

Parkes Shire Council
Submission to the
NSW Legislative Council Select
Committee on
Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities

21 October 2025

1. Executive Summary

Parkes Shire Council submits this document in response to the NSW Government's proposal to establish an Energy-from-Waste (EfW) facility within the Parkes Special Activation Precinct (SAP). While Council acknowledges the constructive engagement of the proponent, Parkes Energy Recovery, and recognises the strategic importance of EfW infrastructure in addressing the state's waste crisis, it must be emphasised that community concerns remain significant, legitimate, and unresolved.

The absence of a coordinated, whole-of-government approach has left the Parkes community feeling excluded from decisions that potentially affect their health, environment, economy, and identity. The proposal has generated widespread anxiety, driven not by the actions of the developer, but by a lack of transparent information, limited consultation, and the perception that Parkes is being positioned as a dumping ground for Sydney's waste. Affirmative government leadership is urgently needed, not passive observation or policy rhetoric.

Given the NSW Government's direct involvement in the precinct and the project's strategic significance, Council strongly advocates for an appropriate degree of separation in the planning assessment process to uphold the integrity and impartiality of decision-making. Specifically, Council requests that the EfW proposal be referred to the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) from the outset, rather than relying on reactive triggers such as public objections. Furthermore, Council calls for an extended public exhibition period of no less than eight weeks to allow meaningful community review of a project of this scale and complexity.

Council does not oppose innovation or infrastructure development. However, it insists that any EfW facility must meet the highest standards of environmental and public health protection, be subject to rigorous independent assessment, and deliver tangible, lasting benefits to the host community. Most critically, **if the safety of the proposed EfW facility cannot be proven through independent, peer-reviewed scientific evidence, then it must not be allowed to proceed.** The health and wellbeing of residents, the integrity of agricultural production, and the reputation of Parkes as a clean and green region are non-negotiable.

This submission calls on the NSW Government to:

- Establish a **whole-of-government taskforce** to engage meaningfully with the Parkes community and ensure that is technology is deployed it is best-available.
- Provide **clear, evidence-based information** on the risks, benefits, and regulatory framework of EfW technology.
- Ensure **independent scientific review** of health and environmental impacts.
- Guarantee **local benefits** through a binding Community Benefits Agreement (CBA), including infrastructure investment, employment opportunities, and environmental safeguards.
- Implement a **statewide education campaign** to build public understanding and trust.
- Introduce a **community-hosting levy** to fairly compensate regional communities for their role in managing metropolitan waste.
- Refer the project to the **Independent Planning Commission** and extend the **public exhibition period** to a minimum of eight weeks.

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3. Introduction

Parkes Shire Council welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the NSW Legislative Council Select Committee's inquiry into proposed Energy-from-Waste (EfW) facilities. This submission reflects Council's role as both a stakeholder in the planning process and a representative of the Parkes community, which holds a diverse range of views on the proposed EfW development, proposed for the Parkes Special Activation Precinct (SAP).

Council acknowledges the strategic importance of EfW infrastructure in addressing the state's growing waste crisis, particularly in light of the projected shortfall in landfill capacity across Greater Sydney. The NSW Government has identified Parkes SAP as one of four priority precincts for EfW development, and Council recognises the potential for such infrastructure to contribute to circular economy goals and regional industrial growth.

However, the proposal has caused significant distress within the community, largely due to a lack of clear, consistent and accessible information from government agencies. Many residents have expressed deep concern about the potential health, environmental, agricultural, and reputational impacts of hosting an EfW facility. Others have acknowledged the potential benefits, including job creation, energy generation, and industrial symbiosis. Council's responsibility is to ensure that all voices are heard and that the planning process is transparent, evidence-based, and inclusive.

The purpose of this submission is to provide a balanced and constructive contribution to the inquiry, aligned with its terms of reference. It draws on community sentiment, technical analysis, and Council's experience as a local government authority directly impacted by the proposal. Most critically, Council maintains that if the safety of the proposed EfW facility cannot be demonstrated through independent, peer-reviewed scientific evidence, then it must not proceed.

Parkes Shire Council does not oppose innovation or infrastructure development. However, it insists that any EfW facility must meet the highest standards of safety and environmental performance, be subject to rigorous independent assessment, and deliver tangible, lasting benefits to the host community. Council also advocates for a whole-of-government approach to engagement, planning integrity, and equitable policy design, **ensuring that regional communities are treated as partners, not passive hosts**, in the state's waste strategy

4. Terms of Reference

The inquiry terms of reference are reproduced below.

- (a) *the performance of the technologies proposed for the Tarago and Parkes Energy Recovery Facilities as compared to leading thermal technologies employed in "state of the art" facilities internationally, noting such technologies as proposed are not employed anywhere else on the Eastern seaboard*
- (b) *the spread of the emissions predicted and the quality of emissions to be generated*
- (c) *health impacts from currently operating older technology waste incinerators as compared to the proposed newer technology*
- (d) *impacts on human health including on regional town drinking water, rainwater harvesting and soil contamination.*
- (e) *the impact on agriculture locally and across the wider region*
- f) *alterations to the Parkes Special Activation Precinct specifically in relation to the proposed Energy Recovery Facility in that region*
- (g) *impacts of waste-dumping over a number of decades in the Tarago region*
- (h) *the methodology of emission monitoring employed by leading large scale waste-to-energy facilities in Australia and across the world*
- (i) *alternative solutions to reduce and manage residual waste produced by Greater Sydney, and*
- (j) *any other related matters*

5. Community Sentiment

Key concerns of Opponents of the Parkes EfW Proposal

Council has received over 130 submissions from the community opposing the proposed EfW plant in Parkes. The Key concerns raised by opponents to the development include;

1. **Impact on human health:** Residents are concerned about potential exposure to toxic emissions and long-term health risks, particularly for vulnerable populations.
2. **Impact on agricultural produce, particularly livestock:** There is fear of contamination and reputational damage to Parkes' clean and green agricultural brand.
3. **Lack of genuine consultation:** The community feels excluded from meaningful dialogue and decision-making processes.
4. **Transparency deficits:** There is a perception that critical information regarding the project's risks, benefits, and planning has not been openly shared.
5. **Pre-determined outcomes:** Many believe the project's approval is a foregone conclusion, undermining trust in the planning process.
6. **Concerns about regulatory oversight:** The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is viewed by some as lacking independence and reliability in its assessment role.
7. **Inconsistent safety standards:** EfW facilities are permitted in only four locations across NSW. If the technology is safe, the community questions why it is not proposed for metropolitan areas such as Sydney.
8. **Impact on land values:** Residents are concerned about potential devaluation of residential and farming properties due to proximity to the facility.
9. **Parkes being used as a metropolitan waste solution:** Many feel the issue is Sydney's problem and should be resolved within Sydney, not exported to regional NSW.
10. **Proximity to sensitive receptors:** The Parkes Christian School is located within 6km of the proposed site, raising concerns about exposure to emissions for children.
11. **Conflict with recycling:** EfW is seen by some as undermining recycling efforts and diverting focus from circular economy practices.
12. **EfW does not facilitate circular economy practices:** There is concern that the facility may contradict the principles of reuse, repair, and recycling.
13. **Disincentive to other industries and future residents:** The presence of an EfW facility may deter investment and population growth in Parkes.
14. **Insufficient monitoring and compliance:** There is a strong call for more rigorous oversight than current regulations provide.
15. **Cost of transporting the waste from Sydney to Parkes:** The economic burden of long-haul waste transport is seen as unjustified.
16. **Environmental impact of transporting waste from Sydney to Parkes:** Concerns include increased carbon emissions and road infrastructure strain.
17. **Impact on Parkes Water Supply:** Potential contamination and competition for water resources are key concerns.
18. **Impact on Parkes' reputation as clean and green:** The town's identity as a progressive, environmentally conscious regional centre is perceived to be at risk

Key issues raised by Supporters of the Parkes EfW Proposal

Council has received very few formal submissions supporting the proposed EfW plant in Parkes. There has however been a number of informal representations, with anonymity normally requested. While concerns about the proposed EfW facility are significant, there are community members that have expressed support or cautious optimism about the project. These perspectives are often grounded in confidence in modern technology, recognition of the broader waste management challenges, and belief in the potential local benefits. Key positive views include:

1. **Safety remains paramount:** Even among those not opposed to the project, there is unanimous agreement that safety must not be compromised under any circumstances.
2. **Global precedent:** There are over 2,000 EfW facilities operating successfully around the world, including in densely populated cities and adjacent to farmland (for example the Renergia¹ EfW plant in Luzern Switzerland where landfill has been prohibited for over 20 years), demonstrating that modern plants can operate safely and efficiently.
3. **Outdated health concerns:** Many health arguments against EfW are based on older technologies and do not reflect the performance of contemporary, best-practice facilities.
4. **EfW complements recycling:** Countries with the highest recycling rates also utilise EfW, indicating that both can coexist within a circular economy framework.
5. **Resource recovery opportunity:** EfW is viewed as the final opportunity to recover value from waste before it is sent to landfill.
6. **Stringent standards in NSW:** NSW is recognised as having some of the most rigorous EfW standards in the world, offering strong regulatory safeguards.
7. **Environmental benefit over landfill:** Thermal treatment of waste is considered superior to landfill, particularly in reducing methane emissions (a potent greenhouse gas).
8. **Robust regulatory oversight:** Any EfW facility will be subject to detailed scrutiny by NSW Planning, the EPA, and NSW Health, ensuring compliance with environmental and health standards.
9. **Community image concerns:** The proliferation of anti-incinerator signage is seen by some as damaging to the town's image and business confidence.
10. **Economic transformation:** The project is viewed as potentially transformational for Parkes, bringing jobs of the future, investment, and flow-on benefits to the local economy.
11. **Alignment with SAP vision:** The EfW proposal aligns with the Parkes Special Activation Precinct's eco-industrial precinct concept, supporting circular economy goals.
12. **Community awareness:** There have been multiple occasions where the community was informed of the potential for an EfW facility within the SAP, suggesting the concept is not new.
13. **Industrial attraction:** EfW facilities can attract complementary industries by supplying baseload steam and electricity, enhancing the precinct's appeal to manufacturers and the potential for industrial symbiosis.

This submission focuses on concerns raised by opponents of the proposal. While positive views have not been addressed herein, they are acknowledged as important and valid.

