NSW Legislative Council

Select Committee on Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities

Proposed energy from waste facilities

October 2026

Report 1

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Chair: Hon Nichole Overall MLC

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Terms of reference

(1) That a select committee be established to inquire into and report on proposed energy from waste facilities, and in particular:

(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.

The terms of reference for the inquiry were referred to the committee by the Legislative Council on 6 August 2025.[1]

[1] *Minutes,* NSW Legislative Council, 6 August 2025, item 48.

Committee details

Committee membership

Hon Nichole Overall MLC	Nationals	*Chair*
Dr Amanda Cohn MLC	The Greens	*Deputy Chair*
Hon Mark Banasiak MLC*	Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party	
Hon Sarah Kaine MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Natasha Maclaren-Jones MLC	Liberal Party	
Hon Peter Primrose MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Rod Roberts MLC	Independent	
Hon Emily Suvaal MLC	Australian Labor Party	

* Hon Mark Banasiak MLC is a participating member from 3 September 2025 for the duration of the inquiry.

Secretariat

Janelle Taouk, Principal Council Officer
Kevin Cen, Senior Council Officer
Taryne Cullen, Council Officer
Philip Kolotas, Administration Officer
Laura Ismay, Director

Chair's foreword

Every bin of rubbish has an economic, social and environmental consequence, and every community in NSW has a stake in how we manage waste. As our population grows, the challenge is to ensure solutions are well planned, environmentally responsible, and underpinned by the critical social licence required for infrastructure that will operate for decades.

Currently, New South Wales restricts large-scale thermal treatment of waste to Parkes and Goulburn-Mulwaree, with West Lithgow and Tomago recently added as further potential sites. Richmond Valley is to be removed as a nominated precinct, apparently due to lack of interest from potential proponents.

This inquiry was established against a backdrop of significant and sustained concern, particularly in regional communities, on these proposed developments.

This included the basis for the specifically designated regional locations, with consistent questions around fairness and equity: whether it is reasonable to expect regional communities to shoulder the burden of large-scale infrastructure intended to deal with waste generated in, and transported from, Greater Sydney and in the absence of guaranteed, consequential direct benefits for host communities.

Other consistent concerns included the still emerging and largely untested application of this technology at scale in New South Wales; the assessment of impacts, including cumulative; the extent to which communities have been meaningfully engaged; whether claimed environmental and economic benefits are sufficiently established; and the capacity of the NSW Environment Protection Authority to act as both regulator and the agency responsible for the implementation of waste management policy.

A position almost universally agreed upon, including by the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer, was that waste is best managed as close to its source as possible. Transporting hundreds of thousands of tonnes of metropolitan waste to regional facilities hundreds of kilometres away adds to costs, emissions and impacts, including on local infrastructure, and will essentially be borne by councils and passed on to ratepayers.

The Smart Energy Council's July 2026 report, *Waste-to-Energy in Australia: Energy Solution or Problem?*, echoes concerns raised during the inquiry. The report challenges assumptions about emissions reductions and the environmental advantages of waste-to-energy facilities (also known as energy from waste), claims about modern landfill performance, the changing composition of residual waste, and the long-term consequences of creating structural demand for waste feedstock (the input material processed by a facility) potentially working against efforts to reduce waste, increase recycling and move towards a circular economy.

The Victorian Parliament has also just completed an inquiry into waste-to-energy facilities with recommendations for stronger regulation and community safeguards.

Victoria is currently progressing five facilities with no precinct restrictions and a legislated statewide cap of 2.5 million tonnes per year.

In excess of 1400 submissions were received for the New South Wales inquiry and the Committee conducted five public hearings and two well-attended regionally-based public forums in Parkes and Goulburn. We heard from residents, farmers, education and health professionals, local councils, Aboriginal Land Councils, agricultural, environmental and community groups such as the CWA, government agencies, proponents, consultants, and technical experts.

Those supportive of the technology provided information and examples of waste-to-energy facilities' safe operation, primarily in international settings, and outlined commitments to 'stringent' and 'best-practice' regulation and control, the environmental benefits and economic opportunities.

However, the Committee is concerned at the expectation for proponents to be ultimately responsible for engagement, dissemination of information and consultation.

At the conclusion of the inquiry, the central dilemmas remained. These include the lack of transparency and consistency around site selection processes, including the economic rationale.

So too, a failure to gain broad community acceptance. Both the New South Wales and federal governments have acknowledged that in relation to the renewable energy rollout and data centres, social licence must be prioritised. That principle should apply equally to waste-to-energy proposals. Regulatory approval does not, of itself, confirm social licence. Public confidence and trust must be built through transparent decision-making, credible independent assessment, and genuine, guaranteed opportunities for affected communities to influence decisions before they become effectively irreversible.

It is notable that the 'waste crisis' of the 1990s - at which time it was projected that Greater Sydney's landfills would be at capacity by 2006 - led to the approval by the New South Wales Labor government of the Woodlawn Eco-Precinct at Tarago, NSW. It was intended as a 'transition' arrangement while New South Wales moved towards a more integrated waste management system. Almost 30 years later, it appears that New South Wales is again searching for a 'silver bullet' solution without resolving the underlying structural challenges.

This was also highlighted in the 2017 New South Wales parliamentary inquiry into energy from waste technology that successfully recommended that approval for the proposed Eastern Creek facility not proceed. It too, cited concerns - including from the NSW Environment Protection Authority and NSW Health - about potential risks to human health and the environment, uncertainty on future feedstock levels, limited reference data, levels of emissions, the appropriateness of the proposed location and the significant lack of community support. Almost a decade later, similar questions are yet to be fully resolved in relation to the current proposals.

The NSW government needs to look beyond the next landfill deadline, the next facility or the next immediate crisis and ensure that decisions made today do not simply shift the burden of waste from one community to another, and from one generation to another.

This inquiry has been in-depth and complex but is one I have been honoured to chair. Inevitably, it is difficult to encompass and encapsulate every viewpoint and relevant position and so I offer a heartfelt acknowledgement and thanks to all who have been involved, particularly, regional residents. I also extend my appreciation to my Committee colleagues for their efforts, and to the marvellous Secretariat for all they have done in bringing this inquiry and report together in our commitment to achieve constructive outcomes for NSW in how we deal with the challenge of waste into the future.

Hon Nichole Overall MLC
Committee Chair

Findings

Finding 1 **41**

New South Wales, particularly Greater Sydney, is facing increasing waste volumes and declining landfill capacity, placing growing pressure on the resilience of the waste management system and increasing the risk of a waste management crisis.

Finding 2 **41**

Many of the findings of the 2017 Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 6 - Planning and Environment inquiry into energy from waste technology were reinforced by evidence received during this inquiry, with many of the issues remaining inadequately addressed.

Finding 3 **41**

The 2017 Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 6 - Planning and Environment inquiry recommended that the proposed Eastern Creek waste-to-energy facility not be approved, citing unresolved concerns about human health and environmental risks, uncertainty around feedstock and emissions, limited reference data, the appropriateness of the proposed location and a lack of community support.

Finding 4 **42**

The waste crisis in Sydney in the 1990s was a catalyst for the development of the Woodlawn Bioreactor Landfill.

Finding 5 **42**

Proponents and other witnesses, including government representatives, maintained that modern waste-to-energy facilities can operate safely irrespective of location provided they are appropriately designed, regulated and managed.

Finding 6 **42**

Although Western Australia has an operational waste-to-energy facility, the proposed facilities at Parkes and Goulburn Mulwaree would be the first of their kind on the eastern seaboard.

Finding 7 **43**

Modern waste-to-energy facilities operates differently from older facilities, including in design, operating temperatures, advanced flue gas treatment, emissions control and monitoring systems.

Finding 8 **43**

Waste-to-energy processes generate Incinerator Bottom Ash (IBA) and hazardous Air Pollution Control Residues (APCR) which require appropriate management. Existing facilities and capabilities for the safe management and treatment of these residues remain exceptionally limited.

Finding 9 **72**
The proposed facility at Woodlawn is located within the Sydney drinking water catchment.

Finding 10 **72**
There is genuine and understandable community concern about the potential cumulative impacts and other risks associated with waste-to-energy facilities, particularly in agricultural regions and communities reliant on rainwater harvesting.

Finding 11 **72**
While proponents point to the safety of modern waste-to-energy technology, there is not yet long-term assessment of their impact. In this context, asking communities to accept even the possibility of long-term health impacts is likely to heighten concern and, understandably, reinforces expectations for a high threshold of demonstrated and enforceable health protections.

Finding 12 **73**
The Peak Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council identified potential significant mental health impacts for Aboriginal families arising from ongoing fear and uncertainty associated with the proposed waste-to-energy facility and concerns regarding environmental degradation.

Finding 13 **73**
Many regional stakeholders expressed the view that the proposed waste-to-energy facilities in Parkes and Goulburn Mulwaree should not proceed. However, where waste-to-energy is proposed, stakeholders identified a range of protections they consider necessary to safeguard human health, the environment and regional communities.

Finding 14 **74**
Perceived or actual contamination from waste-to-energy facilities could adversely affect consumer confidence, the reputation of regional produce and access to domestic and export markets, particularly for premium agricultural products. Concerns are heightened where contamination could affect legally enforceable export certification and market-access requirements.

Finding 15 **75**
Community confidence in the NSW Environment Protection Authority has been eroded by compliance issues at the Woodlawn Eco Precinct and perceived limited enforcement. Community concerns also extend to the NSW Environment Protection Authority's capacity and resourcing to regulate emerging waste-to-energy technologies, and its dual role in implementing waste-to-energy policy and regulating the sector.

