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OBJECT

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Location: New South Wales 2576	
Attachment: N/A	

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Dear Commissioners

I am writing to express my strong opposition to application SSD-9409987.

The PlasRefine development, which will process up to 120,000 tonnes per annum of mixed plastic matter, represents a threat to residents of the Southern Highlands such as myself.

It is clear from scientific research that plastic recycling contributes significant quantities of microplastics to the surrounding environment, even when best practice mitigation measures are adopted. The science is still emerging, but microplastics have been linked to cancer, asthma, liver and lung disease, dementia and infertility, with children being especially susceptible to health effects. Furthermore, microplastics act as vectors for PFAS, BPA and other toxic chemicals, worsening their health risks.

This site is located near residents, schools and water catchments. The nearest resident is less than 200m from the site, the nearest early childhood centre is 750m and the site is located in a flood-impacted area adjacent to a riparian corridor that runs into Sydney™s drinking catchment. Plus there is a significant research facility right next door (ABR).

Even if PlasRefine could contain microplastic pollution from the site (which the research suggests is impossible), it cannot prevent the terrible pollution that would result if there was a fire. Fires are common in plastics recycling facilities due to the high flammability of plastics. A fire at this site would result in major microplastic and other toxic pollution that could spread for many kilometres around the site. I note that in the Indiana plastics recycling fire of 2023, ash debris was found in people's home 9.6 km away. This is a high wind area that could carry toxic substances great distances.

This is clearly not the right site for a development of this nature and size. Given the significant risks arising from microplastic and other toxic pollution, plastics recycling facilities need to be carefully located in appropriate heavy industrial areas with adequate buffers from residents, schools and drinking catchments.

In this case, the threat of environmental damage is both serious and irreversible. The Commission should apply the precautionary principle and refuse the application as proposed.

No amount of mitigation measures can resolve the fundamental flaw presented by the lack of site suitability. This is quite simply not the right site.

Yours sincerely

Harry Keats