



DOUG KELSALL

OBJECT

Submission ID: 212964

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

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Context

My wife and I have owned a family home in Exeter since April 2021. Exeter is a picturesque rural village located a short 10 min drive from Moss Vale. We're active members of the Exeter Village Association and love the sense of community in Exeter, Moss Vale and the broader Southern Highlands. Given my love for the area, after finding out about the Plasrefine proposal I've had sleepless nights worrying about the destruction of a special community and region of natural beauty.

We spend a lot of time in Moss Vale as it's the closest shopping precinct, supporting local businesses. We've been delighted to see the area evolve into a lovely place with fantastic cafes, restaurants and boutique shops, particularly over recent years. It's a tourist destination in its own right. I strongly oppose Plasrefine setting up operations in Moss Vale as it poses a huge risk to human, animal and environmental health as well as tourism and the local economy. My primary concern is the risk to human, wildlife and environmental health from toxic pollution and microplastic leakage. Even using the best possible filters, the facility will be unable to prevent highly toxic and dangerous microplastics from being released into the area and waterways. This is particularly concerning given the closest residents are located only 150-200 meters away from the site. This is unheard of in Australia! Much smaller facilities are located at least 12kms from residents. This proposed facility will be 5 times larger than any other facility in Australia.

Unacceptably high fire risk (given lack of immediate emergency infrastructure)

Given the high risk of fire and pollution associated with this type of facility it should be located in a heavy industrial zone, as far away from residents as possible. It's completely at odds with the council's plans to turn this area into a bio-tech and agri-research area, which makes perfect sense given the Southern Highlands is renowned for agritourism and wine. My husband and I moved to the Southern Highlands from Sydney as we wanted a healthier lifestyle surrounded by nature and clean air. We fell in love with the Southern Highlands because of its natural beauty, rich history and exceptional cool climate wines like pinot noir. After moving to the Southern Highlands we were blown away by the sense of community spirit and the passion of the residents to protect the area's natural beauty and heritage. One of things that worries me most is the risk of fire.

I listened to Kylie Roberts-Frost's presentation at the recent public meeting and was shocked to discover how high the fire risk is. Kylie is a global expert on managing and auditing plastic recycling facilities. She has said no matter how sophisticated the facility is, at some point there will be a fire it's impossible to avoid. She went on to explain how ill-equipped Moss Vale and the Southern Highlands are to manage a fire at a plastic recycling facility with temperatures that could reach 1000 degrees centigrade. In her presentation she recounted the events of fire in a similar but much smaller facility in Hume ACT in December 2022.

- The first truck arrived within 6 mins*
- An additional 3 trucks arrived within 12 mins*
- Another 3 arrived at 16 mins*
- Aerial support support arrived within 28 mins*
- A Defensive strategy was adopted at 32 mins*



- The facility was declared a loss at 45 mins
- The fire burnt for 3 days spewing toxic chemicals into the area

A fire like this in Moss Vale would be catastrophic. There are only 3 or 4 fire trucks in the Southern Highlands and the closest backup is in Campbelltown 50 mins away. This clearly demonstrates that Moss Vale is not the right site. These types of facilities must be in an appropriate heavy industrial zone and as far away from residents as possible.

Associated and proven health risks

I tuned in online to watch some of the presentations at the recent public meetings and was very proud to see so many residents speaking out against the proposed Plasrefine plant. I was utterly shocked and appalled to hear that when asked how to avoid the toxicity and pollution from Plasrefine, the residents were advised to limit their time outdoors. This is an unacceptable response and is in direct opposition to the new human rights (health environment) amendment bill passed in October 2023. My understanding is that this law was established to ensure that all Australians live in a safe and healthy environment with clean air and water. How will the NSW government uphold this regulation when a toxic recycling facility is located so close to residents? (see https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/b/db_68569/) After finding out about Plasrefine. The health risks are too high for myself and my husband to accept. If Plasrefine is approved we'll have no other choice but to leave the Southern Highlands in search of a new location that is free from the health and environmental risks that this facility poses. This would be absolutely devastating as we love our life and friends in the Southern Highlands. The risk to human and animal health from a fire is way too high. Fires fuelled by plastic are incredibly toxic and deadly due to the release of toxic chemicals such as benzene, dioxins, cyanide, chlorine, carbon monoxide and VOCs. This could lead to asthma attacks, leukemia, cancer, reproductive issues and many other health problems down the line.

Tourism and negative economic impact

The economic gain, perhaps a small amount of employment, is greatly outweighed by the detrimental downside of impacting a vibrant tourism trade and local economy that is reliant on a clean environment (ie wineries and agribusiness). Additionally, the likely result of property devaluation alone would outweigh any local economic benefits. This will 100% be a setback for the region's prosperity. The Southern Highlands is one of the most popular tourist destinations in NSW - loved for its exceptional wines and high-quality organic produce. We buy all our wine from local wineries and our organic vegetables, fruit and bread from local farms. This recycling facility threatens the quality of agricultural produce due to the pollution and microplastics that will be leached into the area. It will impact the reputation of the Southern Highlands, its agriculture and the economy.

Other legitimate concerns / considerations:

1. Risks to endangered species in the area including - platypus population a state government grant of \$500,000 was recently awarded to monitor this population - Southern myotis and large bent winged bats
2. Too close to Garvan Institute - a critical medical research facility it's only 50 m away and will surely be destroyed when a fire occurs
3. Large increase in traffic, particularly from trucks causing additional pollution in the area and road damage
4. Only 10m away from streams that lead into the Wingecarribee River. This river leads into the Warragamba dam which is Sydney's drinking water. Given the impossibility of preventing microplastics from leaking into the area this will impact the health of Sydney residents
5. Plasrefine are an unproven overseas entity with NO safety record or successful businesses in Australia calling into question liabilities and concerns about their ability to operate such a complex facility/operations.



6. The planning and feasibility studies were woefully inadequate they used AI and incorrect modelling meaning it would be unethical to grant based on a misleading and incorrect submission

Thank you for accepting submissions from residents and for allowing residents to present their concerns at a public hearing. Please make the right decision and reject this proposal so that we can save a special regional area of natural beauty - that is much loved by Southern Highlanders and Sydney Siders a-like.