Finding 16 **75**
Waste-to-energy facilities may have the potential to deliver regional investment and employment, support electricity generation, and provide community benefits through mechanisms such as community benefit funds.

Finding 17 **76**
Local councils and residents are concerned about potential impacts on infrastructure, waste transport, property values and tourism, as well as the distribution of costs and benefits between metropolitan waste generators, private proponents, the State and host communities.

Finding 18 **76**
At least one Sydney council has reported that domestic waste management charges have doubled in the past decade, and further increases are likely if transport distances increase.

Finding 19 **76**
The waste levy generates almost $1 billion in revenue each year, with less than 10 per cent reinvested in waste and environmental programs and the majority directed to consolidated revenue.

Finding 20 **77**
Some stakeholders are of the view that new landfill capacity could be delivered more quickly and at substantially lower cost than waste-to-energy facilities.

Finding 21 **77**
Transporting waste from Sydney hundreds of kilometres to the regions poses various risks, such as increased ratepayer charges and transport-related carbon emissions, with some industry sources estimating that this cost could be as high as $25 million.

Finding 22 **77**
Local government representatives are of the view that, to secure long-term council contracts, waste-to-energy facilities would need to remain cost-competitive with landfill, including the full life-cycle costs of transport, processing and residual waste management.

Finding 23 **94**
There is strong and sustained regional opposition to the current waste-to-energy proposals in New South Wales.

Finding 24 **95**
Regional communities perceive that they are being unfairly asked to bear a disproportionate share of the risks associated with managing metropolitan waste, without commensurate benefits.

Finding 25 **95**
The Woodlawn Eco Precinct receives approximately 800,000 tonnes of waste annually, transported more than 200 kilometres from Sydney, representing around 40 per cent of Sydney's residual waste.

Finding 26 **95**
The existing policy framework, which prohibits waste-to-energy facilities across Greater Sydney while permitting them in four nominated regional precincts, has fuelled perceptions of a 'double standard'. The absence of clear, consistent and transparent reasoning for selecting these precincts has contributed to community opposition.

Finding 27 **96**
The existing policy framework excludes the development of waste processing infrastructure outside identified precincts and is impacting proposals that are perceived to incorporate waste-to-energy elements.

Finding 28 **97**
Waste could be more effectively managed closer to where it is generated, reducing the costs, resources and impacts associated with transporting waste over long distances.

Finding 29 **99**
Community consultation and engagement for proposed regional waste-to-energy facilities has been inadequate, particularly in potential host communities.

Finding 30 **99**
Community consultation concerning proposed waste-to-energy facilities should not rest primarily with local councils or project proponents. The absence of a trusted body providing impartial and reliable information has contributed to public uncertainty and opposition.

Finding 31 **101**
Social licence has been further eroded by the impacts and unintended consequences of State Significant Developments on regional communities, contributing to avoidable distress, mental health impacts and, in some instances, strains on social cohesion.

Finding 32 **114**
Greater focus is needed at the start of a product's lifecycle, rather than solely at the end of the waste stream. Stronger upstream regulation and shared responsibility between producers and waste generators are essential to encourage better product design and improve material recovery.

Finding 33 **115**
Significantly greater investment is needed across the upper tiers of the waste hierarchy, particularly in waste reduction, improved source separation and collection systems, advanced recycling infrastructure, and product stewardship.

Finding 34 **116**
Targeted grants could help councils, businesses and industry establish local waste recovery capabilities, enabling materials to be captured, processed and reused onsite rather than sent to landfill.

Finding 35 **116**
Local governments are facing increasing financial and operational pressures across their waste management responsibilities, with mandated requirements such as FOGO placing additional cost pressures on councils.

Finding 36 **116**
Diversification of waste treatment technologies, such as anaerobic digestion, pyrolysis, and gasification, has the potential to play an important role in managing specific waste streams.

Finding 37 **117**
Some councils favour technologies such as gasification, pyrolysis and biochar over mass-burn incineration, viewing them as more modular and suitable for local or regional applications, with fewer associated risks and community concerns.

Finding 38 **117**
Despite the objectives of the legislated waste hierarchy, and in the absence of a completed NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan, the NSW Government is prioritising waste-to-energy technology ahead of other waste management alternatives, with regional areas disproportionately affected by this approach.

Finding 39 **117**
Waste-to-energy facilities have operational lifespans of 25–30 years, while Parkes Energy Recovery is seeking a 40-year lease. The reliance of these facilities on ongoing waste feedstock has the potential to undermine circular economy goals and initiatives.

Finding 40 **118**
Strategic waste management and infrastructure planning in New South Wales remains under-resourced and fragmented, with no single agency responsible for comprehensive oversight and coordinated delivery of waste facilities, infrastructure and services across the state.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 **73**
That, for any waste-to-energy projects, the NSW Government commission independent, multidisciplinary health and environmental impact assessments to establish robust baseline conditions and enable future impacts to be measured reliably.

Recommendation 2 **74**
That, where waste-to-energy facilities are supported by councils and communities, the NSW Government establish independent community–scientist monitoring arrangements that provide communities with direct access to environmental and emissions data, with monitoring and reporting conducted transparently and that can be independently verified and support the incorporation of citizen science, and that are not solely reliant on information provided by project proponents or government agencies.

Recommendation 3 **75**
That the NSW Government commission an independent review of the Woodlawn Eco Precinct examining its compliance history, regulatory breaches and rectification measures.

Recommendation 4 **76**
That the NSW Government commit to dramatically increased direct reinvestment of the waste levy to councils and the waste sector for infrastructure, education, and circular economy initiatives and outcomes.

Recommendation 5 **78**
That the NSW Government, where necessary, expand and support improvements to landfill capacity to ensure safe and reliable continuity of waste management in the short-to-medium term while other waste management measures are assessed and developed.

Recommendation 6 **78**
That the NSW Government immediately undertake and publish a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of approaches to waste management, including environmental and emissions impacts, in New South Wales to provide greater clarity to communities, councils and industry.

Recommendation 7 **96**
That the NSW Government impose a moratorium on all current waste-to-energy proposals and commission an independent, transparent review of all designated precincts, including the site-selection criteria and processes, the restriction to regional areas, and the inconsistencies of the current restricted regional precinct model, with the full findings and analysis publicly released.

Recommendation 8 **97**

That the NSW Government review the existing precinct model and give consideration to an alternative model for potential various forms of waste-to-energy facilities, focusing on:

- The need to evaluate proposals on their merits, including environmental performance, proximity to waste generation, infrastructure availability, cumulative impacts and community support
- The opportunity for potential sites to be nominated and considered against strict criteria, including community acceptance and
- The publication of results to ensure robust, consistent and comprehensive assessment.

Recommendation 9 **97**

That the NSW Government establish clear minimum buffer distances between proposed waste-to-energy facilities, ensuring safe and appropriate distances from food production, schools and hospitals.

Recommendation 10 **98**

That, where waste-to-energy facilities are supported by councils and communities, the NSW Government require clear financial transparency and contingency planning to minimise local government exposure to cost overruns, as well as prohibit contract terms that penalise councils for reducing waste sent to waste-to-energy facilities.

Recommendation 11 **98**

That the NSW Environment Protection Authority establish a central, publicly accessible waste-to-energy compliance register to record breaches, incidents, audits, enforcement actions and outcomes. The register should be searchable by facility and date, distinguish alleged from confirmed breaches, and show whether matters have been resolved.

Recommendation 12 **99**

That, given the proposed facility at Woodlawn is located within the Sydney drinking water catchment, the NSW Environment Protection Authority, in consultation with WaterNSW, establish a regime of regular and independent site monitoring to ensure ongoing compliance with the facility's environmental protection licence and with the requirement that the development have a neutral of beneficial effect on water quality.

Recommendation 13 **100**

That the NSW Government establish clear minimum requirements for consultation on large-scale infrastructure projects, ensuring engagement is not solely proponent-led, requires minimum thresholds for community engagement, consultation and provides host communities with access to independent technical, environmental and health information.

Recommendation 14 **100**
That the NSW Government investigate and publicly report on the Peak Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council's claim that the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1993* has been breached in relation to the Parkes waste-to-energy proposal.

Recommendation 15 **101**
That the NSW Government not proceed with approval of the current proposed regional New South Wales waste-to-energy facilities in the absence of numerous critical elements, but most significantly, the absence of conclusive social licence and community acceptance, including from local councils and Aboriginal Land Councils.

Recommendation 16 **101**
That the NSW Government establish a consistent siting and community-engagement framework for large-scale waste-to-energy facilities. The framework should establish minimum siting principles, require proponents to demonstrate that community and environmental impacts have been avoided or appropriately managed, mandate early and meaningful engagement with affected communities, local councils and First Nations peoples, and require proponents to identify tangible local community benefits.

Recommendation 17 **115**
That, in addition to the measures proposed by the Plastic Reduction and Container Recycling Bill 2026, the NSW Government consider the most effective ways to disincentivise non-recycled plastic packaging.

Recommendation 18 **116**
That the NSW Government strengthen upstream product stewardship measures to help reduce residual waste, including through extended producer responsibility, right-to-repair requirements, sustainable product design standards, restrictions on hazardous materials, and enhanced funding for the food organics and garden organics (FOGO) mandate.

Recommendation 19 **118**
That, where waste-to-energy facilities are proposed, the NSW Government ensure they process only genuinely residual waste, so that waste-to-energy complements rather than displaces recycling.

