



PETER SHORT

OBJECT

Submission ID: 218126

Organisation: N/A	Key issues: <i>Social impacts, Visual impacts, design and landscaping, Land use compatibility (surrounding land uses), Traffic, Other issues</i>
Location: <i>New South Wales 2576</i>	
Attachment: <i>Attached overleaf</i>	

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please see attached uploaded file

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Plasrefine has engaged GHD Pty Ltd of Sydney to prepare all the necessary reports to justify its proposed development.

The development is described by GHD as the construction and operation of a plastics recycling and reprocessing facility plant at a capital investment value of more than \$30 million with the capacity to receive up to 120,000 tonnes per year of mixed plastics. The report then states that the direct capital investment value is \$88million.

The report does not indicate how much of this 120,000 tonnes will be recycled. Some facilities have reported that only 9% of its tonnage is recycled. What happens to the balance?

In its report is states in regard to contamination of soils and water: “The potential risk from contamination is therefore considered acceptably low.”

That means that there is still some risk of contamination even if it is low. But what happens if it turns out not to be “low”?

Some reports refer to the fact that plastics are made up of a multitude of toxins that don’t just disappear after recycling. In fact, recent research suggest that plastic may grow in toxicity each time it is recycled.

A 2022 **Greenpeace USA report** revealed that plastic recycling rates in the U.S. are dismally low, at just 5%. Without strict standards for sorting, quality, and destination of plastic waste, much of what is recycled is actually downcycled into lower-quality, less functional materials. Even worse, these recycled plastics often contain higher levels of toxic chemicals, making them less safe for human use.

Additionally, much of the packaging collected for “recycling” in the Global North is exported to the Global South, where inadequate infrastructure and regulations make it difficult to manage the influx of trash from both domestic and foreign sources. Before banning the trade in 2018, China alone imported nearly 8 million tons of plastic waste annually; today, Southeast Asia has become the top destination.

Some interesting points from the Guardian and Greenpeace:

Recycled plastics, the report says, often contain higher levels of chemicals such as toxic flame retardants, benzene and other carcinogens, environmental pollutants including brominated and chlorinated dioxins, and numerous endocrine disruptors that can cause changes to the body’s natural hormone levels.

Waste plastics earmarked for recycling are typically exported from high-income countries to poorer parts of the world

In 2022 Human Rights Watch research found that plastic recycling facility workers and nearby residents can be exposed to harmful chemicals when they inhale toxic dust or fumes emitted during the recycling process, which threatens their right to health. This exposure to air pollution puts workers and residents at the risk of developing significant life-long health conditions, including cancer and reproductive system harms.

Working on the basis that Plasrefine will have to bring in chemicals to deal with the recycling process, that means they will have to bring them in by road over our public roads in the

Southern Highlands. Why do we have to put up with that additional risk if an accident were to occur with one of those trucks? There is also the road usage that will also significantly increase and our roads are not the best at most times.

This proposal has been declared a State Significant Development and has been referred by the Minister to the Independent Planning Commission for determination and is described as this:

Construction and operation of a plastics recycling facility with the capacity to accept and process up to 120,000 tonnes of plastic waste per annum. The facility would also manufacture plastic fibres and resins

Its Reference number is SSD-9409987

The Case Category is Industrial (interestingly not waste management facility)

Decision makers appear to be: Commissioner (Panel Chair) Andrew Mills and Other Commissioners Clare Sykes and Janett Milligan

Who makes decisions on state significant development

This means a committee of 3 persons will decide whether or not to approve the development proposed by Plasrefine.

When the Independent Planning Commission holds a public hearing prior to determining a DA for State significant development **no-one can appeal against the merits of the decision.**

Has this taken the role of democracy where decisions are made by elected council members to anarchy where the decision is made by the State **using 3 decision makers.**

The State should not be making decisions to allow potentially harmful activities to occur in this State and definitely not in the Southern Highlands.

Peter Short

24 November 2024