



NATHALIE SWAINSTON

OBJECT

Submission ID: 218428

Organisation: N/A	Key issues: <i>Social impacts, Land use compatibility (surrounding land uses), Traffic, Other issues</i>
Location: <i>New South Wales 2577</i>	
Attachment: N/A	

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I am writing to voice my strong objection to the proposed Moss Vale Plastics Recycling Facility. I do so as both a member of the local community, and a representative for Parents for Climate, Australia™s leading climate advocacy organisation for parents, carers, families who believe that our children deserve to be safe at home, at school and at play now and into the future - and this development is at odds with that sentiment.

I live in Moss Vale with my husband, and our two young children - the youngest of whom attends the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] which is just several hundred metres down the road from this proposed development.

There is no denying Australia has a plastics problem. And solutions to limit its impact on the environment, and manage its use, re-use and safe disposal are critical. But we cannot try and solve one environmental problem, by creating another one.

It is astounding to me that the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure - whose stated mission is to ensure that NSW is livable and prosperous by delivering thriving communities, public spaces, places and economies - seeks to address its recycling challenges with a company that has NO track record of safe plastic recycling and manufacturing in Australia - and in a location just a couple of hundred metres from where children live, learn and play. Especially when the dangers of plastics to the environment and human health are becoming clearer every day.

Hundreds of peer reviewed scientific studies have found that residents living near plastics recycling and manufacturing facilities have higher rates of respiratory illnesses, cardiovascular diseases, and some forms of cancer compared to those living farther away. Many studies also demonstrate increased rates of adverse birth outcomes and that children have higher rates of asthma and other respiratory conditions, likely due to increased exposure to air pollutants such as the millions of kilos of microplastic dust emitted each year in recycling factories studied so far. When it comes to plastics manufacturing and recycling the research is clear: proximity is the poison.

These known and well documented risks alone should be cause for concern. However there is also the issue of pollution and contamination of water runoff. The proposed site sits within 10m of riparian zones, with potential water run-off from the factory entering the Wingecarribee River, and subsequently into the Warragamba Dam affecting millions more than those in our local area.

Also cause for concern is the risk of transport pollution both during the construction and operation of the factory. A recent report released by The Climate Council found that Children are more vulnerable to the harms of air pollution due to their physiology, size and behaviour. Those who live, learn or play near busy roads, factories or industrial areas are at greater risk. In 2021, air pollution is estimated to have been responsible for almost seven times as many disability adjusted life years (the number of healthy years lost to poor health) as exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke among Australian children aged 0-14. And children exposed to air pollution, including from heavy vehicles, face an increased risk of asthma.

Nevertheless, the NSW Government has recommended this factory to operate within close proximity to children and their families and carers, with hundreds of truck movements each day. And in one of the windiest, most natural disaster prone regions in Australia.



It seems at the very least, that while the precautionary principle is supposed to be a key component in environmental and public health policy - it has been ignored in recommending this project. The precautionary principle states that preventive action should be taken in the face of uncertainty and potential risks. Given the risks and impacts from communities that have gone before us have been well documented, I would like to understand how the Department proposes to reconcile these conflicts? The National EPBC Act; the Protection of the Environment Operations Act in NSW - both these Acts incorporate the precautionary principle, emphasising the need to prevent environmental damage when there are threats of serious or irreversible harm, even if full scientific certainty is lacking.

Our children are already having to live with the burden of a more hostile climate and all the risks and challenges that will bring. The CSIRO™s 2024 State of the Climate outlined how Australia is already facing an increase in extreme heat events, longer fire seasons, and more intense heavy rainfall. This changing climate is not only increasing risks for health, happiness and safety for our children into the future, but creates a number of immediate risks to the safety of this project. Flooding, fire - all these are very real possibilities, and will create long lasting, potentially catastrophic effects to the broader Southern Highlands community and the people who live in it, and whose livelihoods depend on it being safe and healthy.

Our children deserve to know that we will keep them safe based on the best evidence available, and not just do what is easy or convenient. Planning decisions are not abstract affairs - they have consequences that reach far beyond the walls in which the decisions are made.

This Panel™s decision will have a direct impact on the health of my children, their community and the environment. I urge you to find a more remote home for the proposed facility - a safe and significant distance away from where any person works, learns, lives or plays.