Recommendation 20 **118**
That the NSW Government undertake an independent review of the long-term impact of waste-to-energy technologies on recycling.

Recommendation 21 **118**
That the NSW Government establish a dedicated agency with clear responsibility for the strategic planning, coordination and oversight of waste management services and infrastructure across New South Wales and establish an independent community advocate body to represent community interests in waste management decision-making.

Recommendation 22 **119**

That the NSW Government finalise and publish the NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan, setting out clear timelines, funding pathways and decision-making frameworks, before further consideration of waste-to-energy proposals. The Plan should also include a credible, transparent and measurable pathway to achieving the NSW Government's target of an 80 per cent average resource recovery rate by 2030.

Conduct of inquiry

The terms of reference for the inquiry were referred to the committee by the Legislative Council on 6 August 2025.

The committee received 1421 submissions

The committee held five public hearings: three at Parliament House in Sydney, one in Parkes and one in Goulburn. The committee also held two public forums in Parkes and Goulburn.

The committee also conducted a site visit in Goulburn.

Inquiry related documents are available on the committee's website, including submissions, hearing transcripts, tabled documents and answers to questions on notice.

Chapter 1 Overview of waste management in New South Wales

New South Wales continues to face a significant waste management challenge. Waste generation has increased over recent years and is projected to continue increasing. Capacity available to service Greater Sydney is similarly projected to decline over the coming decade. How residual waste - the waste that remains after materials suitable for reuse, recycling or other forms of resource recovery have been removed - can be managed safely and sustainably is a critical component. This chapter outlines waste growth and existing landfill capacity constraints in Greater Sydney, the waste hierarchy and governance arrangements in New South Wales, and the NSW Government's strategic response, including the NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan.

Waste generation in New South Wales

1.1 Evidence presented to the committee showed that New South Wales is producing waste in substantial and increasing volumes.[2] This includes putrescible waste such as those produced by households and businesses, and non-putrescible waste like construction and demolition waste.[3]

1.2 Between 2015-16 to 2022-23, the amount of waste produced in New South Wales rose from 18.7 million tonnes per year to 22.4 million tonnes per year. The NSW Government projects that waste volumes will rise to approximately 37 million tonnes per year by 2041-42.[4]

1.3 Inquiry participants attributed this rise in waste volumes to:

- population growth
- economic growth
- consumption habits.[5]

1.4 Residual waste refers to waste left after all recyclable or reusable material has been removed following a resource recovery process or source separation

[2] Submission 377, NSW Government, p 4; Evidence, Ms Gayle Sloan, Chief Executive Officer, Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia, 15 December 2025, p 2.

[3] Submission 377, NSW Government, pp 4-5; NSW Environment Protection Authority, *NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan* (September 2025), https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-09/25p4616-nsw-waste-and-circular-infrastructure-plan.pdf, pp 7-8.

[4] Submission 377, NSW Government, p 4.

[5] Evidence, Ms Sloan, 15 December 2025, p 4; Evidence, Dr Ron Wainberg, Technical Director, MRA Consulting, 1 July 2026, p 7; Dr Richard Kirkman, CEO and Managing Director, Veolia Australia New Zealand, 15 December 2025, p 35.

collection system. It is the waste that is currently sent to landfill.[6] In 2022-23, around 66 per cent of waste produced was recycled, while the remaining 7.7 million tonnes of residual waste was sent to landfill.[7] Evidence to this inquiry also indicated that a substantial proportion of waste continues to require disposal, despite some improvements in recycling rates.[8]

1.5 The challenge is considered particularly acute in Greater Sydney, which is home to approximately 66 per cent of the New South Wales population. The NSW Government has advised that the current landfills servicing Greater Sydney are expected to reach capacity by 2030.[9]

1.6 Capacity constraints are expected to affect both putrescible and non-putrescible waste. The NSW Government projects that, by 2030, there will be a shortfall of approximately 1.1 million tonnes per year in putrescible waste landfill capacity. By 2031, non-putrescible waste landfill capacity is projected to fall short by approximately 2 million tonnes per year. By 2040, these shortfalls are projected to increase to approximately 1.4 million tonnes for putrescible waste and 2.4 million tonnes for non-putrescible waste, per year.[10]

Landfills and resilience

1.7 There are currently four landfills that accept red-lid kerbside putrescible waste and 13 landfills that accept non-putrescible waste for Greater Sydney.[11] The principal landfills identified in evidence include:

- Lucas Heights Landfill
- Elizabeth Drive Landfill
- Eastern Creek Landfill
- Woodlawn Eco Precinct.[12]

6 Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation, *Energy from waste factsheet* (17 January 2023), https://www.nsw.gov.au/regional-nsw/regional-business-and-economy-nsw/resources-library/energy from waste, p 1.

7 Submission 377, NSW Government, p 4.

8 Evidence, Mr Chris Horsey, Manager Waste Management, Hornsby Shire Council, 4 May 2026, p 2.

9 Submission 377, NSW Government, p 4.

10 Submission 377, NSW Government, pp 4-5.

11 Submission 377, NSW Government, p 4.

12 Submission 377, NSW Government, p 4; Evidence, Mr Steve Fedorow, Director Community and Environment, Hornsby Shire Council, 4 May 2026, p 7; Evidence, Ms Vanessa Parkes, Director City Living, Blacktown City Council, 4 May 2026, p 7.

1.8 Regional areas of New South Wales also have limited landfill space, with the Northern Rivers, mid-North Coast and Canberra regions potentially running out of capacity by 2030.[13]

1.9 The combination of increasing waste volumes and declining landfill capacity creates risk for the resilience of the existing waste management system. Many inquiry participants were of the view that Greater Sydney is heading towards a waste crisis.[14]

1.10 The concentration of residual waste disposal capacity in a relatively small number of landfills also creates operational risks. The NSW Government noted:

> Relying on a handful of landfills for Sydney's residual waste creates a significant risk to the ongoing delivery of essential waste services such as the collection of red-lid kerbside bins. If access to these sites were disrupted (for example, by flooding or scheduled closure), the rest of the waste management network servicing Greater Sydney would be unable to make up for the loss in residual waste capacity. This could lead to large volumes of residual waste not having a safe pathway for disposal.[15]

1.11 The NSW Government suggests that, if action is not taken, infrastructure shortfalls could lead to:

- Waste being transported interstate or to regional areas at high cost
- Increased waste disposal costs for rate payers and businesses
- Increased risk of illegal dumping and environmental harm
- Greater risk to waste service continuity during extreme events, and
- Delays or cancellation of construction and demolition activity, disrupting the delivery of critical infrastructure projects. This is expected to result in an estimated $23 billion reduction to the New South Wales economy.[16]

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13 Submission 377, NSW Government, p 6.

14 Submission 377, NSW Government, p 6; Submission 362, Waste Contractors and Recyclers Association of NSW, p 2; Evidence, Mr Mike Ritchie, Managing Director, MRA Consulting, 1 July 2026, p 12; Evidence, Ms Joanna Kubota, Executive Director, The Parks, Sydney's Parkland Councils, 15 December 2025, p 15; Evidence, Mr Jeremy Manion, Regional Waste Coordinator, The Parks, Sydney's Parkland Councils, 15 December 2025, pp 14 and 16; Evidence, Mr Craig Barker, Chief Executive Officer, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, 1 July 2026, p 13; Evidence, Mr Asela Atapattu, Executive Director, Policy, Programs and Finance, NSW Environment Protection Authority, 1 July 2026, p 41; Evidence, Mr Horsey, 4 May 2026, p 2.

15 Submission 377, NSW Government, p 6.

16 Submission 377, NSW Government, pp 4-6; NSW Environment Protection Authority, *NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan* (September 2025), p 8.

1.12 Some stakeholders agreed that landfill constraints could, to some extent, be alleviated by expanding existing landfill capacity or developing new landfill sites.[17]

1.13 The NSW Government has proposed streamlining planning processes to extend or expand priority landfill capacity where necessary to address the immediate shortage. However, the NSW Government is of the view that landfill expansion would increase available capacity only temporarily.[18] The NSW Government has therefore identified the development of waste-to-energy (WtE) as one way to reduce reliance on landfill and improve the resilience of the waste management system.[19]

Waste management in New South Wales

The waste hierarchy

1.14 In New South Wales, the management of waste is underpinned by the waste hierarchy, which is enshrined in the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001*.[20] The waste hierarchy sets out a list of priorities for the efficient use of resources and ranks waste management options in order of preference, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Waste Hierarchy[21]

[17] Evidence, Ms Kubota, 15 December 2025, pp 19-20; Evidence, Mr Xavier Martin, President, NSW Farmers Association, 15 December 2025, p 24; Submission 377, NSW Government, p 6, Evidence, Mr Horsey, 1 July 2026, p 4.

[18] Submission 377, NSW Government, pp 6-7.

[19] Submission 377, NSW Government, pp 6-7.

[20] Evidence, Mr Stephen Beaman, Executive Director, Operations, NSW Environment Protection Authority, 15 December 2025, p 63; NSW Environment Protection Authority, *Better Regulation Statement, Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Amendment (Thermal Energy from Waste) Regulation 2022* (2022), https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/Publications/waste/22p3810-Better-Regulation-Statement-Energy-from-Waste-Regulation, p 4.

[21] NSW Environment Protection Authority, *The Waste Hierarchy* (20 October 2022), https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/Your-environment/Recycling-and-reuse/warr-strategy/The-waste-hierarchy.

1.15 The waste hierarchy is:

1. **Avoidance,** including action to reduce the amount of waste generated by households, industry and all levels of government.

