatible in the context of the surrounding development.

The proposed facility lies within the town's border, less than 200 metres from residences and in close proximity to large historic townships, farmland, schools and medical facilities. The site is located in a flood impacted area, adjacent to a riparian corridor within Sydney's water catchment. This location is totally inappropriate for the proposed development. For a plastics recycling facility of this scale and magnitude, it is only appropriate for it to be located on sites designed for heavy industry and that do not feed into major water catchments.

#### 2.0 Hazards

In contrast to other materials, plastic is not easily recyclable. Furthermore, the large majority of plastic products are not, and likely cannot be, recycled. The recycling of plastic is extremely hazardous for numerous reasons.

#### Risk to People

Plastics Recycling poses significant health risks to humans, because plastic is highly toxic, and its toxicity increases when recycled. Plastics are made up of over 13,000 different chemicals, including phthalates, and over 3,200 of them are hazardous to human health.

Plastics recycling is a leading source of microplastics pollution. This pollution adversely impacts the air and waterways. Australian researchers have estimated that between 620,000-3,200,000 tonnes of microplastics



*may have been unintentionally generated by recycling globally. The release of these excessive microplastics results in the accumulation of microplastics in human organs, particularly the brain which has been found to contain up to 30 times more microplastics. Research clearly shows a trend whereby, as plastic pollution increases, so does the plastic accumulation in our organs. Microplastics carry pathogens, antibiotics and synthetic hormones. They also play a role in facilitating the emergence of infectious diseases. They are risk factors for disease and illness such as, cancer, dementia, asthma, lung disease, liver disease and infertility.*

*The plastic recycling process results in the release of excessive respirable airborne microplastics and nanoplastics, making the recycling facilities significantly dangerous environments for workers, residents and visitors in the surrounding areas.*

#### *Risk to Environment*

*The exceedingly high levels of microplastics that are generated and released into the air during the plastic recycling process pose severe threats to the environment. It has been estimated that the proposed plant's washing facilities would discharge 16,000 litres of water into the sewerage each day, however, the Moss Vale Sewage Treatment Plant lacks a specialised system for removing these microplastics. This would consequently result in the excessive presence of microplastics in the treated effluent, which ultimately flows into the Sydney Water Drinking Catchment. The proposed site is only 10m away from streams that lead into the Wingecarribee River, a river that leads into the Warragamba dam which is Sydney's drinking water.*

*It is imperative that the NSW Independent Planning Commission and State Government seek an alternate location for the proposed Plastics Recycling facility. Any such facility should be situated at a sufficient distance from residential areas and waterways to prevent contamination of major water catchments.*

#### *3.0 Threat of Fire*

*Due to the high flammability of plastic products, a facility such as the one proposed, is a severe fire hazard, and in turn, a critical health and safety risk. An ongoing plastics fire is likely to cause catastrophic devastation and pollution. Given fires are inevitable at plastic recycling facilities, any site for a proposal of this scale must be located in a heavy industrial zone, not on a site that has residents 200 metres away.*

#### *4.0 Impact on Tourism*

*The Southern Highlands is celebrated for its agriculture, wineries and organic produce. The proposed DA, however, directly threatens the quality and safety of this produce, due to the excessive generation of microplastics. This subsequently impacts tourism, business and the economy of the Southern Highlands.*

*An oversized, out-of-place plastics recycling facility would have a significant impact on the aesthetics of the Southern Highland and, in turn, negatively impact on tourism and local economy.*

#### *5.0 Public Interest and Safety*

##### *Traffic and Vehicles*

*A major public safety issue is the operation of construction vehicles for excavation and building supplies, as well as the estimated 380 vehicles and numerous heavy semi-trailers that would be accessing the facility a day. There is a critical public safety issue created by the consistent movement of vehicles to and from the site and throughout the Local Government Area, which will operate close to residential homes, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including School Zone times.*

##### *Noise and Vibration*

*The extremely large excavation and construction required during the proposed build for this huge site, in addition to the 24 hour operation of the facility, is likely to have significant ramifications related to noise and vibration, for neighbouring properties. There are serious concerns about ground vibrations disturbing the*



ground surrounding neighbouring residential buildings. There are also valid concerns around noise and the impact noise from a 24 hour facility will have on the nearby residents.

#### 6.0 Sewerage

There are significant concerns about the significant impact the proposed facility will have on the existing sewerage system. This new development will increase the pressure on the sewerage system, potentially leading to overload.

#### CONCLUSION

In summary, I strongly object to the proposed DA. After careful consideration of the facts, I am greatly concerned about the cumulative impact the overdevelopment of this site will have on the health and safety of humans and wildlife, the environment, and the interests of the local and wider community. This current DA poses numerous critical issues for public safety that need to be clarified prior to any approval consideration by the NSW Independent Planning Commission and the State Government. Local residents and the wider community are entitled to be made aware of the potential extent and severity of the health and environmental impacts of the current DA. The community needs to be informed of the types of protections that will be employed, and the potential impact of such systems on their health, environment and their properties, prior to any consideration of the Development Application.

In my opinion, the multiple health and environmental risks, and the apparent lack of consideration and communication with impacted locals, make it impossible for the NSW Independent Planning Commission and State Government to consider the approval of this Development Application for a plastics recycling facility in Moss Vale.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my submission.

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