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MPRaD3uClcU>

6. Consideration of Key Issues

1. Environmental and Health Risks

Terms of Reference

- *the spread of the emissions predicted and the quality of emissions to be generated*
- *health impacts from currently operating older technology waste incinerators as compared to the proposed newer technology*
- *impacts on human health including on regional town drinking water, rainwater harvesting and soil contamination.*

Community Concerns

- **Impact on human health:** Residents are concerned about potential exposure to toxic emissions and long-term health risks, particularly for vulnerable populations.
- **Impact on agricultural produce, particularly livestock:** There is fear of contamination and reputational damage to Parkes' clean and green agricultural brand.
- **Inconsistent safety standards:** EfW facilities are permitted in only four locations across NSW. If the technology is safe, the community questions why it is not proposed for metropolitan areas such as Sydney.
- **Proximity to sensitive receptors:** The Parkes Christian School is located within 6km of the proposed site, raising concerns about exposure to emissions for children
- **Insufficient monitoring and compliance:** There is a strong call for more rigorous oversight than current regulations provide
- **Environmental impact of transporting waste from Sydney to Parkes:** Concerns include increased carbon emissions and road infrastructure strain
- **Impact on Parkes' reputation as clean and green:** The town's identity as a progressive, environmentally conscious regional centre is perceived to be at risk

Commentary

By far the greatest concern to the people of the Parkes region is the health and environmental impact of an EfW facility.

It is acknowledged that the proponent (Parkes Energy Recovery), has not yet received the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) and consequently has not yet completed any of the requisite studies, where many of the Health and Environmental issues would be examined.

However, there is considerable information circulating in the community regarding the health risks of EfW facilities. These fears are in part supported by government authorities, for example the Chief Scientist has considered some of the more recent studies and provides;

"In May, the Working Group concluded that additional literature was likely to remain scant. I note a more recent systematic review of health impacts (Tait et al, 2020) that concludes that older incinerator technology and infrequent maintenance are linked with adverse health effects, with fewer effects associated with more modern plants. As with the EnRisks review, the authors note study limitations preclude firmer conclusions, and recommend a precautionary approach. The authors make several recommendations, including design to world's best practice standards; adherence to upgrade and maintenance schedules and avoidance of proximity to food production. The first two can be addressed through the regulatory assessment and compliance process. The

latter (exposure through food) should be addressed through the human health risk assessment (HHRA) that applicants are required to prepare.”²

Further, the Environmental Protection Authority produced the *Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Amendment (Thermal Energy from Waste) Regulation 2021* (the Regulation) under the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*, then the EfW Infrastructure Plan 2041 (the Plan) in September 2021. The Plan identified four (4) priority areas for the location of energy from waste facilities, being: West Lithgow; the Parkes Special Activation Precinct (SAP); the Richmond Valley Regional Jobs Precinct; and the Southern Goulburn Mulwaree Precinct. The diagram below, excerpt from the Plan, provides the criteria against which locations were assessed for selection.³



Most of the criteria are self-apparent and support the SAP location. However, concerning to the community is the provision that the EfW facility “**be away from high density residential areas**”.

Council’s position is clear and uncompromising: if EfW facilities can operate safely, then the NSW Government must provide the chief and evidence to prove it. If they cannot, then such facilities must not proceed, anywhere in the State.

Council will not support, endorse, or accept any facility that poses an unacceptable risk to:

- The health and wellbeing of our community
- The integrity of our environment
- Our reputation for clean, safe, and premium agricultural produce

² NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, *Energy from Waste: Report to the NSW Government* (Report, May 2020) with additional advice as at November 2020 <https://www.chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1431/FINAL-Report_EFW-with-additional-advice.pdf>

³ NSW Environment Protection Authority, *Energy from Waste Infrastructure Plan: Supporting the NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041* (Report, September 2021) <<https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/Publications/waste/Energy-from-Waste-Infrastructure-Plan>>

The health of our residents is not negotiable. The community has a right to live free from fear of toxic emissions, air pollution, or long-term environmental degradation. If the government believes EfW is safe, it must publicly and transparently demonstrate that safety with independent, peer-reviewed evidence. If it cannot, then all EfW project must be halted.

The Parkes community has expressed deep and legitimate concerns regarding the proposed EFW facility in the Parkes Special Activation Precinct. These concerns align closely with the inquiry's terms of reference and reflect a broader unease about the environmental, health, and reputational risks associated with the project.

Human Health and Environmental Safety

Residents are concerned about the potential health impacts of emissions from the facility, particularly:

- Airborne pollutants and their spread across residential areas, including the Parkes Christian School located within 6km of the proposed site.
- Contamination risks to drinking water sources, rainwater harvesting systems, and agricultural soils.
- Long-term exposure to toxic compounds, especially given the lack of independent, peer-reviewed evidence demonstrating the safety of newer EfW technologies.

There also needs to be confidence that if EfW facilities do proceed that they are kept to a modern standard as technology evolves and permissible limits change. The Chief Scientist provides "Given the evolving nature of technology, the expert review concluded future reductions of maximum permissible limits should be feasible. It recommended the limits be reviewed again within three years, followed by reviews at five yearly intervals. I endorse this approach".⁴ Yet despite this recommendation, 5-years have elapsed and as far as we are aware there has been no such review.

Agricultural and Economic Impacts

Parkes is known for its clean, green image and premium agricultural produce. The community fears:

- Damage to livestock and crops from airborne or soil-borne contaminants.
- Loss of market trust in Parkes-branded produce due to proximity to a waste incineration facility.
- Economic disadvantage, with no clear local benefit to offset the reputational and environmental risks.

Accordingly, Council has previously written to the Planning Secretary to suggest inclusion in the SEARs of provisions to assess;

- Cumulative Impacts on Agriculture
- Agricultural Risk and Market Perception
- Agricultural Supply Chain Impacts
- Enhance Monitoring Requirements specifically relating to agricultural produce such as livestock

⁴ NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, *Energy from Waste: Report to the NSW Government* (Report, May 2020) with additional advice as at November 2020, pp ii. <https://www.chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1431/FINAL-Report_EFW-with-additional-advice.pdf>

Equity and Site Selection

The community questions why EfW facilities are banned in most of NSW, yet permitted in only four regional locations:

- Why Parkes? If EfW is truly safe, why is it not proposed for metropolitan areas like Sydney?
- Perceived inequity, where regional towns bear the environmental burden of urban waste without receiving proportional benefits.

Monitoring and Compliance

There is a strong call for:

- Stricter oversight than current regulatory standards.
- Transparent, real-time monitoring of emissions and environmental impacts.
- Independent audits and community access to environmental performance data.

Transport and Carbon Footprint

Transporting waste from Sydney to Parkes raises concerns about:

- Carbon emissions from long-haul freight.
- Road safety and infrastructure strain.
- Environmental hypocrisy, where a facility meant to reduce landfill contributes to increased transport-related pollution.

Recommendations

1. That the NSW Government immediately initiate a coordinated, whole-of-government engagement process with the Parkes community regarding the EfW proposal. That relevant agencies, including Planning, Environment, Health, and Regional Development, be tasked with providing clear, accessible information on the risks, benefits, and regulatory framework of EfW technology.
2. That independent experts be engaged to facilitate community forums and provide impartial assessments of the proposed facility.
3. That the Chief Scientist and Engineer be required to review the “2020 Energy from Waste” report, with particular attention to the information circulated with the Parkes community on the adverse health effects of these facilities. The Chief Scientist and Engineer should make a determination if these facilities are indeed safe near food sources and communities such as Parkes (or anywhere else).
4. If an EfW plant proceeds, there should be a requirement that the EfW facility be fitted with **Best Available Techniques (BAT)** and required to continuously be upgraded to comply with **international best practice**, such as the **EU BAT** for waste incineration, as it changes from time to time.
5. If an EfW plant proceeds, there should be a requirement that **Real-time emissions data** be made publicly available, and that facilities be required to **monitor and report under “Other Than Normal Operating Conditions” (OTNOC)** such as start-up and shutdown periods.
6. That the Chief Scientist and Engineer also investigate **international best practice** emission monitoring requirements.

7. That the NSW Government publicly articulate its policy position on EfW infrastructure in regional NSW, including its role in addressing Sydney's waste crisis.
8. That future infrastructure proposals of this scale include mandatory early-stage community engagement led by government, not solely by private proponents.
9. Cumulative Impact Assessment: The Parkes EfW proposal must be assessed in the context of other State Significant Developments (SSDs) in the region, including the Parkes Special Activation Precinct (SAP) and large-scale renewable energy projects. Evaluating the project in isolation risks overlooking the broader cumulative impacts on land use, infrastructure, and regional industries, particularly agriculture.
10. Agricultural Risk and Market Perception: Council is concerned that agriculture is not explicitly addressed in other EfW SEARs. A targeted assessment is needed to evaluate both the physical risks of contamination and the reputational risks to agricultural outputs. This includes potential impacts on enterprise costs, productivity, and market access, especially in export markets where consumer perception can be as influential as scientific evidence.
11. Agricultural Supply Chain Impacts: The SEARs should require consideration of the full agricultural supply chain, including upstream and downstream infrastructure such as livestock saleyards, grain handling facilities, and specialised enterprises. These systems are integral to the regional economy and may be affected directly or indirectly by the EfW facility.
12. Application of Large-Scale Solar Guidelines: The NSW Large-Scale Solar Energy Guidelines provide a robust framework for assessing regional economic impacts. Council recommends that a Level 3 regional economic impact assessment, as outlined in the Solar Guidelines, be applied to the Parkes EfW project to ensure consistency and thoroughness in evaluating economic outcomes.
13. Enhanced Monitoring Requirements: Community confidence in the safety of EfW technology is closely tied to transparency and monitoring. Council notes that some substances, such as dioxins, are not currently subject to continuous monitoring. If technically feasible, continuous monitoring of all emissions should be mandated. This would significantly improve public trust and regulatory oversight.

2. Waste Management and Recycling Integrity

Terms of Reference

- *impacts of waste-dumping over a number of decades in the Tarago region*
- *alternative solutions to reduce and manage residual waste produced by Greater Sydney,*
- *the performance of the technologies proposed for the Tarago and Parkes Energy Recovery Facilities as compared to leading thermal technologies employed in "state of the art" facilities internationally, noting such technologies as proposed are not employed anywhere else on the Eastern seaboard*
- *alterations to the Parkes Special Activation*
- *the methodology of emission monitoring employed by leading large scale waste-to-energy facilities in Australia and across the world Precinct specifically in relation to the proposed Energy Recovery Facility in that region*

Community Concerns

- **Parkes being used as a metropolitan waste solution:** Many feel the issue is Sydney's problem and should be resolved within Sydney, not exported to regional NSW
- **Conflict with recycling:** EfW is seen by some as undermining recycling efforts and diverting focus from circular economy practices.
- **EfW does not facilitate circular economy practices:** There is concern that the facility may contradict the principles of reuse, repair, and recycling

Commentary

There appears to be widespread agreement that Sydney and parts of regional NSW are facing a waste crisis, and that our efforts to recycle has resulted in little change in the percentage recycled in the past 10 years.