2. **Resource recovery,** including re-use, recycling, reprocessing and energy recovery, consistent with the most efficient use of the recovered resources.

3. **Disposal,** including management of all disposal options in the most environmentally responsible manner.[22]

1.16 Disposing of waste in landfills is the least preferred option within the waste hierarchy.[23] However, residual waste that cannot reasonably be avoided, reused or recovered will continue to require management. The NSW Government and inquiry participants recognise that both landfill and WtE may have a role in managing this residual waste, while maintaining the priority given to higher-order waste management options.[24] Other waste management solutions are discussed in Chapter 6.

[22] NSW Environment Protection Authority, *The Waste Hierarchy* (20 October 2022).

[23] Evidence, Mr Lemin, 15 December 2025, p 12; Evidence, Mr Damian Thomas, Director Advocacy, Local Government NSW, 15 December 2025, p 51; Evidence, Mr Beaman, 1 July 2026, p 35; NSW Environment Protection Authority, *NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan* (September 2025), p 9.

[24] Evidence, Ms Sloan, 15 December 2025, p 2; Evidence, Mr Lemin, 15 December 2025, pp 9-10 and 13; Ms Kubota, 15 December 2025, p 20; Evidence, Mr Manion, 15 December 2025, p 19; Evidence, Mr Thomas, 15 December 2025, p 51; Evidence, Mr Ritchie, 1 July 2026, p 7; Evidence, Ms Veronica Lee, Executive Director, City Service, City Services Management, City of Sydney, 15 December 2025, p 15; Evidence, Mr Tony Chappel, Chief Executive Officer, NSW Environment Protection Authority, 15 December 2025, p 61; Evidence, Dr Wainberg, 1 July 2026, p 7; NSW Environment Protection Authority, *NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan* (September 2025), pp 9 and 17.

Role and responsibilities

1.17 Waste management in New South Wales is governed by a range of legislation, including:

- the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*, which establishes the licensing framework for waste, defines waste related offences and sets penalties.
- the Protection of the Environment Operations (Waste) Regulation 2014, which prescribes requirements for waste facilities and operators, and outlines the waste levy system. [25]
- the Protection of the Environment Operations (Clean Air) Regulation 2022, which regulates emission standards from various sources including waste facilities. [26]
- the Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Regulation 2022, which prohibits energy recovery from thermal treatment of waste except in prescribed precincts. [27]

1.18 The NSW Environment Protection Authority (NSW EPA) is the state's independent environmental regulator and is responsible for the protection of human and environmental health. It implements the NSW Government's policy relating to waste management and regulates the licences of waste operators to ensure compliance with the conditions of their licences. [28]

1.19 Local councils are responsible for the day-to-day management and operational aspects of waste collection and disposal. [29] Councils also implement waste initiatives such as introducing food organics and garden organics (FOGO) services to communities, reducing bin sizes and decreasing the frequency of bin collection. [30] The impacts of these initiatives on local council are discussed further in chapters 4 and 6.

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[25] NSW Environment Protection Authority, *Waste regulations in NSW* (14 July 2021), https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/Your-environment/Waste/waste-overview/waste-regulations.

[26] NSW Environment Protection Authority, *Protection of the Environment Operations (Clean Air) Regulation 2022* (15 May 2023), https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/Licensing-and-Regulation/Legislation-and-compliance/about-the-poeo-act/Remake-of-POEO-Regulations-2022.

[27] Evidence, Mr Beaman, 1 July 2026, p 35.

[28] Evidence, Mr Beaman, 1 July 2026, p 35; Evidence, Mr Chappel, 15 December 2025, p 55; NSW Environment Protection Authority, *What we do* (3 July 2024), https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/About-us/What-we-do.

[29] Evidence, Ms Kubota, 15 December 2025, p 15; Evidence, Ms Lee, 15 December 2025, p 16; Evidence, Councillor Khal Asfour, Vice President (Metropolitan/Urban), Local Government NSW, 15 December 2025, p 48.

[30] Evidence, Ms Parkes, 4 May 2026, p 7; Evidence, Mr Darryl Woods, Executive Manager, Major Projects, Wagga Wagga City Council, 15 May 2026, p 14; Evidence, Councillor Nina

NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan

1.20 The NSW Government's response to the emerging landfill capacity constraints is set out, in part, in the NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan ('the Plan'). The first draft chapter of the Plan was released for public consultation in May 2025, with the formal first chapter of the Plan released in September 2025. It focuses on managing Greater Sydney's imminent waste challenge and outlines how the NSW Government will work together with industry and with local councils to:

1. streamline planning processes to unlock capacity of existing priority landfills, where necessary to avoid immediate landfill shortages in Greater Sydney
2. enable WtE infrastructure where doing so will reduce reliance on landfill, build resilience in waste management, and maintain protections for human health and the environment, and
3. strengthen strategic planning for waste and recycling infrastructure to meet the needs of Greater Sydney's growing population. [31]

1.21 The Plan seeks to maintain essential waste services, prioritise higher-order actions in the waste hierarchy, and progressively reduce reliance on landfill as New South Wales transitions towards a circular economy. [32] The circular economy is discussed further in chapter 6.

1.22 To support implementation of the Plan, the NSW Government notes that it will establish an Advisory Committee comprising local council representatives, waste and resource recovery sector members, and technical experts. The committee will:

- provide local and industry insights,
- identify barriers to planning, investment and development of critical waste and recycling infrastructure,
- explore opportunities to accelerate investment in line with the waste hierarchy, and
- advise the NSW Government on risks to implementing the plan and achieving its objectives. [33]

Dillon, Mayor, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, 15 May 2026, p 16; Evidence, Councillor Jasmin Jones, Mayor, Yass Valley Council, 15 May 2026, p 22; Evidence, Councillor Kenrick Winchester, Mayor, Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, 15 May 2026, p 22.

[31] NSW Environment Protection Authority, *NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan* (September 2025), pp 11-12; Submission 377, NSW Government, p 6.

[32] NSW Environment Protection Authority, *NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan* (September 2025), pp 9 and 11-12.

[33] NSW Environment Protection Authority, *NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan* (September 2025), p 12.

1.23 At the time of tabling this report, the full NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan had not yet been released.

1.24 Inquiry participants identified a range of factors that, in their view, have contributed to the current configuration of waste management infrastructure in New South Wales. These included concerns regarding long-term strategic planning, the allocation of responsibility for waste infrastructure planning and delivery, the regulatory role of the NSW EPA, the use of waste levy revenue and the availability of comparative information on waste disposal options. These will be discussed in the following chapters.

Chapter 2 Waste-to-energy technology

This chapter provides an overview of waste-to-energy (WtE), its potential role in managing residual waste in New South Wales, and the current framework governing its development. It outlines the main WtE technologies before examining the development of the New South Wales regulatory and strategic framework, including planning, environmental, health and licensing requirements.

What is waste-to-energy?

2.1 The NSW Government defines waste-to-energy ('WtE'), also known as energy from waste, as a process of converting residual waste that cannot be recycled into energy through a biological or thermal process to create heat, electricity or solid/gas/liquid fuels.[34] WtE processes may also enable the recovery of other resources, such as metals and construction aggregates.[35]

2.2 The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change similarly defines WtE technologies as 'any waste treatment process that creates energy in the form of electricity or heat from several types of waste'.[36]

2.3 The NSW Government states that waste-to-energy can be a 'legitimate and necessary' option for managing residual waste that can help reduce reliance on landfill, lower greenhouse gas emissions by replacing more carbon-intensive fuels and prevent harmful methane emissions from materials in landfill.[37] However, the claim that incineration reduces carbon emissions was disputed by a number of stakeholders.[38]

2.4 WtE technologies can broadly be divided into thermal and non-thermal processes. The technologies differ in the types of waste they can process, the outputs they produce, and the infrastructure and regulatory requirements associated with their operation.

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[34] Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation, *Energy from waste factsheet* (17 January 2023), https://www.nsw.gov.au/regional-nsw/regional-business-and-economy-nsw/resources-library/energy-from-waste, p 1; Submission 377, NSW Government, p 7.

[35] Submission 120, Waste Management & Resource Recovery Association of Australia, p 9.

[36] United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, *Waste to energy technologies*, https://unfccc.int/technology/waste-to-energy-technologies.

[37] 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, p 22.

[38] Submission 241, Residents Against the Richmond Valley Incinerators Inc, p 2; Submission 95, Boomerang Alliance and Total Environment Centres, p 4.

Thermal technologies

2.5 Thermal treatment technologies use high temperatures to convert waste into energy products, including heat, steam, synthetic gas (syngas), pyrolysis oil, and char. These products may be used directly as energy sources or further processed to generate electricity or support industrial operations. [39]

2.6 Thermal treatment technologies include:

- ***Combustion:*** the most widely used WtE technology for treating residual municipal and commercial and industrial waste. It involves burning waste with air or oxygen to produce heat, which can be used to generate electricity. This process recovers value from waste that would otherwise be landfilled and can significantly reduce the volume of waste requiring disposal. [40]
- ***Gasification***: converts waste into synthetic gas (syngas) by heating it in a low-oxygen environment. The resulting syngas can be used to generate heat and electricity or further refined into fuels. [41]
- ***Pyrolysis***: uses external energy to heat waste and convert it into a range of gaseous, liquid and solid energy outputs such as syngas, oil or char. [42]
- ***Plasma processing***: uses very high-temperature plasma to produce combinations of heat, fuels and other outputs, such as metals and construction products. [43]

2.7 The two WtE proposals currently under consideration in New South Wales incorporate thermal treatment technologies. These proposals are discussed in Chapter 3.

