



NAME REDACTED	OBJECT	Submission ID: 213886
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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Over three days the IPC panel has heard the voice of the Southern Highlands community and we are appreciative of the opportunity to present our case. The commissioners have come away from the public meetings in no doubt as to our overwhelming opposition to the Plasrefine proposal. Apart from the proponent, the consulting firm GHD, the DPHI and literally a mere handful of supporters (mostly non residents), statistically 100% of speakers and submission contributors have clearly articulated their opposition with a resounding NO to Plasrefine and #NotTheRightSite.

In view of this across the board community opposition, it beggars belief that this application has been given a recommendation to proceed by the DPHI. It would be interesting to know how much weight is actually accorded to the standpoint of the people, in the formulation of the determination. Vox populi is a foundational tenet of democracy - we elect politicians to represent us and to safeguard the best interests of their constituents. Three separate tiers of government of differing political persuasions have objected to this application. Bureaucrats are appointed, not elected, and in the strictest sense are servants of the public. Their viewpoint is only one of many. As a concerned friend in Sydney recently remarked; how could it possibly proceed given the level of opposition? A very fair question, indeed.

My husband and I listened with interest to the Q and A session involving GHD and DPHI representatives on 12/11.

We remain unimpressed by the responses provided by the former's spokesman, who repeatedly used the terms I guess and I suppose when asked to clarify questions posed by the panel. His lack of surety at this critical 11th hour was quite the red flag. We remain unconvinced and totally lack any confidence in this application. When discussing the dubious technical process of recycling a material which is not biodegradable, together with the scientifically supported hazardous impacts, it is imperative to assess probable consequences as a priority rather than concentrating on lesser possible consequences. Put simply, too much is at risk and the cavalier notion of building the factory and then playing it by ear when it is already operational is not only disingenuous and discourteous but also extremely dangerous.

Which brings me to the salient issues in this debate which I believe to be risk and duty of care, which of course are related and integral to the discussion.

As a former teacher in Sydney, an important aspect of my job was to assess and determine the risk exposed to my students when organising excursions and any activity which involved students leaving the campus during school hours under the school's supervision. This was an overt display of our duty of care to our charges, which was taken very seriously. Teacher colleagues will attest to the complexity of the risk assessment process. The initial consideration is usually the probable risk and if considered low, consideration is then given to possible risk. There were several instances when a decision was taken to cancel an activity or event because the level of risk was too high and our duty of care would have been compromised. Ensuring the safety of those students within the parameters of a world without guarantees, was paramount. I would not have been able to live with myself had a student been injured or worse on my watch because I had failed to do my homework.

Coincidentally I've just helped a friend with a risk assessment involving a choir from a local school, which has been invited to perform at a Senior's Christmas lunch at a social club. Our assessment was thorough and



comprehensive. Again, probable risks were identified and weighed first, followed by possible risk and happily, duty of care specifications were all upheld. The Seniors will have their choir!

In contrast, the risk assessment provided by the proponent of the application is formulaic and lacking in depth and detail. Plasrefine has a clear duty of care to the citizens of this community, which is not reflected in the documentation. In civilised democratic societies even sensitive recipients, as we are described by the proponent, are entitled to the same duty of care as my former students and the local choir. Are we not all equal in the eyes of our governing bodies? In terms of degree of risk, I suggest that living in close proximity to a toxic factory operational 24/7, contaminating our air, soil and water, the basic building blocks of life, would generate a much higher degree of probable risk compared to a supervised cohort of appropriate teacher to student ratios walking on footpaths with the teachers closest to the road, to a sports facility 100 metres away. You take my point.

I do not believe that Plasrefine's priority is the safeguarding of the environment, nor is it a positive collaboration with the community. This [REDACTED] company has seen an opportunity to make a profit in Australia, [REDACTED] and has aggressively pursued it, despite rational and reasonable arguments put forward against it.

It is one thing to face the reality of a natural disaster, eg the ferocious bushfires which raged through the Highlands in the summer of 2019/20, but entirely another to confront an avoidable man made crisis for which we are poorly equipped. In all probability, fire will occur within the facility and the town with its limited resources will bear the brunt of the devastation, while the bureaucrats, politicians and consultants involved in the decision process will have long moved on, thereby abrogating their responsibility. It defies logic to attempt to ameliorate one of our waste sustainability issues by creating another, in my opinion, more damaging one.

Regarding the clarifications made by DPHI representatives, the strategy was presumably to reiterate that all current parameters have been met. This may be so in theory, but just because the numbers are reconciled and the green credential boxes on paper all ticked, does not mean that they are in the best interests of the people in practice. It is obvious to many that our incumbent State Labor Government has zero concern for regional NSW, particularly in safe Liberal seats. There will be a reckoning.

To conclude, the citizens of the Southern Highlands will not accept this diabolical facility in Moss Vale. If approved, we foresee prolonged legal challenges, ongoing protests and karma at the ballot box. More importantly however I foresee a community plagued by deteriorating mental health, fragmentation, physical illness and quite literally, despair. This legacy is unacceptable and cannot be justified.

NSW is a large state with space to spare. The proponent is doing us a great disservice by not at least taking up an offer made by MP Wendy Tuckerman to identify a more suitable site for this project. This suggests a contempt for our community which will undoubtedly manifest in other ways should the venture proceed.

I have long resisted the unsettling trend in today's culture to be perpetually offended and to identify as a victim. The Plasrefine situation has changed my attitude. Please hear me when I say I am mightily offended that we will be dismissed as collateral damage because a businessman seeks to exploit us in order to make money. He will be nowhere near the facility and will be oblivious to its impact. And yes, I now identify as a victim and seek redress.

When making the final deliberation, I respectfully urge the IPC commissioners to consider the human element. Would you or your families be prepared to live in a town where a plastic recycling plant is built? Would you willingly accept a dramatic deterioration in your quality of life, when other options are available? Would you accept a level of estrangement from your family to ensure they do not come to harm? Would you be prepared to grapple with mental and physical health issues which are not of your making? If the answer to any of these questions is no, then please ensure we in the Highlands do not become the next innocent victims of greed and profit.



New South Wales Government
Independent Planning Commission

Thank you.

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