The recently released "Draft NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan" (draft plan), seeks to set out the strategy to address the looming crisis.

Minister Sharpe stated: *"Over the last 10 years, the amount of waste recycled in NSW has flatlined at an average of 65% of waste generated across the state. The waste that we don't recycle – around 7.7 million tonnes in 2022–23 – is sent to landfill for disposal."*

"NSW has a waste and recycling crisis. If we don't act now – by building new infrastructure and driving down our residual waste – red bins will not be able to be collected in Sydney and parts of regional NSW by 2030."

The Minister further warned that:

"This will result in an intolerable increase in the amount households pay for the collection of their red-lid kerbside bins, in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis," and

*"It will also trigger a slowdown of critical infrastructure projects... This could lead to a \$23 billion loss to the NSW economy and a significant decline in employment."*⁵

The draft plan in essence proposes

⁵ NSW Environment Protection Authority, *Draft NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan: Meeting Our Residual and Food and Garden Organic Waste Needs (Draft Plan, 2025)* <<https://yoursay.epa.nsw.gov.au/draft-nsw-waste-and-circular-infrastructure-plan>>

- 1) Streamlining Planning for Existing Landfills,
- 2) Enabling EfW Infrastructure,
- 3) Strategic Planning for Growing Populations.

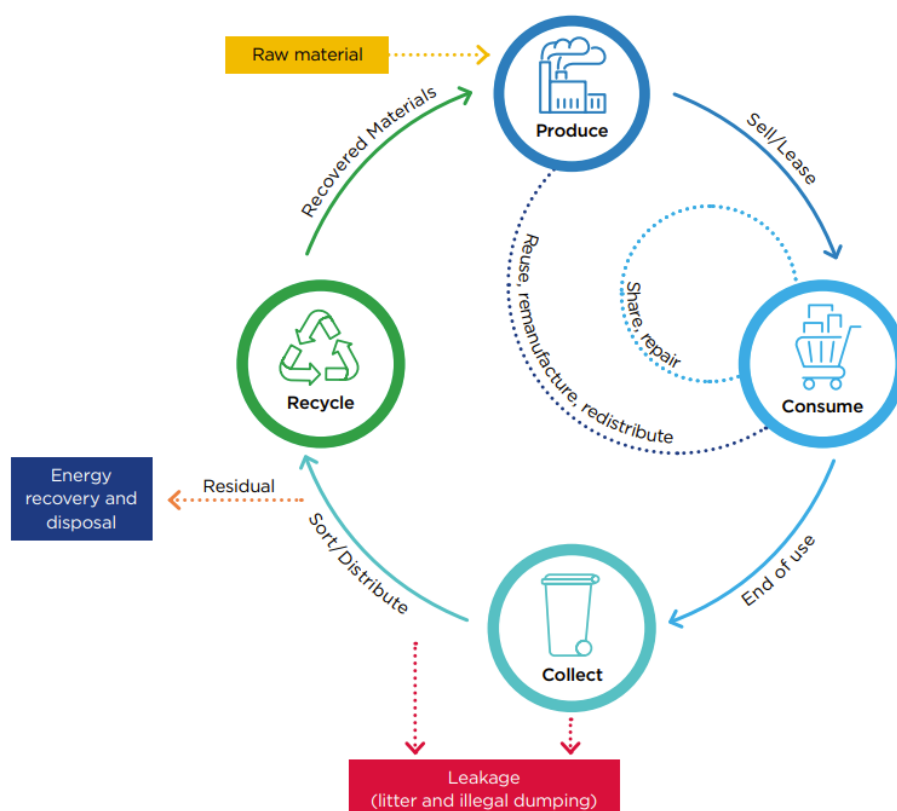
In terms of transition to a Circular Economy the plan indicates that the overarching goal is to **keep waste out of landfill and in use for longer** by:

- 1) Reducing waste generation,
- 2) Increasing reuse, repair, and recycling,
- 3) Diverting organic waste (FOGO) from landfill and
- 4) Ensuring safe management of residual waste during the transition.

“Once these landfills close, waste generated by households and businesses in Greater Sydney will have to be transported to other landfills, most of which are **in regional NSW or interstate**. The cost of doing this is expected to hike the household fee for a red-lid bin service by 20%”.⁶

The NSW Government certainly see EfW as part of the Circular Economy, see figure 1 below⁷, albeit as a transition to more sustainable practices.

Figure 1: Circular economy

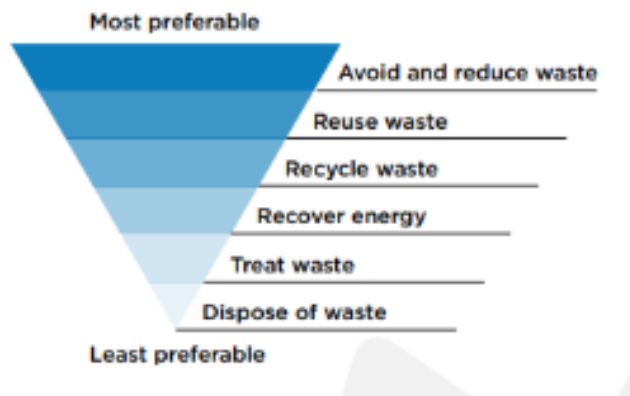


⁶ NSW Environment Protection Authority, *Draft NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan: Meeting Our Residual and Food and Garden Organic Waste Needs (Draft Plan, 2025)*, pp6. <<https://yoursay.epa.nsw.gov.au/draft-nsw-waste-and-circular-infrastructure-plan>>

⁷ NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, *NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041: Stage 1 – 2021–2027 (June 2021)* <<https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/nsw-waste-and-sustainable-materials-strategy-2041.pdf>>

The aim of course is to eliminate the need for EfW facilities using recycling, however, Australia is not a high-performing recycling country and even the best recycling countries in the world use EfW as part of waste management.

The EPA waste hierarchy provides the preferred approach to waste management.



The waste hierarchy underpins the objectives of the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001*. The waste hierarchy is a set of priorities for the efficient use of resources and provides a base to foster the transition to a circular economy.⁸ 1 - Avoid & reduce waste, 2 - Reuse waste, 3 - Recycle waste, 4 - Recover Energy, 5 - Treat waste, 6 - Dispose of waste. (EPA. (2019)).⁹

The unfortunate reality is that currently, and for the foreseeable future, unless there is consequential government intervention, residual waste will be destined for landfill, unless diverted to facilities such as EfW. There may be more desirable technologies than EfW, however these do not seem to be recognised in the various framework documents.

As shown above, energy recovery features mid-way on the hierarchy. However, the EPA suggest the real benefit is reducing landfill methane emissions. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas, with estimates ranging from it being 10-20% more potent as a global warmer than carbon dioxide. Again, impact estimates vary widely based on waste type etc, however publicly available information suggests (as an indication) that for every ton of waste that goes through an EfW facility, a ton of greenhouse gas emission is avoided.

It would therefore seem apparent that;

1. Sydney landfills will run out by 2030 and there is not another option presently available. So something must be done as a matter of urgency.
2. There is 7.7 million tonnes of landfill waste in NSW (2022-23 figure)¹⁰
3. The plan will streamline landfill approvals, which may provide a very short-term stop-gap solution to the waste crisis in the Sydney basin.
4. Once the Sydney landfills are full, regional NSW will be targeted for additional landfill capacity.
5. Recycling and reuse have flatlined over the past 10 years
6. NSW Government supports, at least notionally EfW as part of the waste crisis strategy
7. NSW Government initiatives over the past 10-years have done little to increase recycling
8. NSW Government sees EfW as part of the Circular Economy

⁸ EPA. (2019). *Circular Economy Policy*. Retrieved from <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/-/media/epa/corporate-site/resources/recycling/19p1379-circular-economy-policy-final>

⁹ *Circular Economy Policy*. <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/-/media/epa/corporate-site/resources/recycling/19p1379-circular-economy-policy-final>

¹⁰ NSW Environment Protection Authority, *Draft NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan: Meeting Our Residual and Food and Garden Organic Waste Needs (Draft Plan, 2025)* <<https://yoursay.epa.nsw.gov.au/draft-nsw-waste-and-circular-infrastructure-plan>>

Running out of space for landfill in the Sydney basin is not an abstract risk, it is real, imminent and severe. Other than landfill the only proposal presently is EfW, yet, despite this urgency, the communities of **Parkes, Richmond Valley, Southern Goulburn Mulwaree, and West Lithgow**, (the only areas where EfW is currently permitted), have been left to manage the social and reputational consequences of these policy with little or no government support.

The designation of Parkes as a potential site for an EfW facility has raised serious concerns among our community. There is a strong perception that Parkes is being used to absorb Sydney's waste burden, with little consideration for the local impacts or benefits.

The environmental and health risks of EfW are discussed above in this submission, but in terms of waste management, the community sees no clear upside, no guaranteed local jobs, no reinvestment in infrastructure, and no direct economic or environmental benefits for Parkes. Without tangible local gains, the proposal appears completely one-sided.

One of the aspirations of the Parkes SAP is to be "The Central West's newest and most advanced enterprise precinct, producing high-value food and manufactured products for global and national markets", and "Australia first UNIDO eco-industrial park, and the nation's leading circular economy precinct", which if achieved creates very exciting opportunity for the youth of the region.

It is councils hope and aspiration that the jobs created are the jobs of the future, jobs that stand to create a renaissance in manufacturing, ie such things as artificial intelligence, automation, electrical, programable logic, robotics etc. Given the worker shortage, automation may just be the renaissance of manufacturing.

The proponents have indicated that the Parkes plant will operate at international best practice, such as the EU Best Available Techniques, in which case automation and robotics may play a role. Notwithstanding that a government supported arrangement to ensure any EfW facility has a requirement to have 10% of its workforce as trainee/apprenticeship target and encouraged that in these be in new and emerging businesses.

We urge the NSW Government to provide transparent information about the expected benefits for Parkes, including job creation, infrastructure investment, and environmental safeguards. We also request meaningful community consultation and a commitment to reinvest a portion of any revenue or savings into local services and development."

If the EfW facility is to proceed, we ask that it be accompanied by a binding community benefits agreement, including local employment targets, air quality monitoring, and reinvestment in health, education, and environmental initiatives in Parkes.

Further, it is important that waste management always focus on the waste management hierarchy.