Non-thermal technologies

2.8 Non-thermal WtE technologies use biological and mechanical processes to convert waste into waste-derived products and biofuels. They generally rely on the controlled decomposition of biodegradable materials, such as agricultural waste and food and garden organics, to produce useful resources. [44]

2.9 Non-thermal technologies include:

- ***Anaerobic digestion***: a process in which microorganisms break down organic matter without oxygen, producing biogas and organic digestate. Biogas can be used to generate renewable electricity or produce carbon

[39] Submission 377, NSW Government, pp 7-8.
[40] Submission 377, NSW Government, p 7.
[41] Submission 377, NSW Government, p 8.
[42] Submission 377, NSW Government, p 8.
[43] Submission 377, NSW Government, p 8.
[44] Submission 377, NSW Government, p 8.

dioxide for synthetic fuels, while the digestate can be processed into a compost-like material used as a soil amendment.[45]

- *Fermentation*: biologically breaks down carbohydrates in organic materials into alcohols and/or food organics. Remaining residues can then be used for further resource recovery.[46]

2.10 Other waste-to-energy technologies will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

Development of the New South Wales waste-to-energy framework

2.11 Waste-to-energy is an emerging industry in Australia. New South Wales currently has no large-scale WtE facilities.[47] The NSW Environment Protection Authority (NSW EPA) adopted an Energy from Waste Policy Statement in 2014, positioning WtE as part of an integrated waste management system with resource recovery, emissions, efficiency and social licence requirements.[48]

2.12 The section below explores key developments in the waste-to-energy framework in New South Wales discussed during the inquiry.

Chief Scientist & Engineer's report

2.13 In 2017, the NSW Legislative Council's Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Planning and Environment conducted an inquiry into energy from waste technology. The inquiry examined issues including international emissions standards, technology, environmental and health impacts, and alternative waste management options.[49] One recommendation was that the NSW Government establish an expert advisory body on WtE, chaired by the Chief Scientist to examine and report on the WtE regulatory framework. The stated purpose was to create greater certainty for both communities and the market.[50]

2.14 Following this inquiry, in 2019, the NSW Government requested the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer establish a cross-agency working group to review WtE in New South Wales. The Working Group was comprised of the NSW Chief Scientist

45 Submission 377, NSW Government, p 8.

46 Submission 377, NSW Government, p 8.

47 NSW Environment Protection Authority, *Better Regulation Statement, Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Amendment (Thermal Energy from Waste) Regulation 2022* (2022), p 6.

48 Evidence, Mr Stephen Beaman, Executive Director, Waste and Resource Recovery, NSW Environment Protection Authority, Public Hearing, Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Planning and Environment, 26 June 2017, pp 3-4.

49 Portfolio Committee No. 6 - Planning and Environment, NSW Legislative Council, *Energy from waste' technology* (2018).

50 Portfolio Committee No. 6 - Planning and Environment, NSW Legislative Council, *Energy from waste' technology* (2018), p 68.

& Engineer, the Director of the Office of NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, the NSW Environment Protection Authority and the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.[51] The review aimed to ensure that any WtE proposals adopted international best-practice standards and controls to protect human health and the environment.[52]

2.15 The Chief Scientist and Engineer's report was published in May 2020, with additional advice provided in November 2020. This included an independent expert review by the University of Sydney of the proposed best-practice air emission limits for WtE facilities.[53]

2.16 The Chief Scientist and Engineer's report stated that WtE could have a legitimate role in New South Wales waste management, provided that facilities are tightly regulated, use appropriate waste streams, meet world-best-practice emissions standards, demonstrate their environmental and health impacts, and operate within the waste hierarchy.[54]

2.17 The report made several recommendations for the responsible development and regulation of WtE facilities in New South Wales. These include:

- establishing and regularly updating WtE assessment and waste-input frameworks,
- maintaining robust regulatory and best-practice standards,
- independently reviewing emissions limits and monitoring requirements against international standards,
- ensuring WtE does not undermine the waste hierarchy by understanding the incentives that influence consumer and industry behaviour;
- requiring lifecycle assessments for proposed facilities,
- implementing waste-input monitoring and reporting; and
- providing a proportionate regulatory pathway for new technologies and innovation.[55]

[51] NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, *Energy from waste: Report from the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, with additional advice as at November 2020* (November 2020), https://www.chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au/independent-reports/archive/energy-from-waste, pp 21-22.

[52] NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, *Energy from waste: Report from the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, with additional advice as at November 2020* (November 2020).

[53] NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, *Energy from waste: Report from the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, with additional advice as at November 2020* (November 2020).

[54] NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, *Energy from waste: Report from the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, with additional advice as at November 2020* (November 2020).

[55] NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, *Energy from waste: Report from the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, with additional advice as at November 2020* (November 2020).

2.18 The NSW Government published its response to the Chief Scientist and Engineer's report in May 2021, supporting the recommendations and additional advice.[56] The Energy from Waste Policy Statement was subsequently updated to reflect the advice on air emission standards provided in the report.[57]

2.19 In December 2024, the NSW Minister for Environment, the Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC, sought further advice from the Chief Scientist and Engineer on international best-practice standards and controls for WtE facilities.[58] In April 2025, the Chief Scientist and Engineer provided advice to the Minister, which confirmed that New South Wales's emission limits 'are among the most stringent' when compared with other jurisdictions, such as the European Union, USA and China. In answers to supplementary questions, the NSW Environment Protection Authority confirmed that the Chief Scientist's advice also suggested that, following consultation, the regulation could be amended to add some flexibility with technical and operational practicability and the costs to industry.[59]

2.20 In evidence, Professor Hugh Durrant-Whyte, NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, Office of the Chief Scientist & Engineer, reaffirmed his 2020 findings and confirmed that New South Wales requirements were more stringent than comparable US and European requirements in eight of the ten categories examined.[60]

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56 NSW Government, *Response to the Energy from Waste report from the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer* (1 May 2021), NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment, https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/Publications/waste/21p2943-Government-response-to-energy-from-waste-report, p 1.

57 NSW Government, *Response to the Energy from Waste report from the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer* (1 May 2021), NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment, p 1; Correspondence from The Hon Penny Sharpe MLC, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, to Professor Durrant-Whyte, NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, 17 December 2024, available at: https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/Your-environment/Waste/waste-and-circular-infrastructure-plan/energy-waste-framework.

58 Correspondence from The Hon Penny Sharpe MLC, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, to Professor Durrant-Whyte, NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, 17 December 2024; Answers to supplementary, Mr Tony Chappel, Chief Executive Officer, NSW Environment Protection Authority, received 13 February 2026, p 1.

59 Correspondence from Professor Durrant-Whyte, NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer, to the Hon Penny Sharpe MLC, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment and updated advice on Energy from Waste (7 April 2025) https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/Your-environment/Waste/waste-and-circular-infrastructure-plan/energy-waste-framework; Answers to supplementary, Mr Chappel, 13 February 2026, p 1.

60 Evidence, Professor Hugh Durrant-Whyte, Chief Scientist & Engineer, Premier's Department, 4 May 2026, p 29.

Regulatory and strategic framework in New South Wales

2.21 The regulation of waste-to-energy in New South Wales is governed by the *Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Regulation 2022,* which was amended in 2022 to provide a framework for future waste-to-energy proposals. According to the NSW EPA, the amendments to the Regulation translate the NSW Energy from Waste Infrastructure Plan (the Infrastructure Plan) into law. [61]

2.22 The Regulation prohibits the thermal treatment of waste for energy recovery unless it falls within specified exceptions or occurs in approved locations. These are:

> (a) the Parkes Activation Precinct, or
> (b) one of the following nominated precincts, identified on a map published in the Gazette by the EPA—
> (i) the Richmond Valley Regional Jobs Precinct,
> (ii) the Southern Goulburn Mulwaree Precinct,
> (iii) the West Lithgow Precinct, or
> (c) one of the following nominated precincts or premises, identified on a map or specified in a notice published in the Gazette by the EPA—
> (i) an Activation Precinct,
> (ii) a Regional Jobs Precinct,
> (iii) former mine premises,
> (iv) former thermal electricity generation premises. [62]

2.23 The NSW Government describes the state's WtE framework under the Regulation as a strict regulatory and planning framework intended to protect human health and the environment while supporting waste management needs. Both the NSW EPA and NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) have roles in assessing and regulating WtE proposals, which must meet applicable air-quality and operational standards. [63]

2.24 The framework establishes three 'tiers' of controls, based on the waste type and process. [64]

2.25 Tier 1 covers activities that are excluded from the WtE regulatory framework: [65]

- These activities are outside the WtE regulatory framework because they are already regulated through planning and NSW EPA licensing and are considered to provide environmental benefits.

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61 NSW Environment Protection Authority, *Better Regulation Statement, Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Amendment (Thermal Energy from Waste) Regulation 2022* (2022), p 1.

62 *Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Regulation 2022 (NSW)* reg 144.

63 Submission 377, NSW Government, p 8.

64 Submission 377, NSW Government, p 9.

65 Submission 377, NSW Government, p 9.

- Examples include anaerobic digestion, composting, eligible waste fuels, autoclaving, and thermal treatment of plastics for genuine recycling.
- Further changes are proposed to include certain agricultural wastes and anaerobic digestion residues that produce products such as biochar, biogas, biomethane and sustainable aviation fuel.

