



NAME REDACTED

OBJECT

Submission ID: 218417

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	

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I write to register my formal opposition to the proposed Plasrefine plastic recycling facility in Moss Vale. As a Commonwealth public servant and writer residing in Bowral, I have significant concerns about the broader implications this \$88-million development would have for our region's future sustainability, economic development, and environmental integrity.

Of particular concern is the apparent contradiction between this proposal and the carefully developed Southern Highlands Innovation Park (SHIP) draft master plan. The SHIP precinct was specifically designed to attract biotech industries, research facilities, and sustainable enterprises that would enhance our region's economic profile. The introduction of a heavy industrial facility processing 120,000 tonnes of plastic annually would fundamentally undermine this strategic vision and deter the very businesses we aim to attract.

The environmental governance aspects of this proposal are especially problematic. The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's recommendation for approval appears to have relegated critical operational and safety considerations to post-approval conditions rather than addressing them during the assessment phase. This approach to environmental and safety management is particularly concerning given the facility's proximity to sensitive riparian zones - merely 10 metres from waterways feeding into the Wingecarribee River system.

Working from home, as many professionals in our region do, I am acutely aware of the environmental qualities that make the Southern Highlands attractive to knowledge workers and creative professionals. The proposed facility, with its acknowledged operational issues such as five-hour daily door openings and potential microplastic releases, threatens to compromise the very attributes that have drawn a growing professional community to this area.

The fire safety implications are particularly concerning from a risk management perspective. The facility's scale and nature, combined with Moss Vale's limited firefighting capacity (one unmanned, volunteer-operated truck), presents an unacceptable risk profile. This is especially pertinent given the documented history of 19 significant fires at Australian plastic facilities since 2019. The contrast with the Parkes facility's 7-kilometre buffer zone makes the proposed 200-metre separation from residential areas appear remarkably inadequate.

Furthermore, the proposal conflicts with recent legislative recognition of Australians' right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. As someone familiar with public policy, I find it difficult to reconcile this development with our evolving environmental protection frameworks and obligations.

The potential impact on our region's tourism and agricultural sectors cannot be overlooked. The Southern Highlands' reputation for viticulture and agritourism has been carefully cultivated over generations. The presence of Australia's largest plastic recycling facility near the heart of Moss Vale would irreparably damage this brand positioning. The proximity to over 50 local vineyards, some within 200 metres of the site, presents both practical and reputational risks to our region's agricultural sector.

The proposal also raises serious questions about long-term environmental liability. The documented presence of endangered species, including the microbat and platypus colonies (the subject of a recent \$500,000 state government conservation grant), suggests potential conflicts with our biodiversity protection obligations. The risk of microplastic contamination in our waterways, acknowledged even by the project's consultants, could have far-reaching consequences for both environmental and public health.



While I acknowledge the importance of recycling infrastructure in our transition to a circular economy, the location of such facilities must be determined through careful strategic planning that considers long-term regional development objectives. This proposal, despite its laudable aims, represents a significant departure from the considered development pathway outlined in the SHIP master plan and endorsed by both local government and community stakeholders.

I urge the Commission to reject this proposal and maintain the integrity of our region's strategic planning framework. The long-term costs to our community's environmental, economic, and social fabric far outweigh any perceived benefits of this inappropriately sited industrial development.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns.