We believe Parkes deserves to be treated as a partner in NSW's waste strategy, not merely a destination for its waste. We welcome further dialogue and urge the Government to reconsider the current approach in light of the significant negative community sentiment.

Recommendations

In light of the urgent waste management challenges facing NSW, and the significant community concerns raised, particularly by regional communities such as Parkes, the following recommendations are proposed to ensure integrity, transparency, and sustainability in the deployment of EfW infrastructure:

1. All levels of government should consistently advocate the waste hierarchy as the preferred approach to waste management, with EfW considered only after all viable recycling and reuse options.
2. A comprehensive, evidence-based public information campaign is urgently needed to explain EfW's role in the waste management mix. If EfW is safe, this must be clearly and credibly communicated. If it poses unacceptable risks, it should be removed from the policy framework.
3. All EfW proposals in NSW must demonstrate that all waste, without exception, undergoes validated pre-treatment or sorting at off-site waste transfer stations prior to incineration. This ensures that recyclable and reusable materials are diverted from EfW and supports circular economy principles.
4. The NSW EPA must require EfW proponents to explicitly outline how they will meet the resource recovery criteria for mixed waste, as defined in the NSW Energy from Waste Policy Statement. This should include measurable targets and independent verification mechanisms.
5. To reduce landfill dependency and promote material recovery, EfW facilities should be required to implement on-site ash processing. This enables potential reuse of incinerator ash in construction or other industries and minimizes environmental impact.
6. The NSW Government must undertake a critical analysis of whether residual waste destined for landfill can be realistically managed through alternative technologies or enhanced recycling systems, before approving EfW projects. This includes revisiting the waste hierarchy and prioritizing waste avoidance, reuse, and recycling.
7. Regional communities such as Parkes must be treated as partners, not passive recipients of Sydney's waste. The Government should commit to ongoing dialogue, transparent planning, and equitable distribution of both the burdens and benefits of waste infrastructure
8. Establish a Community Consultative Committee (Similar to that required by Mines) with an independent chair and a binding Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) for any regional town hosting an EfW facility, including:
 - Local job creation
 - Targeted 10% trainee/apprentice program particularly in modern jobs
 - Infrastructure investment
 - Environmental safeguards
 - Community representation in oversight committees
9. If EfW facilities proceed they should be government supported to optimise regional benefits including;
 - Participate in any industrial symbiosis (such as steam distribution and behind the meter local electricity distribution)
 - Optimise industrial tourism opportunities, where students and researchers can visit the facilities for educational purposes.
 - Facilitate research. Provide facilities where researchers are able to conduct research on the EfW facility performance, the emissions, by product research and other recycling initiatives.

3. Economic and Infrastructure Considerations

Terms of Reference

- *the impact on agriculture locally and across the wider region*

Community Concerns

- **Impact on agricultural produce, particularly livestock:** There is fear of contamination and reputational damage to Parkes' clean and green agricultural brand.
- **Impact on land values:** Residents are concerned about potential devaluation of residential and farming properties due to proximity to the facility.
- **Disincentive to other industries and future residents:** The presence of an EfW facility may deter investment and population growth in Parkes.
- **Cost of transporting the waste from Sydney to Parkes:** The economic burden of long-haul waste transport is seen as unjustified.
- **Impact on Parkes Water Supply:** Potential contamination and competition for water resources are key concerns.

Commentary

The proposed EfW facility in Parkes presents a complex set of economic and infrastructure implications that must be carefully considered in the context of regional development, agricultural integrity, and long-term community wellbeing.

Agricultural Viability and Market Confidence

Parkes Shire is renowned for its clean, green image and premium agricultural produce. The proximity of an EfW facility raises concerns about:

- Airborne and soil-borne contaminants potentially affecting livestock and crops.
- Market perception risks, where buyers may associate Parkes produce with industrial pollution, regardless of actual safety standards.
- Loss of agricultural competitiveness, particularly in export markets that demand high environmental standards.

These concerns are amplified by the lack of independent, peer-reviewed studies specific to the Australian context, and the absence of clear government communication on agricultural safety.

Land Values and Investment Confidence

There are fears in the community that the introduction of an EfW facility may negatively impact:

- Residential and agricultural land values, due to perceived environmental risks and stigma.
- Investor confidence, particularly in sectors reliant on Parkes' reputation for environmental quality.
- Future residential growth, as families may be deterred by proximity to industrial waste infrastructure.

These impacts need to be explicitly addressed. Further, without a clear and enforceable Community Benefits Agreement, the economic upside for Parkes remains speculative and unbalanced.

Industrial Attraction and Regional Growth

While EfW facilities can support industrial symbiosis and provide baseload energy and steam, there is community concern that:

- The stigma of hosting Sydney's waste may deter other industries from locating in Parkes.
- The lack of guaranteed local benefits—such as discounted energy, infrastructure investment, or employment pathways—undermines the precinct's appeal.
- Circular economy aspirations may be compromised if the facility is perceived as a standalone incinerator rather than part of a broader eco-industrial strategy.

Transport Costs and Environmental Footprint

Transporting waste from Sydney to Parkes introduces:

- Significant logistical costs, which may undermine the economic viability of the facility.
- Increased carbon emissions, contradicting the environmental rationale for EfW.
- Road infrastructure strain, with potential damage from heavy vehicle movements and associated safety risks.

A comprehensive lifecycle assessment is needed to evaluate whether the environmental benefits of EfW outweigh the transport-related impacts.

Water Supply and Resource Security

The community has raised concerns about:

- Potential contamination of the Parkes water supply, particularly during abnormal operating conditions.
- Competing water demands, especially during drought periods, where industrial use may conflict with agricultural and residential needs.
- Lack of baseline data, making it difficult to assess the true risk to water resources.

These concerns warrant detailed analysis and transparent public reporting.

Early estimates suggest the EfW facility will need in the vicinity of 120ML/yr. If this is so the impact on the Parkes Water Supply will not be significant, given the annual water supplied to the Parkes network (including Northparkes Mines) is approximately 5500ML/yr.

Economic Equity and Hosting Burden

Parkes is one of only four locations in NSW where EfW facilities are permitted. This exclusivity raises questions of fairness:

- Why are metropolitan areas excluded if the technology is safe?
- What compensation is provided to regional communities bearing the environmental and reputational burden?
- How will the economic benefits be shared locally?

Council has proposed a hosting levy of \$15 per tonne, to create a community fund for infrastructure, community projects, and circular economy initiatives. This would help offset the perceived inequity and build social licence.

Recommendations

1. Conduct a comprehensive agricultural impact assessment, including livestock and crop safety, market perception analysis, and long-term soil health monitoring.
2. Monitoring Requirements: There appears to be conjecture in relation to the ability to continuously monitor some substances, particularly dioxins. As we understand, tests will be conducted every three months for the first 12 months of operation and two measurements per year thereafter. If it is possible to continuously monitor all the substances, it would raise community confidence considerable, and we therefore ask that this be considered.
3. Commission an independent valuation study to assess the potential impact on land values and residential growth.
4. Undertake a full lifecycle environmental and economic analysis of waste transport from Sydney to Parkes, including carbon footprint and infrastructure wear.
5. Require baseline and ongoing water quality monitoring, with public reporting and contingency planning for contamination events.

4. Community Engagement and Planning

Community Concerns

- **Lack of genuine consultation:** The community feels excluded from meaningful dialogue and decision-making processes.
- **Transparency deficits:** There is a perception that critical information regarding the project's risks, benefits, and planning has not been openly shared.
- **Pre-determined outcomes:** Many believe the project's approval is a foregone conclusion, undermining trust in the planning process.
- **Concerns about regulatory oversight:** The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is viewed by some as lacking independence and reliability in its assessment role.
- **Inconsistent safety standards:** EfW facilities are permitted in only four locations across NSW. This raises questions about why Parkes is deemed suitable while other regions, including Sydney, are excluded.

The proposed EfW facility in Parkes has caused significant distress within the community. This distress is not solely due to the nature of the infrastructure, but rather the feeling that there was a **lack of clear, consistent, unbiased and accessible information** particularly from government agencies. The absence of coordinated engagement has left residents feeling excluded from decisions that potentially affect their health, environment, economy, and identity.

Parkes Council has been included in this accusation. Council has endeavoured to provide all pertinent information on a dedicated web page¹¹ as a self-disclosure. It is also important to note that Council was not the agency handling the EfW project.

A comprehensive chronology is included at Appendix 1. In summary, the following outlines Councils early involvement in the SAP and EfW discussions.

1 August 2017	The elected Council was first introduced to the concept which eventually developed into the Special Activation Precinct (SAP) in a strategic workshop. Principles included large areas with adequate buffer zones for businesses to develop without affecting neighbours. It was initiated by an abattoir investor, who could not find land suitably zoned, with buffers and service. The initial principle was for agricultural value adding, as over 65% of local produce was transported out of the Shire with no-value-adding.
31 October 2017	The Hon John Barilaro & The Hon Rick Colless MLC visited Parkes to investigate Councils concept (at Councils invitation). As a result of the meeting, Mr Barilaro activated a number of senior bureaucrats to fully develop the concept.
30 July 2018	The Hon Gladys Berejiklian & Deputy Premier John Barilaro announced at Bathurst the NSW 20 year Economic Vision including "Parkes Special Activation Precinct". This was the initiation of the Parkes SAP and in essence the transfer of the concept from Council to the State Government.
May 2019	The recycling precinct and EfW facility was identified as a potential inclusion in the SAP, during State Government led Enquiry-by-Design workshop, where a room of experts

¹¹ <https://www.parkes.nsw.gov.au/Council/News-media-and-projects/Projects-and-works/Energy-From-Waste-Facility>

	(~60) gathered to help design the SAP. The resultant structure plan was then prepared and published. ¹²
May 2019	A Community Statement was also published at that time which featured a full page on Energy from Waste. ¹³
22 July 2020	The Hon. John Barilaro commitment of \$185.4 million from the NSW Government to the Special Activation Precinct at the Pacific National terminal in Parkes, stating “A vision of the Parkes Shire Council for over 20 years came to full realisation”.
December 2020	Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation (RGDC) calls Expressions of Interest for EfW facility at Parkes SAP closing Feb 2021. Council was excluded from participation on the tender.
4-5 May 2022	The RGDC held community drop-in sessions on 4-5 May 2022 at the Cooke Parke Pavillion, with representatives from EfW, also...Fulton-Hogan (SAP Contractors), Georgiou (Newell Highway Bypass contractors), Brightmark, Regional NSW, RGDC and Parkes Council.
28 July 2022	RGDC Media release naming three shortlisted consortia, with an accompanying information sheet (see also Appendix 2). ¹⁴ Also flagged 4 August online information session. The three consortia shortlisted to submit binding proposals in the Parkes precinct were: • New Energy Corporation Pty Ltd • Veolia Recycling & Recovery Pty Ltd, I-Environment Investments Pacific Pty Ltd • Tribe Infrastructure Australia Pty Ltd, Masdar Tribe Australia Pty Ltd, Acciona Concesiones S.L., John Beever (AUST.) Pty Limited and Acciona Construction Australia Pty Ltd
4 August 2022	Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation (RGDC) held a public online information session on EfW. Approximately 68 registrations, ~40 questions. Panel included RGDC, Dr Jackie Wright (EnRisk - Health Expert), Niels Jakobsen (Chief advisor on sustainable energy at Viegand Maagøe, Netherlands - International Expert on EfW), John King and Alex Upitis - Talis & Deborah Palmer (WSP) as facilitator (Session 5-6.30pm).
24 March 2025	Successful Consortium announced led by Tribe Infrastructure Group (Tribe) and including Tadweer Group, HiQ Group (HiQ) and Kanadevia Inova (KVI).