2.26 Tier 2 covers activities that are permitted outside nominated precincts: [66]

- These activities are also considered to provide environmental benefits but require additional controls.
- They include using WtE to replace coal or liquid petroleum fuels in existing manufacturing facilities.
- Proposed additions include certain specification fuels derived from non-municipal waste to replace gas in existing industrial/manufacturing facilities outside Greater Sydney, and thermal treatment of end-of-life tyres to recover products such as oil, steel, carbon black and syngas.

2.27 Tier 3 refers to activities that are restricted to the nominated precincts discussed at 2.22 above: [67]

- Thermal treatment of mixed waste streams, such as municipal solid waste, is subject to the highest level of location and regulatory control and can only occur within nominated precincts.
- Current nominated precincts include Parkes, Southern Goulburn Mulwaree, West Lithgow and Richmond Valley, as shown in Figure 2.
- Proposed changes would expand West Lithgow to include the former Wallerawang power station, remove the Richmond Valley precinct, and establish a new Tomago Precinct in the Port Stephens area.

[66] Submission 377, NSW Government, p 9.

[67] Submission 377, NSW Government, pp 9 and 10.

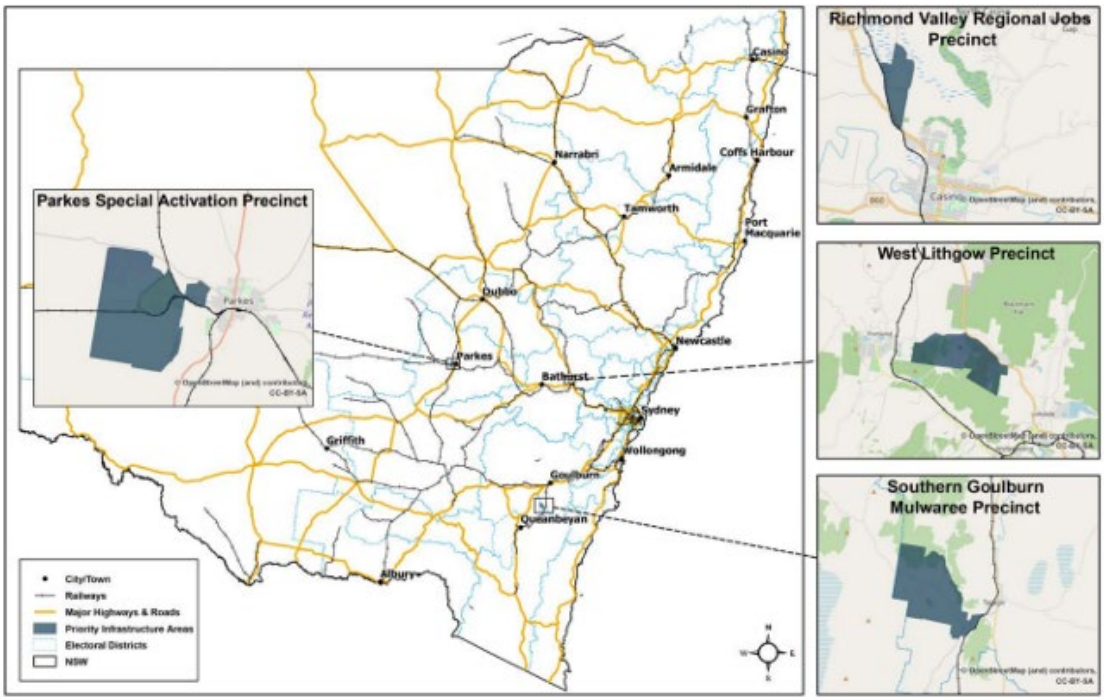

Figure 2 Parkes Special Activation Precinct, Richmond Valley Regional Jobs Precinct, Southern Goulburn Mulwaree Precinct and West Lithgow Precinct. [68]

2.28 The NSW Government submission notes that WtE precincts must be located where they can use or connect to existing infrastructure, minimise environmental and climatic impacts, support employment and energy security, attract investment, and align with existing waste, net-zero and regional-growth strategies. [69]

2.29 The NSW Government also states that all WtE proposals must demonstrate compliance with relevant planning and environmental legislation and policies, and international best practice, regardless of location. [70]

Supporting policies and strategies

2.30 A number of policies and strategies support the regulatory framework of WtE in New South Wales, such as:

- The NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041, published in June 2021, which identified the need for new residual waste infrastructure,

[68] NSW Environment Protection Authority, *Energy from waste – options paper* (December 2024), https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-02/nsw-environment-protection-authority-energy-from-waste-options-paper.pdf, p 2.

[69] Submission 377, NSW Government, p 10.

[70] Submission 377, NSW Government, p 10.

including energy recovery facilities, to reduce reliance on landfill and manage waste that cannot be avoided or recycled.[71]

- The Energy from Waste Infrastructure Plan 2041, published in September 2021, which guided the strategic development and location of thermal WtE facilities in NSW.[72]
- The 2025 review of the NSW energy from waste framework: The NSW EPA released an Energy from Waste Options Paper proposing changes to eligible precincts and associated risks, the definition of thermal treatment, and the onsite industrial/manufacturing process exception. The review received 822 survey responses and 323 written submissions from community, environmental, local government and industry stakeholders. According to the NSW EPA, industry and local government were 'broadly supportive' of the proposed changes in the review.[73] This helped inform the NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan, which now supersedes the NSW Energy from Waste Infrastructure Plan.[74]
- The Energy from Waste Technical Note, published in 2026, sets out minimum operational standards and requirements for certain facilities proposing to thermally treat waste or waste-derived materials to recover energy, such as plant design and operation, thermal efficiency criteria, emissions standards and resource recovery requirements.[75] This updates and replaces the 2021 Energy from Waste Policy Statement.

Planning and licensing framework

2.31 The NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) is responsible for assessing certain thermal WtE proposals, including:

- Projects that meet the State Significant Development thresholds under section 31 of Schedule 1 of the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021*; and
- Any WtE proposal within NSW Special Activation Precincts.[76]

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71 NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, *NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041, Stage 1: 2021–2027* (June 2021), p 22.

72 NSW Environment Protection Authority, *Energy from Waste Infrastructure Plan 2041* (September 2021), https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/Publications/waste/Energy from waste-Infrastructure-Plan.

73 NSW Environment Protection Authority, *Energy from Waste Infrastructure Plan 2041* (September 2021).

74 NSW Environment Protection Authority, *NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan* (September 2025).

75 NSW Environment Protection Authority, *Energy from Waste Technical Note* (8 May 2026), https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/Your-environment/Waste/waste-and-circular-infrastructure-plan/energy-waste-technical-note.

76 Submission 377, NSW Government, p 10.

2.32 The NSW Government submission states that DPHI assesses each proposal on its individual merits against applicable legislation, policies and guidelines. Before lodging a development application (DA), applicants must obtain environmental assessment requirements from the Planning Secretary. These specify the technical studies required and include a comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement strategy. [77]

2.33 A DA must be supported by detailed assessments of potential environmental, health and social impacts, including air quality, human health, agricultural impacts, noise, traffic, water and social impacts. Local councils and relevant government agencies can contribute to establishing the assessment requirements. [78]

Air quality and health

2.34 Proponents of WtE facilities must provide an air-quality impact assessment showing compliance with health protective impact assessment criteria. This applies even where a facility is located within an area identified as suitable for WtE. [79]

2.35 According to the NSW Government, DPHI works with the NSW EPA and NSW Health to assess air quality and human health risks. These agencies may also obtain advice from independent Australian and international experts in WtE technology, and environmental and human health. [80]

Public assessment and consultation

2.36 Once lodged, a DA undergoes merit-based assessment by the DPHI including public exhibition and further community consultation. DPHI makes all documentation publicly available and considers submissions from the community, council and government stakeholders. [81]

2.37 The NSW Government submission states that DPHI requires WtE applicants to undertake 'comprehensive, open and transparent' engagement during DA preparation. Applicants must report consultation outcomes, including responses to issues raised and proposed future engagement. These matters are considered by DPHI in assessing the proposal. [82]

[77] Submission 377, NSW Government, p 10.
[78] Submission 377, NSW Government, p 11.
[79] Submission 377, NSW Government, p 11.
[80] Submission 377, NSW Government, p 11.
[81] Submission 377, NSW Government, pp 11 and 12.
[82] Submission 377, NSW Government, pp 11 and 12.

Role of the NSW Environment Protection Authority

2.38 The NSW EPA advises DPHI on whether the proposal complies with environmental legislation and policies and whether an environment protection licence could be issued for the facility. If the NSW EPA determines that it cannot issue the required licence, this is taken into account in DPHI's assessment and recommendations. [83]

2.39 If a WtE proposal is approved, the development consent and environment protection licence, issued by the NSW EPA, set conditions for operation, monitoring and reporting. [84]

2.40 The NSW EPA's planning, licensing and ongoing regulation of WtE facilities are governed by key environmental legislation, including the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* and the *Protection of the Environment Operations (Clean Air) Regulation 2022.* [85]

[83] Submission 377, NSW Government, p 11.

[84] Submission 377, NSW Government, p 12.

[85] Submission 377, NSW Government, p 12.

Chapter 3 Waste-to-energy: current developments and international examples

Waste-to-energy (WtE) is an emerging waste management technology in Australia that thermally treats residual waste to generate energy. This chapter examines WtE developments in other Australian jurisdictions and internationally. It also considers the regulatory framework governing WtE facilities in New South Wales and international examples. It concludes by exploring the distinction between modern WtE technologies and legacy operations, including differences in combustion, emissions controls, monitoring and regulatory oversight.

