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OBJECT

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Organisation: N/A	Key issues: <i>Social impacts, Land use compatibility (surrounding land uses), Traffic</i>
Location: New South Wales 2579	
Attachment: N/A	

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As an assessment authority, the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure has failed in its duty of care to our community, and failed to meet any benchmarks for common sense.

There has been no respect or demonstrable care for the quantum of stress placed on residents by recommending the approval of a hazardous industry, at a site where there is no buffer zone from existing, conflicting land uses. It is elemental: you don't risk poisoning where you drink. An ounce of prevention is worth an incalculable amount of cure, with some of the outcomes of this proposal arguably incurable.

Procedural fairness has been afforded to the proponent, but no procedural fairness or decency has been afforded to Wingecarribee Shire Council or the community in this recommendation for approval. The Premier has stated we should "trust the process". How can we trust a process whereby a State Authority such as the DPHI abrogates its assessment responsibilities through the use of emerging, flawed Artificial "Intelligence" (AI) assessment to post-approval management and monitoring of conditions of consent by Council? This is negligent and unfair. Wingecarribee Shire Council's submissions reference site-specific expertise stating and I quote the proposed location is fundamentally inappropriate. The whole point of a State Significant Development is that the State Government accepts responsibility for ensuring boxes are ticked prior to a recommendation. DPHI needs to refer to and respect the professional advice provided by Wingecarribee Shire Council if it is to ensure its assessment is sound and accurate. As will be evident from the submissions made to the Independent Planning Commission, the mismanagement of this proposal by DPHI has undermined community trust in the government.

As is, it is hard to determine what infrastructure issues the Department of Planning has satisfactorily assessed. If we acknowledge Desktop Analysis is fraught with issues, then combining that with the use of emerging AI technology in assessing matters that require careful, not careless consideration, is of additional concern if these troublesome processes are to be given precedence over site specific data and assessment. In one example, on page 27 of the DPHI assessment report, the submission summary states WSC identifies some substantial and positive changes to the proposed development and advises the traffic route is reasonable which is a quote from the DRAFT submission which was then overturned because it was based on a desktop analysis, and a completely different submission rejecting the route and viability of the site was provided post-field survey. No human could have made that error: the draft had DRAFT all over it. The Site description at section 1.2.5 also has the Wingecarribee River flowing upstream into the Reservoir. These inconsistencies are unprofessional, and in view of the responsibilities vested in the DPHI as an assessment authority, could be deemed as negligent.

I would like to see the DPHI take responsibility for the sloppiness of its work and develop a Social Impact Management Plan for itself. Part B (d) speaks to the need for measures to avoid, minimise and mitigate the development's negative social impacts, including specific measures to minimise stress-related impacts in how it executes its responsibilities. Please walk the talk, NSW Government.

I've been working with a core group of about a dozen researchers in the Moss Vale Matters Community since 2021. When this recommendation arrived, one member was caring for her father who has cancer, another's mother had a stroke and she had to fly interstate, one had COVID, another had an operation due and was to be supported by his wife - also a key member, another was preparing to cater at Parliament House for the King and many of these residents adjacent to the site have Post Traumatic Stress Injury (PTSI) from this battle over the last 3 years. I had only been sworn into Council 3 days prior, had just moved house, and was working full-



time. In the first instance we were informed that the community had no more than two weeks to digest all the paperwork to prepare for the IPC, when the proponent and paid staff at GHD each time were given a minimum of 28 days if not more to respond. The pressure was immense, as so seriously dangerous is this proposal that we have had no other choice but to take on unacceptable, highly inappropriate levels of stress and responsibility to help inform the community, busy going about their usual business, that this was recommended.

I would also like to speak to statements made by David Gamble, Senior Technical Director at GHD and Project Director for Plasrefine, during the public forum of the October 30, 2024, Wingecarribee Shire Council meeting, that need to be considered as part of this assessment process. Gamble made this comments in an attempt to in some way sway Council's submission to the IPC.

Mr Gamble made a statement about the facility being 'fully enclosed'. However it is acknowledged in the documents provided to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure that there are roller doors large enough to fit semi trailers that would need to remain open for long enough for trucks to enter and exit amongst other access doors. There are no airlocks for this vehicular access. There are also 33 air vents and an unclear amount of emissions stacks. Significantly, GHD has provided images of the factory for presentation to the DPHI, Wingecarribee Shire Council and our community that are purported to be a true representation of the proposed development, but none of them truly reflect the information in the documents regarding the vents, emissions stacks or heights of the buildings. Combined with statements like the building being 'fully enclosed', it could be suggested that the proponent is attempting to gaslight our community.

Mr Gamble has stated that 'heavy vehicle movements would operate on major roads already approved for heavy vehicles' to avoid impact on local roads'. This is untrue. Part of the route they are relying on is the newly formed Braddon Road: a residential, local road. If they don't use that, they will need to use a section of Beaconsfield Road to which they do not have permission. Mr Gamble's statement that the development avoids impacts on local roads is categorically incorrect. And nowhere is it acknowledged that the state of our roads is abysmal - they are falling apart like soggy biscuits as they were never built for the level of their current usage. This is a further cause for alarm with the number of projected truck movements as the edges are not well-formed, they are considerably pot-holed, and as such they pose a significant safety risk with a higher likelihood of accidents.

Mr Gamble stated that Significant environmental testing and analysis has been done to ensure that any environmental impacts can be mitigated or avoided . As GHD appears not to have conducted the baseline testing required for the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements, this statement appears to be false. And in GHD's response to Submissions it is noted that they will attempt to mitigate unacceptable noise levels for nearby sensitive receivers, occurring 7 days a week, essentially with community engagement. They did light testing at a time when natural light remained, and have stated residents will need to remain indoors to avoid polluted air. If mitigation and avoidance of light pollution is to conduct testing when there is residual daylight, the mitigation of noise pollution is for nearby residents to spend a lifetime wearing ear protection, and the mitigation of air pollution is for residents to spend their lives inside, then that tells you enough about the irreconcilable issues about the lack of buffer zone with adjacent sensitive receivers in this selected site.

Mr Gamble stated that they had conducted extensive community engagement. If that was the case, nearby residents would not have been unaware until recently that the project was being proposed.

Consistently misleading statements by GHD such as these demonstrate that the Plasrefine proposal is a deeply flawed endeavour.

Perhaps it is the proponent's inexperience in the industry that led them to the rookie error of selecting a site where there was no buffer zone from existing, conflicting land uses. In fairness, the health, safety and wellbeing of our community cannot be risked just because a proponent did not do their appropriate landowner homework



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as to what the essential factors are to assess in land use planning for an industry of this size and nature.