So from the early development of the SAP there was a number of occasions where the EfW concept was communicated to the public, however from the 4 August 2022 online session, until now, there has been very, very little communication by State Government on this issue with the public. **Council has asked on multiple occasions that education and engagement be undertakes, with no success (see Chronology at Appendix 1).**

There remains very little engagement by the NSW Government with the Parkes Community on the EfW proposal.

Planning Integrity and Government Responsibility

Given the NSW Government’s direct involvement in the Parkes Special Activation Precinct and the strategic significance of the EfW proposal, it is imperative that planning integrity be upheld through **independent and transparent mechanisms**. The Parkes EfW project is on State owned land, the

¹² https://shared-drupal-s3fs.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/master-test/fapub_pdf/A+Parks/Parkes+SAP+-+Structure+Plan.pdf

¹³ <https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-04/Regional-Snowy-Hydro-SAPS-Parkes-Community-Statement.pdf>

¹⁴ [Circular economy vision for Parkes one step closer | NSW Government](#)

project was called through a State government process, the proponent was selected by State Government, the project will help address a State issue (ie waste crisis in Sydney) and may well be assessed by State Government. From a governance and transparency perspective, Council requests:

- Referral of the project to the **Independent Planning Commission (IPC)** from the outset.
- An extended **public exhibition period of at least eight weeks** to allow meaningful review of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
- Full transparency in IPC processes, including site inspections, public hearings in Parkes, and published stakeholder engagement records.

Whole-of-Government Taskforce

To restore trust and ensure equitable engagement, Council recommends the establishment of a **Whole-of-Government Taskforce** to oversee community engagement and planning integrity for the Parkes EfW proposal.

Suggested Composition

- Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (Chair)
- NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA)
- NSW Health
- Department of Regional NSW
- Infrastructure NSW
- Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation
- Parkes Shire Council representatives
- Community representatives
- Independent scientific and health experts

Mandate

- Ensure the best technology is deployed and associated benefits such as industrial symbiosis are maximised.
- Lead transparent engagement with the Parkes community, including public forums, information sessions, and ongoing dialogue.
- Coordinate independent assessments of health, environmental, and agricultural impacts, including baseline air and water quality studies.
- Develop a binding Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) with enforceable commitments for local employment, infrastructure investment, and environmental safeguards.
- Oversee real-time monitoring and public reporting of emissions and compliance data.
- Ensure planning integrity, including referral of the project to the IPC from the outset.
- Support education and communication, including a statewide campaign to explain EfW technology, risks, and benefits.

Recommendations

1. Establish a Whole-of-Government Taskforce to oversee community engagement and planning integrity for the Parkes EfW proposal.
2. Refer the project to the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) from the outset to ensure impartiality and public confidence.
3. Extend the public exhibition period for the Environmental Impact Statement to a minimum of eight weeks.
4. Mandate a Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP) as part of the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs).
5. Ensure community representation in all stages of planning and oversight, including participation in the IPC process.
6. Require transparent reporting of all community engagement activities and outcomes.

5. Equity and Urgency in Waste Infrastructure: A Case for a Community-Hosting Levy and Voluntary Planning Agreement

Parkes Shire Council acknowledges the critical waste management challenges facing New South Wales. The Draft NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan (May 2025) makes clear that Greater Sydney is on track to run out of landfill capacity within the decade. There is 7.7 million tonnes of landfill waste in NSW, with more than half of that generated in Sydney.

The consequences of inaction are severe¹⁵:

- A 20% increase in household waste collection fees;
- A potential \$23 billion loss to the NSW economy;
- Disruption to critical infrastructure projects, including housing;
- Increased illegal dumping and environmental degradation.
- Landfills in regional NSW will be the probable destination for Sydney waste if alternate solutions are not identified.

The NSW Government has identified EfW as a transitional solution to reduce reliance on landfill and build resilience in the waste system. However, under current policy, EfW facilities are only permitted in four regional precincts—Parkes, West Lithgow, Southern Goulburn Mulwaree, and (until recently) Richmond Valley. This concentration of infrastructure in rural communities has created a perception of inequity, where regional towns are asked to absorb the environmental and reputational burden of metropolitan waste, often without commensurate support or benefit.

Learning from the Renewable Energy Zones

Recent experience with Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) has shown that large-scale infrastructure projects, even those with environmental merit, can fracture communities when poorly managed. As reported in the federal parliamentary inquiry into climate change, landholders hosting wind and solar farms have faced **bullying, threats, and social ostracism** from opponents within their own communities. The lack of coordinated government engagement, misinformation, and perceived unfairness in benefit distribution have led to deep divisions.

Parkes Shire Council urges the NSW Government to avoid repeating these mistakes. EfW policy must be implemented as a **win-win**, not a **win-lose**. Communities must be treated as partners, not passive hosts, and must be supported with transparent information, meaningful engagement, and tangible benefits.

Technology Must Be Proven Safe

Parkes Shire Council is clear: EfW technology must be proven safe before any facility proceeds. The health and wellbeing of our residents, the integrity of our environment, and the reputation of our agricultural sector are not negotiable. The NSW Government must provide transparent, independent, and peer-reviewed evidence that EfW facilities can operate without adverse impacts on human health, air and water quality, or agricultural production.

¹⁵ NSW Environment Protection Authority, *Draft NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan: Meeting Our Residual and Food and Garden Organic Waste Needs (Draft Plan, 2025)* <<https://yoursay.epa.nsw.gov.au/draft-nsw-waste-and-circular-infrastructure-plan>>

Until such evidence is publicly available and accepted by the community, any EfW proposal must be subject to the highest level of scrutiny, including referral to the Independent Planning Commission from the outset.

The Case for a Community-Hosting Levy

Assuming the technology is proven safe and the project proceeds, Parkes Shire Council proposes the introduction of a \$15 per tonne community-hosting levy, indexed annually in line with the waste levy. This levy should be:

- State-administered, similar in structure to the existing landfill levy;
- Collected at the point of waste generation, not imposed on the EfW operator;
- Directed to host communities, to fund infrastructure, services, and circular economy initiatives.

This is not a commercial charge, it is a **policy instrument** to ensure fairness and equity in how the burdens of the waste crisis are shared across NSW.

A Modest and Reasonable Contribution

To contextualise the proposal:

- Households in the Sydney basin generate approximately 600 kg¹⁶ of residual waste per year.
- A \$15/tonne levy equates to \$9 per household annually, or less than 20 cents per week.
- By comparison, the current landfill levy can be as high as \$174 per tonne.

The proposed hosting levy reflects the principles of the waste hierarchy, which prioritises waste management strategies from most to least preferred: avoidance, reuse, recycling, energy recovery, and landfill. NSW's current landfill levy, up to \$174 per tonne, is intentionally high to discourage disposal at the lowest tier of the hierarchy. In contrast, Energy EfW sits mid-tier, offering partial resource recovery through energy generation. As such, a lower levy is appropriate, recognising its reduced environmental impact compared to landfill. Recycled materials, being higher on the hierarchy, are exempt from levies, reinforcing their desirability. The proposed \$15/tonne community-hosting levy for EfW waste is consistent with this framework, balancing environmental policy with fairness for host communities

This modest contribution reflects sound policy and social fairness. It acknowledges that while EfW may be necessary, its implementation must not come at the expense of regional wellbeing.

If Not EfW, Then What?

The Draft Plan makes clear that alternate technologies are not yet ready to meet the scale and urgency of the waste crisis. Without EfW, the only viable short-term alternative is to expand or **reopen landfills, many of which will be located in regional NSW**. This would further entrench the burden on rural communities and undermine the transition to a circular economy.

EfW, if proven safe and properly regulated, offers a more sustainable pathway. But it must be accompanied by equitable policy settings that recognise and compensate host communities.

¹⁶ NSW Environment Protection Authority, *NSW Local Government Waste and Resource Recovery Data Report 2022–23*, EPA 2024P4569, December 2024, ISBN 978-1-923328-06-6, <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/24p4569-warr-data-report-2022-23.pdf>.

Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) Requirement

The aforementioned hosting levy is an arrangement between the Parkes Community and the NSW Government, in addition given the scale, complexity, and potential long-term impacts of the proposed EfW facility, Parkes Shire Council strongly recommends that the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) include a provision requiring the proponent to work directly with Council to negotiate and enter into a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA). This agreement should outline enforceable commitments to deliver local infrastructure, employment pathways, environmental safeguards, and community development initiatives. A VPA is a critical mechanism to ensure that host communities receive tangible and lasting benefits, from the proponent and that the planning process reflects genuine partnership and shared responsibility.

Recommendation

1. Council urges the NSW Government to develop a community fund by adopting a **\$15/tonne Community-hosting levy**, structured similarly to the landfill levy and applied at the source of waste generation. This measure would:
 1. Demonstrate a commitment to fairness and regional inclusion;
 2. Strengthen community engagement and trust;
 3. Help avoid the community division seen in Renewable Energy Zones;
 4. Ensure that the transition to EfW is not a win-lose proposition, but a shared endeavour.
2. That the SEARs include a mandatory requirement for the proponent to work with Parkes Shire Council to negotiate and enter into a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA), with enforceable commitments to infrastructure, employment, environmental safeguards, and community development.

