

## **Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee submission for inquiry into waste-to-energy infrastructure.**

Dear Committee,

I have been a Sunbury resident for over 40 years and during that time my wife and I have raised our two boys, actively participated in many sporting clubs and Community interest groups. We have worked and attended University in Sunbury and are passionate about our town, its history and its community.

Any proposed Waste to Energy Incinerator will seriously impact our standard of living and the health and welfare of fellow residents, both now and for future generations.

Based on the information available, the proposed WtE incinerator would process up to 750,000 tonnes of waste per year and include a 90m chimney stack situated within 1000m from current housing developments and new developments already in the pipeline.

Impact of WtE on community, transport and environment:

- Health (respiratory illness, cancers, birth defects) and air quality would be adversely affected by the release of fine particles of Nano plastics which cannot be filtered from the air, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, toxic gases, odours and dioxins. All within close proximity to residential housing, schools, childcare, a shopping centre, waterways and one of only 2 main access roads to and from the city for the township. The long term effects of WtE incineration are not yet known but interim scientific reports are critical of this form of waste management.

*Reference – NSW inquiry into proposed energy from waste facilities presented by Member for Goulburn, The Hon Wendy Tuckerman 29 October 2025*

*The health impacts of waste incineration: a systematic review. Veolia Woodlawn Advanced Energy Recovery Centre (ARC) at Tarago.:*

- Contamination risks and food-system vulnerability. The plume of smoke from the incinerator can impact properties many kilometers from the site depending on wind direction. Pollution not able to be filtered (PFAS or forever chemicals) deposit on gardens and farmlands, the produce from which can potentially eaten by livestock and consumers.
- The residue from incineration is toxic ash which contains heavy metals and poisons which have to be carefully wrapped and transported elsewhere, similar to asbestos. This creates unnecessary risks associated with the handling and transportation of materials through populated areas.

Note: HIQ was fined by EPA Victoria in 2024 for improper waste cover and improper disposal of asbestos waste.

- The WtE Incinerator requires 180,000 lts of water daily in order to produce energy through steam generators. Only a portion of this water is recyclable and the majority of power generated will be required to run the facility, leaving little to be fed back into the grid or be of any use to the local community.

- The HIQ Sunbury site is bordered by Emu Creek, a subsidiary of Jacksons Creek which flows into the Maribyrnong River and Port Phillip Bay. Emu Creek is a significant natural waterway and habitat corridor, particularly known for supporting the endangered Growling Grass Frog and is a known habitat for native platypus. Note: HIQ was fined by EPA Victoria in 2024 for improper leachate management.
- Traffic noise, diesel fumes and impact on local roads especially the heritage listed bluestone bridge at Bulla.
- Once approved a reliance on a waste stream for energy counters the need to reduce waste overall. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. A garbage eating monster which has to fed continuously to remain economically viable.

Alternative waste management approach.

- Rather than building garbage hungry, pollution spewing incinerators, reduce the amount of refuse households and industry creates. Victoria's recycling of waste needs reviewing as it currently only captures a fraction of what is possible. Residual, organic and glass bins are a great start but residual waste needs to be regulated by Government to reduce unnecessary volume. For example:
  - Work with Local Government and recycling industries to educate households to streamline the recycling process to reduce their costs in filtering incorrect disposal methods.
  - Create standardized packaging of goods from suppliers (local and international) and outlets to eliminate excessive use of plastics in products and simplify labeling of recyclable packaging.
  - Place tariffs on suppliers and outlets who avoid recycled packaging.
  - Use those tariffs to subsidize innovative recycling homegrown businesses.

I hope that this submission persuades you to deny any WtE Incinerator being located anywhere in Victoria as I believe the risks they present are far too high.

The welfare of our children and grandchildren are at stake.

Yours faithfully

Paul Ross

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