



ALAN BIRD

OBJECT

Submission ID: 212621

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 2577	
Attachment: N/A	

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When this proposal first came to light in 2020, the land selected for the site, was not deemed bushfire prone. However, this has since changed but has not been addressed by either the proponent nor the DPHI in its assessment. On a global scale, since 2019, there have been over 70 fires in plastics recycling, sorting and reprocessing facilities, resulting in loss of life, injured workers and fire fighters requiring hospitalisation, the dissemination of highly toxic carcinogenic emissions, contaminated waterways and environment, a rise in serious health conditions and in several cases, mass evacuations for indefinite time periods. Australia has not been immune from these dangers, with more than 18 such fires since 2019.

Given the increasing number of fires in such facilities and the dangers they create, I am extremely alarmed and astounded, that a facility of such enormous size could be recommended for approval in a bushfire zone. This is a matrix of two huge factories, some 5 storeys high with ancillary buildings creating an 8-acre footprint. The access for firefighting vehicles is restrictive and the resources of Wingecarribee Shire to deal with such a hazardous fire, are insufficient.

Our Shire has fire stations that are unmanned 24/7 and yet the facility will be operating 24/7. GHD has stated that the first responders will be local firefighting units, coming from Moss Vale, Bowral and Mittagong. That would mean a total of only 3 Class 2 fire trucks and 1 hazmat tanker from Mittagong. In a potentially catastrophic fire, time is critical. GHD states that IF additional support is required, it would need to be sourced from stations that are almost an hour away. That is not an IF, but a WHEN, as shown by previous experience.

An unmanned fire station, a factor that has not been considered, is obviously unfamiliar territory for the desktop analysts at GHD. Our first responders require between 7-10 minutes average for turn out time. When this is added to the travel time for each of the units, it means that the closest unit at Moss Vale would take between 13 -16 minutes to attend and the hazmat tanker at Mittagong would take 30 -34 minutes to arrive on scene. Meanwhile, Plasrefine burns, sending clouds of carcinogenic fumes towards our northern towns and villages, as well as impacting the immediate surrounding residents, businesses and the Garvan Institute of medical research (ABR). There is no buffer zone at the proposed location, for this facility.

Plasrefine plans indicate the availability of firefighting equipment within the factories, deemed suitable to combat such an event, although there is no onsite response team mentioned and until AFTER approval, no emergency evacuation or fire management plan in place. Not good enough. The majority of the fires in Australian plastics recycling facilities have not only released toxic emissions into the surrounding communities, but have also required mass evacuations, residents told to keep windows and doors closed to avoid exposure and in many instances, aerial support has been required. I strongly suspect with buildings of this bulk and scale, aerial support is an inevitable scenario also requiring an out of area response taking critical time that simply isn't available.

The proposed location sits on undulating land, between two riparian water courses within the Sydney drinking water catchment. Unlike any other plastics recycling facility in Australia, particularly one slated to be the largest to date, the Plasrefine proposal has no adequate buffer zone. The additional risk to the health and welfare not only of nearby residents, businesses and the Garvan Institute, but also to the lives of first responders, poses an unacceptable risk. A fire at this facility therefore, would be a potentially catastrophic event that our town and the Highlands can ill afford. It is not only Moss Vale residents, visitors, members of the wider Highlands community and business owners who have raised concerns and lodged objections regarding



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this proposal, support has also come from our local Council, State Government Members of Parliament (M.P. Judy Hannan Wollondilly and M.P. Wendy Tuckerman Goulburn) and a Federal Member of Parliament, the Hon. Stephen Jones. Why should the community's hundreds of objections expressing concern and extreme opposition to this project, be set aside and be 'mitigated' out of existence, in the headlong rush to achieve State Government recycling targets? Where is the duty of care to our citizens?