7. Summary of Recommendations

1. That the NSW Government immediately initiate a coordinated, whole-of-government engagement process with the Parkes community regarding the EfW proposal. That relevant agencies, including Planning, Environment, Health, and Regional Development, be tasked with providing clear, accessible information on the risks, benefits, and regulatory framework of EfW technology.
2. That independent experts be engaged to facilitate community forums and provide impartial assessments of the proposed facility.
3. That the Chief Scientist and Engineer be required to review the “2020 Energy from Waste” report, with particular attention to the information circulated with the Parkes community on the adverse health effects of these facilities. The Chief Scientist and Engineer should make a determination if these facilities are indeed safe near food sources and communities such as Parkes (or anywhere else).
4. If an EfW plant proceeds, there should be a requirement that the EfW facility be fitted with **Best Available Techniques (BAT)** and required to continuously be upgraded to comply with **international best practice**, such as the **EU BAT** for waste incineration, as it changes from time to time.
5. If an EfW plant proceeds, there should be a requirement that **Real-time emissions data** be made publicly available, and that facilities be required to **monitor and report under “Other Than Normal Operating Conditions” (OTNOC)** such as start-up and shutdown periods.
6. That the Chief Scientist and Engineer also investigate **international best practice** emission monitoring requirements.
7. That the NSW Government publicly articulate its policy position on EfW infrastructure in regional NSW, including its role in addressing Sydney’s waste crisis.
8. That future infrastructure proposals of this scale include mandatory early-stage community engagement led by government, not solely by private proponents.
9. Cumulative Impact Assessment: The Parkes EfW proposal must be assessed in the context of other State Significant Developments (SSDs) in the region, including the Parkes Special Activation Precinct (SAP) and large-scale renewable energy projects. Evaluating the project in isolation risks overlooking the broader cumulative impacts on land use, infrastructure, and regional industries, particularly agriculture.
10. Agricultural Risk and Market Perception: Council is concerned that agriculture is not explicitly addressed in other EfW SEARs. A targeted assessment is needed to evaluate both the physical risks of contamination and the reputational risks to agricultural outputs. This includes potential impacts on enterprise costs, productivity, and market access, especially in export markets where consumer perception can be as influential as scientific evidence.
11. Agricultural Supply Chain Impacts: The SEARs should require consideration of the full agricultural supply chain, including upstream and downstream infrastructure such as livestock saleyards, grain handling facilities, and specialised enterprises. These systems are integral to the regional economy and may be affected directly or indirectly by the EfW facility.
12. Application of Large-Scale Solar Guidelines: The NSW Large-Scale Solar Energy Guidelines provide a robust framework for assessing regional economic impacts. Council recommends that a Level 3 regional economic impact assessment, as outlined in the Solar Guidelines, be

applied to the Parkes EfW project to ensure consistency and thoroughness in evaluating economic outcomes.

13. Enhanced Monitoring Requirements: Community confidence in the safety of EfW technology is closely tied to transparency and monitoring. Council notes that some substances, such as dioxins, are not currently subject to continuous monitoring. If technically feasible, continuous monitoring of all emissions should be mandated. This would significantly improve public trust and regulatory oversight.
14. All levels of government should consistently advocate the waste hierarchy as the preferred approach to waste management, with EfW considered only after all viable recycling and reuse options.
15. A comprehensive, evidence-based public information campaign is urgently needed to explain EfW's role in the waste management mix. If EfW is safe, this must be clearly and credibly communicated. If it poses unacceptable risks, it should be removed from the policy framework.
16. All EfW proposals in NSW must demonstrate that all waste, without exception, undergoes validated pre-treatment or sorting at off-site waste transfer stations prior to incineration. This ensures that recyclable and reusable materials are diverted from EfW and supports circular economy principles.
17. The NSW EPA must require EfW proponents to explicitly outline how they will meet the resource recovery criteria for mixed waste, as defined in the NSW Energy from Waste Policy Statement. This should include measurable targets and independent verification mechanisms.
18. To reduce landfill dependency and promote material recovery, EfW facilities should be required to implement on-site ash processing. This enables potential reuse of incinerator ash in construction or other industries and minimizes environmental impact.
19. The NSW Government must undertake a critical analysis of whether residual waste destined for landfill can be realistically managed through alternative technologies or enhanced recycling systems, before approving EfW projects. This includes revisiting the waste hierarchy and prioritizing waste avoidance, reuse, and recycling.
20. Regional communities such as Parkes must be treated as partners, not passive recipients of Sydney's waste. The Government should commit to ongoing dialogue, transparent planning, and equitable distribution of both the burdens and benefits of waste infrastructure
21. Establish a Community Consultative Committee (Similar to that required by Mines) with an independent chair and a binding Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) for any regional town hosting an EfW facility, including:
 1. Local job creation
 2. Targeted 10% trainee/apprentice program particularly in modern jobs
 3. Infrastructure investment
 4. Environmental safeguards
 5. Community representation in oversight committees
22. If EfW facilities proceed they should be government supported to optimise regional benefits including:
 - Participate in any industrial symbiosis (such as steam distribution and behind the meter local electricity distribution)

- Optimise industrial tourism opportunities, where students and researchers can visit the facilities for educational purposes.
 - Facilitate research. Provide facilities where researchers are able to conduct research on the EfW facility performance, the emissions, by product research and other recycling initiatives.
23. Conduct a comprehensive agricultural impact assessment, including livestock and crop safety, market perception analysis, and long-term soil health monitoring.
 24. Commission an independent valuation study to assess the potential impact on land values and residential growth.
 25. Undertake a full lifecycle environmental and economic analysis of waste transport from Sydney to Parkes, including carbon footprint and infrastructure wear.
 26. Require baseline and ongoing water quality monitoring, with public reporting and contingency planning for contamination events.
 27. Establish a Whole-of-Government Taskforce to oversee community engagement and planning integrity for the Parkes EfW proposal.
 28. Refer the project to the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) from the outset to ensure impartiality and public confidence.
 29. Extend the public exhibition period for the Environmental Impact Statement to a minimum of eight weeks.
 30. Mandate a Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP) as part of the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs).
 31. Ensure community representation in all stages of planning and oversight, including participation in the IPC process.
 32. Require transparent reporting of all community engagement activities and outcomes.
 33. Council urges the NSW Government to develop a community fund by adopting a **\$15/tonne Community-hosting levy**, structured similarly to the landfill levy and applied at the source of waste generation. This measure would:
 - Demonstrate a commitment to fairness and regional inclusion;
 - Strengthen community engagement and trust;
 - Help avoid the community division seen in Renewable Energy Zones;
 - Ensure that the transition to EfW is not a win-lose proposition, but a shared endeavour.
 34. That the SEARs include a mandatory requirement for the proponent to work with Parkes Shire Council to negotiate and enter into a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA), with enforceable commitments to infrastructure, employment, environmental safeguards, and community development.

8. Conclusion

Parkes Shire Council appreciates the opportunity to contribute to this important inquiry and reiterates its commitment to constructive engagement, evidence-based planning, and community wellbeing. The proposed Energy from Waste (EfW) facility in Parkes presents both potential opportunities and significant risks. Council does not oppose innovation or infrastructure development, but insists that safety, transparency, and equity must be the foundation of any decision.

This submission has outlined the community's concerns regarding health, environmental integrity, agricultural viability, and planning transparency. It has also acknowledged the broader waste management challenges facing New South Wales and the strategic role EfW may play in addressing them. However, Council maintains that no EfW facility should proceed unless its safety can be independently and scientifically verified, and unless host communities are treated as genuine partners in the process.

Council calls on the NSW Government to adopt a whole-of-government approach, ensure independent oversight, and implement a fair and transparent community-hosting levy to support impacted communities. The people of Parkes deserve clarity, respect, and meaningful participation in decisions that affect their future.

Parkes Shire Council stands ready to work collaboratively with government, industry, and the community to ensure that any EfW proposal is assessed with integrity, implemented with fairness, and delivers lasting benefits to the region

9. Authorisation

The above submission was considered by Parkes Council at the ordinary meeting held on 21 October 2025, where council resolved to approve this submission for submittal to the inquiry.

10. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Chronology of Parkes Special Activation Precinct and EfW

Event Date	Event
1 August 2017	Parkes SAP - The elected Council was first introduced to the concept which eventually developed into the Special Activation Precinct (SAP) in a strategic workshop. Principle included large areas with adequate buffer zones for businesses to develop without affecting neighbours. It was initiated by an abattoir investor, who could not find land suitably zoned, with buffers and service. The initial principle was for agricultural value adding, as over 65% of local produce was transported out of the Shire with no-value-adding.
15 September 2017	Parkes SAP - The SAP concept was introduced to The Hon Rick Colless MLC, Duty MLC for Central West. After the presentation an undertaking was made to bring the Deputy Premier to the region to see the concept.
31 October 2017	The Hon John Barilaro & The Hon Rick Colless MLC visited Parkes to investigate Councils concept. As a result of the meeting Mr Barilaro activated a number of senior bureaucrats to fully develop the concept.
5 June 2018	Council was first introduced to the EfW concept in a presentation from a proponent on EfW. That development did not proceed as EPA advised the proponent that there was no framework and the approval process would take a number of years. The concept was based on using the Parkes National Logistics HUB to aggregate waste and recyclables. The project was a concept only, nothing formal was lodged.
30 July 2018	Parkes SAP - The Hon Gladys Berejiklian & Deputy Premier John Barilaro announced at Bathurst the NSW 20 year Economic Vision including “Parkes Special Activation Precinct”. This was the initiation of the Parkes SAP and in essence the transfer of the concept from Council to the State Government.
28/9/2018	2017 Parliamentary Inquiry - Parliamentary EfW inquiry government response - predominately accepting recommendations.
May 2019	Parkes SAP - The recycling precinct and EfW facility was identified as a potential inclusion in the SAP, during State Government led Enquiry-by-Design workshop, where a room of experts (~60) gathered to help design the SAP. The resultant structure plan was then prepared and published. https://shared-drupal-s3fs.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/master-test/fapub_pdf/A+Parks/Parkes+SAP+-+Structure+Plan.pdf
May 2019	Parkes SAP - A Community Statement was also published at that time which featured a full page on Energy from Waste. A full copy available at; https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-04/Regional-Snowy-Hydro-SAPS-Parkes-Community-Statement.pdf
September 2019	Parkes SAP - A Draft Masterplan for the SAP was then prepared and published, which created sub-precincts including the Resource Recovery and Recycling Sub-Precinct. The draft Master Plan, which was underpinned by a community

engagement program and was put on public exhibition from 20 September until 20 October 2019, is available at;

https://shared-drupal-s3fs.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/master-test/fapub_pdf/A+Activation/2.+Parkes+SAP+-+draft+master+plan.pdf).