Proposals for waste-to-energy technologies in New South Wales

3.1 To date, no large-scale waste-to-energy facilities have been approved for development in New South Wales.[86] However, two State Significant Development (SSD) applications for WtE facilities are currently being assessed in New South Wales:

- The Woodlawn Advanced Energy Recovery Centre in Goulburn Mulwaree,[87] and
- The Parkes Energy Recovery Facility in Parkes Shire.[88]

State Significant Development (SSD) assessment process

3.2 As SSD applications, the two proposals for the facilities discussed above are being assessed through the NSW State Significant Development assessment process. The key stages of this process are outlined below to explain the current status of each proposal.

3.3 An SSD is a development that is considered to be of state significance because of what is deemed to be its economic, environmental, or social importance to New

[86] NSW Environment Protection Authority, *NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan* (September 2025), https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-09/25p4616-nsw-waste-and-circular-infrastructure-plan.pdf, p 18.

[87] NSW Planning Portal, *Woodlawn Advanced Energy Recovery Centre*, State Significant Development SSD-21184278, Goulburn Mulwaree, https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/woodlawn-advanced-energy-recovery-centre.

[88] NSW Planning Portal, *Parkes Energy Recovery Facility*, State Significant Development SSD-109430741, https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/parkes-energy-recovery-facility.

South Wales.[89] Thermal WtE proposals may be assessed through the SSD pathway, subject to the applicable planning legislation and development criteria.[90]

3.4 The key stages in the SSD assessment process are:

- **Request SEARs:** The applicant requests the Secretary's environmental assessment requirements (SEARs) which specifies the information that must be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).[91]
- **Prepare EIS:** The applicant prepares an EIS assessing the economic, environmental, and social impacts of the proposed development. The EIS helps the community, government agencies, and the consent authority make informed submissions or decisions on the project.[92]
- **Public exhibition:** Development applications are exhibited for at least 28 days to provide an opportunity for the community to comment and make submissions.[93]
- **Response to submissions:** Following exhibition, the Department of Planning, Housing an Infrastructure (DPHI) publishes submissions and may require the applicant to prepare a response to any issues raised. The submissions report also helps the consent authority in assessing the merits of the proposal.[94]
- **Assessment:** DPHI assesses the application against relevant legislation, policies and guidelines and prepares an assessment report.[95]

89 NSW Planning Portal, *State significant development*, (2 April 2026), https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/the-planning-system/development-assessment/planning-approval-pathways/state-significant-development.

90 NSW Planning Portal, *Energy from waste* (6 May 2026), https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/the-planning-system/energy-from-waste.

91 NSW Planning Portal, *The SSD process: Request SEARs*, (4 October 2023), https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/assessment/state-significant-development/ssd-process/secretarys-environmental-assessment.

92 NSW Planning Portal, *The SSD process: Prepare EIS,* (9 April 2026), https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/assessment/state-significant-development/ssd-process/prepare-eis.

93 NSW Planning Portal, *The SSD process: Exhibit DA*, (9 April 2026), https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/assessment/state-significant-development/ssd-process/exhibit-da.

94 NSW Planning Portal, *The SSD process: Respond to submissions*, (9 April 2026), https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/assessment/state-significant-development/ssd-process/respond-submissions.

95 NSW Planning Portal, *The SSD process: Assess DA*, (9 April 2026), https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/assessment/state-significant-development/ssd-process/assess-da.

- **Determination**: An SSD application is determined by the Minister for Planning, the Independent Planning Commission (IPC), or a delegate of either.[96]

3.5 The current status of the two proposed thermal WtE facilities in the SSD assessment process is shown in Figure 3.

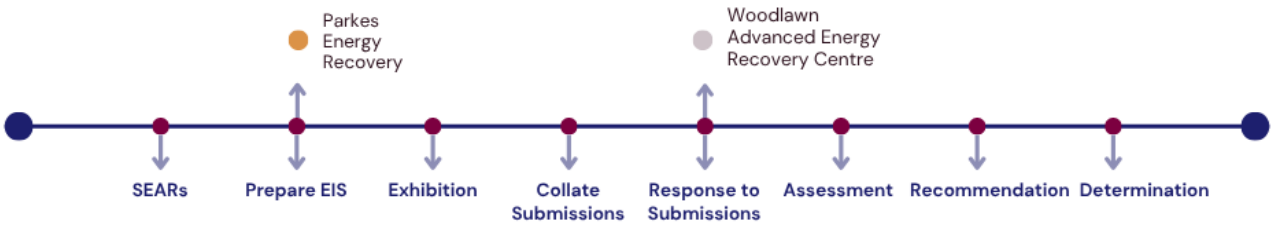

Figure 3 State Significant Development application status for the proposed thermal waste-to-energy facilities in New South Wales.

Woodlawn Advanced Energy Recovery Centre in Goulburn Mulwaree

3.6 Veolia Environmental Services (Veolia) proposes to construct a $600 million Advanced Energy Recovery Centre (ARC) at the Woodlawn Eco Precinct near Tarago, in the Goulburn Mulwaree local government area. The proposed facility would thermally treat up to 380,000 tonnes per year of residual municipal, commercial and industrial waste and generate up to 30 megawatts of electricity.[97] The Woodlawn Eco Precinct is a 6,000 hectares site comprising of several facilities, including a bioreactor landfill, bioenergy plant, wind farm, solar farm, and a mine, which has been reopened under new ownership, separate to Veolia.[98] The committee heard that the NSW Government supported the establishment and development of the Woodlawn landfill in response to a waste disposal capacity crisis faced by North Sydney 25 years ago.[99]

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96 NSW Planning Portal, *The SSD process: Determine DA*, (9 April 2026), https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/assessment/state-significant-development/ssd-process/determine-da.

97 NSW Department of Planning, *Veolia Woodlawn ARC*, NSW Government (30 July 2026), https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/the-planning-system/energy-from-waste/veolia-woodlawn-arc; NSW Department of Planning and Environment, *Planning Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements – Woodlawn Advanced Energy Recovery Centre*, Application No. SSD-21184278, issued 20 October 2022, https://majorprojects.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/prweb/PRRestService/mp/01/getContent?AttachRef=SSD-21184278%2120221020T035118.225+GMT, p 1.

98 Veolia Australia and New Zealand, *Woodlawn Eco Precinct*, https://www.anz.veolia.com/en-au/our-facilities/treatment-plants/solid-waste/woodlawn-eco-precinct; Evidence, Dr Richard Kirkman, CEO and Managing Director, Veolia Australia New Zealand, 15 December 2025, pp 28-29.

99 Submission 148, Hornsby Shire Council, p 6; Evidence, Mr Chris Horsey, Manager, Waste Management, Hornsby Shire Council, 4 May 2026, p 2.

Figure 4 The Select Committee on Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities travelled to Goulburn in May 2026 to visit the Veolia Woodlawn Eco Precinct in Tarago.

3.7 Veolia currently owns and operates more than 65 various waste-to-energy facilities globally, processing 12 million tonnes of waste annually.[100]

3.8 Veolia confirmed that the Woodlawn landfill has 25–30 years of remaining capacity. Mr Craig Barker, Chief Executive Officer, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, emphasised that the WtE proposal was not intended to replace landfill entirely, but rather form part of a 'broader suite of solutions' for managing waste in New South Wales while recognising that some waste streams will continue to require landfill disposal. The Woodlawn Eco Precinct currently receives approximately 900,000 to 1 million tonnes of waste annually, against an approved capacity of about 1.3 million tonnes. The proposed WtE facility would divert approximately 380,000 tonnes of waste from landfill, extending the landfill's operating life.[101]

3.9 Veolia's proposed Advanced Resource Recovery Centre (ARC) will employ a controlled combustion process. Waste would be dried and combusted at temperatures above 850°C, generating heat that produces steam as a byproduct. The steam would then drive a turbine to generate electricity, which would then be exported to the local power grid.[102]

3.10 A schematic representation of the proposed ARC process is provided in Figure 5.

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100 Veolia Australia and New Zealand, *Woodlawn ARC frequently asked questions* (2026), https://www.anz.veolia.com/en-au/our-facilities/energy from waste/woodlawn/frequently-asked-questions; Evidence, Mr Craig Barker, Chief Executive Officer, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, 1 July 2026, p 13; Dr Kirkman, 15 December 2025, p 33.