- September 2019 Parkes SAP - During this time, landowners, stakeholders and the wider community were invited to provide submissions. At the same time, the Department also exhibited the Explanation of Intended Effects (EIE) for a new State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) that enables the planning and delivery of the Special Activation Precincts;
- https://shared-drupal-s3fs.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/master-test/fapub_pdf/A+Activation/1.+Explanation+of+Intended+Effect+-+Activation+Precincts+SEPP.pdf
- December 2019 2017 Parliamentary Inquiry - In response to the Legislative Councils recommendation, Minister for Energy and Environment, the Hon Matt Kean MP requested the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer establish a working group to undertake a review of Energy from Waste in NSW, to ensure proposals adopt international best practice standards and controls to protect human health and environment.
- May 2020 NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer handed down report on Energy from Waste, Identifying departures from International best practice.
- June 2020 Parkes SAP - The final precinct Masterplan was published in June 2020;
- https://shared-drupal-s3fs.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/master-test/fapub_pdf/00+-+Parkes+SAP/Parkes+Master+Plan
- Other documents can be found at..
- <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/activation-precincts>
- 22 July 2020 Parkes SAP – Media Statement, John Barilaro at the Pacific National terminal in Parkes
- A vision of the Parkes Shire Council for over 20 years came to full realisation on Wednesday with the commitment of \$185.4 million from the NSW Government to the Special Activation Precinct.*
- “I am really excited to be here today to see this vision come to fruition,” said Deputy Premier, John Barilaro at the Pacific National terminal in Parkes.*
- He said the funding would kick-off the delivery of the precinct and fund vital infrastructure to make it easier and more attractive for businesses to set up in Parkes.*
- With the prospect of creating 3,000 direct jobs, the Deputy Premier predicted the ripple effect would transform Parkes from a sleepy rural town into a cosmopolitan city of the future, as it happened in Orange when the NSW Department of Industry was moved there.*

“The exciting part about the Special Activation Precinct (SAP) is that the investment is not about politics, but it is the right thing to do for the future of this region, the Central West and the state of NSW.

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| November 2020 | NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer handed down report on Energy from Waste, with additional advice on research completed since the May reports release.

https://npd-web.matrix.squiz.cloud/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1431/FINAL-Report_EFW-with-additional-advice.pdf |
| November 2020 | EPA response to the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer report, supports the recommendations and commits to implementation. The final standards were reported to be the most stringent in the world and reflected international best practice. |
| December 2020 | RGDC calls Expressions of Interest for EFW facility at Parkes SAP closing Feb 2021. Council was excluded from participation on the tender panel. |
| June 2021 | NSW EPA – release NSW Energy from Waste Policy Statement. The NSW Energy from Waste Policy statement sets out the policy framework and overarching criteria that apply to facilities in NSW proposing to thermally treat waste or waste-derived materials for the recovery of energy |
| June 2021 | Department of Planning, Industry and Environment – NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041 - The purpose of NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041 is to guide NSW’s transition to a circular economy by reducing waste, improving resource efficiency, and ensuring safe waste management over the next 20 years, including EfW. |
| 10 September 2021 | Media release - John Barilaro, Deputy Premier & Matt Kean, Minister for Energy and Environment advising Parkes was confirmed as one of four locations across NSW for EfW in the NSW Government’s <i>Energy from Waste Infrastructure Plan</i> that supports the <i>NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041</i> . The <i>NSW EPA Policy on Energy from Waste</i> was published in June 2021 and provides detail including resource recovery criteria. |
| 15 March 2022 | Report to Open council on Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Amendment (Thermal Energy from Waste) Regulation 2021 & Joint Submission See agenda item 9.3. Councils response to Energy from Waste Infrastructure Plan. |

Recommendation That Council,

1. Acknowledges the Parkes Special Activation Precincts inclusion in the EPA Energy from Waste Infrastructure Plan 2041, and the Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Amendment (Thermal Energy from Waste) Regulation 2021.
2. Supports the Draft Joint submission - On the NSW Governments Energy from Waste Infrastructure Plan 2041, by Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Lithgow City Council, Parkes Shire Council and Richmond Valley Council, including,
 - a) **The need for a state-initiated education/communication campaign on EfW,**
 - b) **The need to establish a Community Impact/Economic Innovation Fund ensuring economic benefit (based on tonnage) flows through to affected communities,**

c) The need for NSW Government to work with the Councils to develop a framework for any Voluntary Planning Agreement associated with an EfW proposal,

d) Support the Mayor signing the Joint Submission on behalf of Council,

e) Support the Mayor & General Managers inclusion in a delegation to discuss the submission with relevant State Ministers.

3. Makes a submission to the EPA on the Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Amendment (Thermal Energy from Waste) Regulation 2021, consistent with this report.

4. Request the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (e.g. SEARs) for any proposed project, include the provision for a comprehensive Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP) as part of EIS preparation.

<https://www.parkes.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/council/meeting-business-papers/2022/march-15/agenda-for-ordinary-council-meeting-15-march-2022.pdf>

March 2022 Parkes Council formal submission to NSW Government requesting establishment of Community fund for impacted communities and state education campaign.

March 2022 Letters to various Ministers seeking support of Joint Submission requests

The Hon. Paul Toole MP, Member for Bathurst, Deputy Premier

The Hon. James Griffin MP, Minister for Environment and Heritage

The Hon. Matt Kean MP, Treasurer, and Minister for Energy

The Hon. Wendy Tuckerman MP, Member for Goulburn

The Hon. Sam Faraway MLC, Member of the Legislative Council

Mr Philip Donato, MP, Member for Orange

Mr Christopher Gulaptis, MP, Member for Clarence

4-5 May 2022 The RGDC held community drop-in sessions on 4-5 May 2022, with representatives from EfW, also...Fulton-Hogan (SAP Contractors), Georgiou (Newell Highway Bypass contractors), Brightmark, Regional NSW, RGDC and Parkes Council.

June 2022 Joint submission to Government (Richmond Valley Council, Lithgow Council and Parkes Council). Seeking Government support and statewide education campaign and establishment of Community fund for affected communities. Prepared by MRA Consulting Group and H4CO.

28 July 2022 RGDC Media release naming three shortlisted consortia, with an accompanying information sheet. Also flagged 4 August online information session.

[Circular economy vision for Parkes one step closer | NSW Government](#)

The three consortia shortlisted to submit binding proposals in the Parkes precinct are:

- New Energy Corporation Pty Ltd
- Veolia Recycling & Recovery Pty Ltd, I-Environment Investments Pacific Pty Ltd
- Tribe Infrastructure Australia Pty Ltd, Masdar Tribe Australia Pty Ltd, Acciona Concesiones

S.L., John Beever (AUST.) Pty Limited and
Acciona Construction Australia Pty Ltd

- 4 August 2022 RGDC public online information session on EfW. Approximately 68 registrations, ~40 questions. Panel included RGDC, Dr Jackie Wright (EnRisk - Health Expert), Niels Jakobsen (Chief advisor on sustainable energy at Viegand Maagøe, Netherlands - International Expert on EfW), John King and Alex Uptis - Talis & Deborah Palmer (WSP) as facilitator (Session 5-6.30pm).
- 13 March 2024 Letter to Hon. Tara Moriarty MLC – Handed to Minister during a meeting at parliament house. Raised various SAP issues but stressed the importance of Social licence for EfW.
- 12 November 2024 Letter to Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC, asking for a whole-of-government approach, including education campaign, hosting levy. Pointing out the looming waste crisis and the need to work together to avoid losing community support.
- 25 February 2025 NSW EPA announced a review of its Energy from Waste (EfW) Framework. An Options Paper has been released with comments being accepted up until 8 April 2025.
- 4 March 2025 Letter to Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC – Asking for some proactive opportunities to get in front of EfW information and be proactive.
- 18 March 2025 Report to Open council on EPA EfW Option report, with draft submission. See agenda item 13.1.

RECOMMENDATION That:

1. Council endorses the attached submission on the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Energy from Waste (EfW) - Options Paper (March 2025), significantly summarised in the points below;
 - (a) Council is supportive of the permissibility of EfW facilities in the Parkes Special Activation Precinct.
 - (b) Council will be absolutely uncompromising to ensure that any facility complies with the standards and controls to protect human health and the environment.
 - (c) Council is aware that the NSW Energy from Waste Policy Statement reflects the latest advice on air emissions standards from the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer, to ensure proposals adopt international best practice standards and controls to protect human health and the environment.
 - (d) **A state level education campaign to assist communities understand the impacts of EfW would be valuable.**
 - (e) While the proponents of these facilities must meet their social responsibility obligations, it is our view that the source of the generation must also contribute, albeit in a small way, to help meet the social licence obligations to the hosting community. The onus should not be on the developer alone.
 - (f) **Council proposes a State Government hosting levy of approximately \$10 per tonne** on waste diverted to EfW facilities from large metropolitan centres. Particularly to recognised that recycling (which does not attract a levy) is the preferred ultimate option for all waste, however EfW is much preferred over waste going to landfill (which currently attracts a large levy).
 - (g) That 50% of the levy be diverted to the hosting local government and the residual to the State to administer the process.

- (h) Households in the Sydney basin generate on average around 600kg/household/yr of residual waste. Instead of being buried in landfill and producing methane emissions, that waste could generate baseload power for the State at an EfW facility. Consequently, we are certain that with this knowledge, households of the Sydney Ordinary Council Meeting Agenda 18 March 2025 Item 13.1 Page 87 basin would be satisfied to know that their county cousin receiving large volumes of metropolitan waste at an EfW facility, were being compensated in a small way for an outlay of less than 12c per week.
- (i) The objective of the hosting levy would be to support community projects, generate employment opportunities through economic development activities, allow the employment of a circular economy expert, seek to build a legacy fund for post-closure of the facility and critically, help gain social license

https://parkes.infocouncil.biz/Open/2025/03/OCM_20250318_AGN_219_AT.PDF

FMarch 2025	Council makes formal submission to EPA on EfW Options Paper December 2024, confirming points above from Council meeting of 18 March 2025.
19 March 2025	Letter to Hon. Tara Moriarty MLC – Handed to the Minister during a meeting. Requested State-level education campaign, Shared responsibility, Hosting levy. Asking the Minister to support our request to Letter to Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC.
19 March 2025	Letter to Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC – Seeking a meeting to discuss social licence, hosting levy and working together.
24 March 2025	Successful Consortium announced led by Tribe Infrastructure Group (Tribe) and including Tadweer Group, HiQ Group (HiQ) and Kanadevia Inova (KVI).
28 March 2025	Mayor and Deputy Mayor travel to Sydney to meet with Minister for the Environment, with local Member Phil Donato, asking for EPA EfW Options paper submission period to be extended. Also, that a statewide education campaign be provided to provide unbiased information on EfW and also if EfW is ultimately established in Parkes a community fund should be established to acknowledge the community impacts.
4 April 2025	Mayoral letter to EPA CEO Tony Chappel, seeking reassurance that the EPA will protect the community with is handling of EfW assessment
9 April 2025	Mayoral Letter to Secretary Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, Kiersten Fishburn - seeking reassurance that the Dept Planning will protect the community with is handling of EfW assessment.
22 April 2025	Letter to Secretary Department of Planning, Kiersten Fishburn, seeking clarification of a number of points made by Anti-incinerator advocate Jane Bremmer.
30 April 2025	Request to Chief Scientist & Engineer to discuss the EfW and possibility of a community information session.
May 2025	Draft NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan (see submission 25 June 2025) https://hdp-au-prod-app-nswepa-yoursay-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/6217/4925/1672/25p4590-draft-waste-infrastructure-plan.pdf

2 May 2025	EPA Reply to Mayors letter of 4 April 2025.
8 May 2025	Chief Scientist & Engineer – indicated its an EPA issue and they would work with them.
22 May 2025	Response to Mayors letter of 22 April – Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure.
25 June 2025	Councils’ response to the Draft Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan – Stressing the need for 1) State-wide education campaign, Public clarification of the government position on EfW, Hosting levy.
23 July 2025	Hon Scott Barrett call for Parliamentary Inquiry
26 July 2025	No Parkes Energy-From-Waste Incinerator Community Information Night, including inuendo by Mr Maynard that Council corruption is involved.
29 July 2025	Mayoral Media release supporting Barrett’s Parliamentary Inquiry
30 July 2025	Referral of Maynard allegations to ICAC
30 July 2025	Mayoral letter to premier supporting Parliamentary Inquiry and asking for a hearing to be held in Parkes.
30 July 2025	Letter to Department of planning asking for Agriculture etc to be included in SEAR’s – Initiated by the Economic Development Committee
6 August 2025	Parliamentary Inquiry debated and supported by all major parties https://youtu.be/RjInm9Nyyk4
7 August 2025	Mayor met with Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC, outlined Council concerns about lack of government information and requested a Parliamentary inquiry hearing be held in Parkes.
12 August 2025	Reply to Mayoral letter to premier Minns supporting Parliamentary Inquiry, via The Hon Penny Sharpe
21 August 2025	Mayoral letter to The Hon. Paul Scully, MP, Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, requesting 1) EfW development application be directed to the Independent Planning Pannel for determination from the outset. 2) that the 28-day exhibition period be extended to 8 weeks, 3) that a hearing be held in Parkes.
18 September 2025	ICAC advised in relation to Maynard allegations, “We have determined that we will not be investigating the issues raised, as the information before the Commission is not sufficient to indicate a reasonable likelihood that corrupt conduct might have occurred.”
22 September 2025	Mayoral letter to The Hon. Paul Scully, MP, Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, reiterating request of 21 August 2025.

Appendix 2 – Media Release and Fact Sheet – EfW (28/7/2022)

Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation
Department of Regional NSW



Thursday, 28 July 2022

Media Release

*****EMBARGOED UNTIL THURSDAY, 28 JULY 2022*****

ENERGY FROM WASTE SHORTLIST FOR PARKES

The NSW Government has shortlisted three groups to submit proposals to deliver an energy from waste facility as part of the Parkes Special Activation Precinct's circular economy, to drive jobs in new industries in the central west.

The government is taking a considered approach to establish a facility that considers the priorities of the Parkes community and reduces carbon emissions by diverting waste from landfill, supports investment in the area and meets international standards for eco-industrial precincts.

The proposed facility was identified during the precinct's master planning as a key part of attracting ongoing investment into the precinct through the supply of reliable energy to support heavy energy users and achieve the precinct's sustainability goals.

The three consortia shortlisted to submit binding proposals in the Parkes precinct are:

1. New Energy Corporation Pty Ltd
2. Veolia Recycling & Recovery Pty Ltd, I-Environment Investments Pacific Pty Ltd
3. Tribe Infrastructure Australia Pty Ltd, Masdar Tribe Australia Pty Ltd, Acciona Concesiones S.L., John Beever (AUST.) Pty Limited and Acciona Construction Australia Pty Ltd

The proposed energy from waste facility would be part of the dedicated resource recovery and recycling sub-precinct that is located to minimise noise, air quality, odour and dust generating impacts on the community.

In NSW, proposed energy from waste facilities are required to comply with strict new emissions standards set out in the NSW Environment Protection Agency (EPA) Energy from Waste Policy Statement, that meet and exceed world's best practice.

The strict emission limits, and monitoring requirements to demonstrate compliance, will be included in an Environment Protection Licence (issued by the NSW EPA) that any energy from waste facility requires to operate in NSW.

The government expects to award the tender in late-2022 at which time the successful proponent will proceed to apply for the relevant planning and environmental approvals required.

An online Q&A session with energy from waste experts is being held for the Parkes community on Thursday, 4 August from 5-6pm. The government will continue to work closely with Parkes Shire Council, stakeholders and the community throughout this process.

Energy from waste has been safely and effectively used around the world for the past 50 years, with over 2,000 plants operating worldwide including over 1,000 in Japan, over 400 across Europe and at least 80 in the United States.

There are three large-scale energy from waste facilities proceeding in Western Australia and a further three approved in Victoria.

For more information on energy from waste and the Parkes precinct visit:
rgdc.nsw.gov.au/precincts/parkes.

Media: Antonia Muir Mobile Number: 0438 310 830

Energy from waste

New South Wales is transitioning to a circular economy over the next 20 years. This means we will continue to minimise what we throw away, and use and reuse our resources efficiently, making them as productive as possible.

We will end up with less waste, less emissions and less harm to our environment while boosting innovation, to help drive our economy and create more jobs.

To achieve this, we need to have the services and infrastructure in place to deal with our waste safely and efficiently, to ensure it does not become a problem for future generations. We also need to work together with consumers, industries, and other governments to make the circular economy a reality.

Energy from waste is an effective way to manage residual waste that cannot be recycled. This waste is diverted from landfill and used to create energy, delivering positive outcomes for the community and the environment.

The NSW Government supports energy from waste in the right locations and where it is used to manage genuine residual waste – not as an alternative to waste reduction or recycling.

Energy from waste process



What is energy from waste?

Energy from waste is a process where residual waste (that cannot be recycled) is converted into energy through a biological or a thermal process to create heat, electricity or gas/liquid fuels.

The energy from waste process produces some waste, as ash, which may then be reused for road construction purposes and recovering metals for recycling.

What is residual waste?

Residual waste is the waste left over after all recyclable or re-usable material has been removed following a resource recovery process or source separation collection system. Residual waste is the waste that is currently sent to landfill.

Fast facts



Proven technology

Globally over 2,000 energy plants operating



Negative air pressure

The facility is designed so air pollutants and odours can't escape



Waste volume reduction

An energy from waste facility combusts waste under controlled conditions that reduce the waste volume by about 90 per cent.

What about pollution? Is it safe?

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Energy from Waste Policy Statement requires proven technology, proven operator and a proven waste stream and provides some of the strictest requirements in the world for protection of human health. Any energy from waste facility in NSW would be required to have an Environment Protection Licence (EPL) that sets maximum emission limits in emissions from the facility, that cannot be exceeded. These emission limits are set under the Energy from Waste Policy.

Modern pollution control equipment for industrial plants, such as energy from waste facilities, use a variety of measures to control and measure particulate and other gaseous emissions.

For example, using the best available controls, as required by the approval conditions, can see 99 per cent or more of fine particulates removed from emissions.

Ongoing sampling, monitoring and reporting of pollutants in emissions will be a condition of approval for any energy from waste facility in NSW. This will ensure best practice in health risk management well into the future of operations.

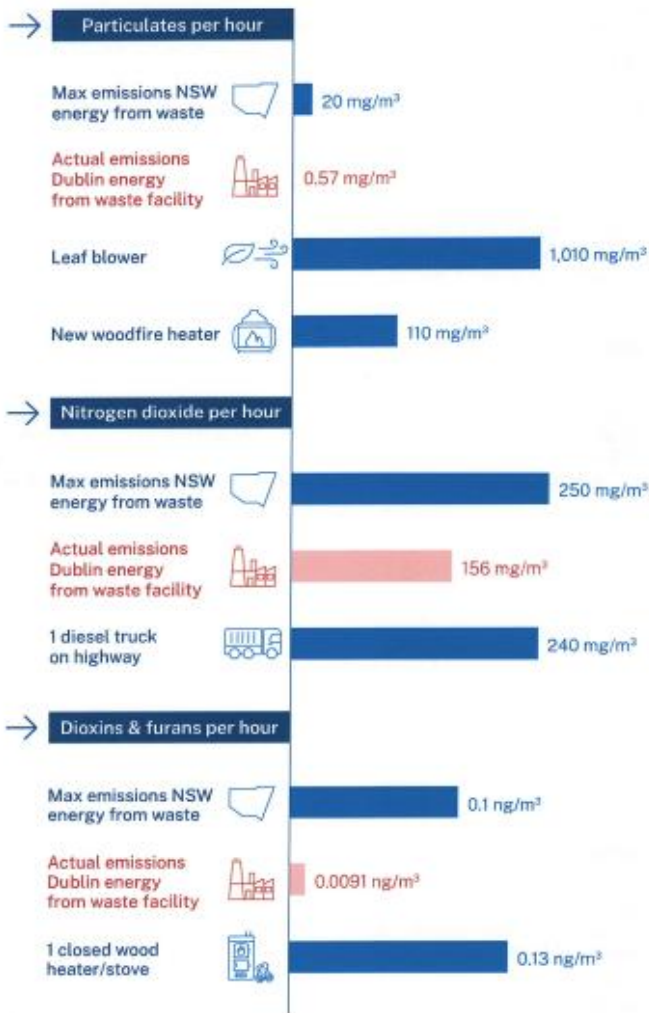
Improved technology means lower emissions

The technology used to control or prevent emissions from energy from waste facilities has improved significantly over the past 25 years, in line with the enforcement of increasingly strict emissions standards worldwide.

For instance, Japan has over 1,000 energy from waste facilities, where the technological improvements and emission controls saw a 99% reduction in emissions from their facilities between 1997 and 2010.

Emissions from proposed NSW energy from waste facilities are required to be no greater than the emissions standards set in the NSW EPA Energy from Waste Policy Statement, that meet and exceed world's best practice.

Emission comparisons



For more information, please contact:

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