101 Evidence, Mr Barker, 1 July 2026, pp 15 and 18.

102 Veolia Australia and New Zealand, *Woodlawn ARC frequently asked questions* (2026).

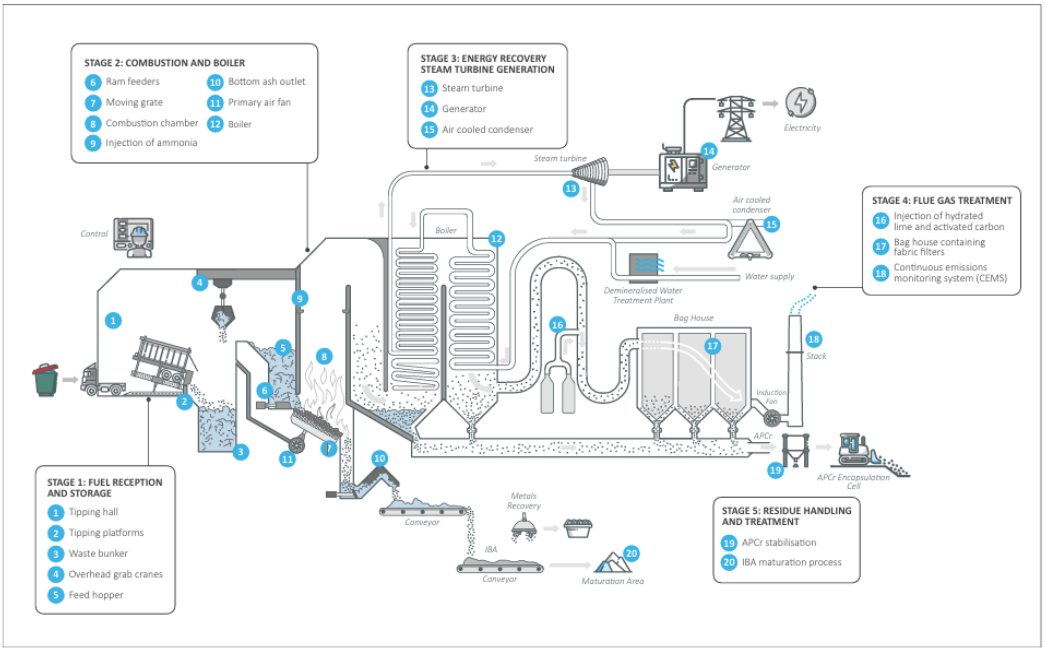

Figure 5 Schematic of the proposed Woodlawn ARC process [103]

3.11 At this stage of the assessment process, Veolia is preparing a response to submissions and an amendment report. These were expected by September 2026 and will be made publicly available by DPHI. [104]

3.12 The proposal was publicly exhibited in late 2022. DPHI received 617 public objections, including an objection from Goulburn Mulwaree Council. The principal concerns raised during the exhibition period included the potential impacts on human health, air pollutants, PFAS, groundwater and drinking-water contamination, agricultural risks, odour, and Veolia's compliance record. [105]

3.13 Four independent experts subsequently requested further information concerning the proposal's consistency with the Energy from Waste Policy, as well as the assessment of PFAS, human health, agricultural risk, and odour. DPHI subsequently requested Veolia to respond to these matters through a submissions report. [106]

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103 EMM Consulting, *Woodlawn Advanced Energy Recovery Centre Environmental Impact Statement* (October 2022), https://majorprojects.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/prweb/PRRestService/mp/01/getContent?AttachRef=SSD-21184278%2120221017T223510.065+GMT, p 59.

104 NSW Department of Planning, *Veolia Woodlawn ARC*, NSW Government (30 July 2026); Evidence, Mr Chris Ritchie, Executive Director Energy, Resources and Industry Assessments, Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, 4 May 2026, pp 44-46.

105 NSW Department of Planning, *Veolia Woodlawn ARC*, NSW Government (30 July 2026).

106 NSW Department of Planning, *Veolia Woodlawn ARC*, NSW Government (30 July 2026).

3.14 In mid-2024, Veolia advised that the proposed ash-residue encapsulation cell would be removed from the project to address concerns regarding potential groundwater contamination. Instead, Veolia proposed an alternative method for treating and disposing of ash residues within the existing Woodlawn landfill. The committee heard that several methods are being assessed to stabilise Air Pollution Control Residue (APCR), including reclassification of the residual material as solid waste. If classified as *general* solid waste, the APCR would be disposed of at the Woodlawn bioreactor; and if classified as *restricted* solid waste, it would be taken to the Kemps Creek disposal facility in Greater Sydney. The amendment report and submissions report were expected by September 2026. [107]

Parkes Energy Recovery Facility in Parkes Shire

3.15 Parkes Energy Recovery is a consortium led by Tribe Infrastructure Group. The consortium was selected by the NSW Government to develop, build, own, and operate a WtE facility within the Parkes Special Activation Precinct. [108]

3.16 Parkes Energy Recovery proposes to develop a WtE facility within the Parkes Special Activation Precinct (SAP) to thermally treat 732,000 tonnes of residual waste and generate 70 megawatts of electrical energy powering 100,000 homes annually. [109]

3.17 The proposed capacity has increased from the 600,000–700,000 tonnes per annum previously advised. Mr Edward Nicholas, Parkes Energy Recovery, attributed the increase to technological advancements and market demand. [110] More recently, Mr Nicholas confirmed that the facility could 'potentially take more' than 732,000 tonnes per annum, depending on the calorific value of the waste

[107] NSW Department of Planning, *Veolia Woodlawn ARC*, NSW Government (30 July 2026); Evidence, Mr Ritchie, 4 May 2026, p 44; Evidence, Ms Kathryn Whitfield, Chief Growth Officer, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, 1 July 2026, p 19; Correspondence from Mr Craig Barker, CEO & Managing Director, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, providing clarification to evidence given at the public hearing on 1 July 2026.

[108] Submission 228, Parkes Energy Recovery, p 1.

[109] NSW Department of Planning and Environment, *Planning Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements – Parkes Energy Recovery Facility*, Application No. SSD-109430741, issued 17 March 2026, https://majorprojects.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/prweb/PRRestService/mp/01/getContent?AttachRef=SSD-109430741%2120260317T013354.740+GMT, p 1; NSW Department of Planning, *Parkes Energy Recovery Facility*, NSW Government, https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/the-planning-system/energy from waste/parkes-energy-recovery-facility; Parkes Energy Recovery, *What is Parkes Energy Recovery?*, https://parkesenergy.com.au.

[110] Evidence, Mr Edward Nicholas, Director, Parkes Energy Recovery, 15 December 2025, p 29; Evidence, Mr Nicholas, 1 July 2026, p 23.

and operational improvements. He also indicated that any formal capacity limit would be determined through the NSW EPA and planning approval conditions.[111]

3.18 Waste from Sydney and surrounding areas will primarily be transported to the proposed Parkes Energy Recovery facility by rail, with locally generated waste delivered by truck, although the source of this locally generated waste was not specified.[112]

3.19 At the facility, waste will be stored in an enclosed bunker maintained under negative air pressure to ensure there are no odour emissions before being processed at temperatures of at least 850°C for a minimum of two seconds. The heat generated through this process will produce steam, which will drive turbines to generate electricity. Electricity will primarily be supplied to businesses within the Parkes SAP, with surplus energy exported to the grid.[113]

3.20 A schematic representation of the proposed WtE process is provided at Figure 6.

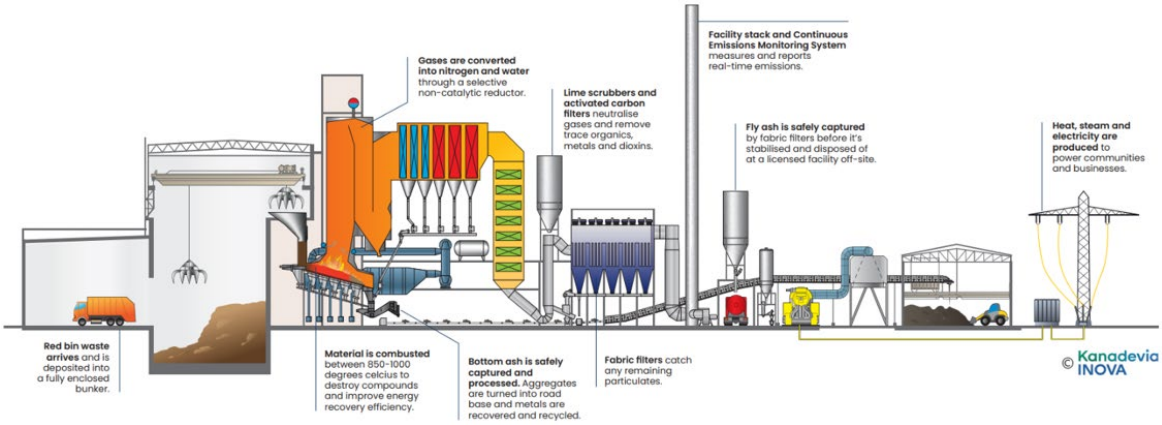

Figure 6 Process schematic of the proposed Parkes Energy Recovery WtE facility[114]

3.21 Project materials indicate that the facility would generate approximately 150,000 tonnes per annum of Incinerator Bottom Ash (IBA). This would be processed to recover approximately 132,000 tonnes of aggregate material, such as glass, stones and grit, and approximately 15,000 tonnes of metals per annum. A further 29,000 tonnes of Air Pollution Control residues (APCR) would also be collected

111 Evidence, Mr Nicholas, 1 July 2026, p 23.

112 Parkes Energy Recovery, *How does this technology work?*, https://parkesenergy.com.au/how-it-works.

113 Parkes Energy Recovery, *How does this technology work?*, https://parkesenergy.com.au/how-it-works.

114 Parkes Energy Recovery, *How energy from waste works*, https://parkesenergy.com.au/how-it-works.

and transferred for reprocessing or immobilisation in accordance with NSW EPA requirements. [115]

3.22 Parkes Energy Recovery proposes to stabilise APCR onsite so it can be classified as general or restricted solid waste and disposed of at appropriately licensed NSW facilities. Material that does not meet reuse specifications will be transported to a licensed facility for disposal or further treatment, with the final destination dependent on procurement outcomes and classification results from EIS testing. The EIS will assess leachability, long-term stability and potential reuse pathways in accordance with NSW EPA requirements. [116]

3.23 The NSW EPA advised that waste that exceeds the hazardous waste threshold cannot be disposed of in landfill. It must first be treated to reduce its hazardous characteristics and may then be reclassified in accordance with the waste classification guidelines. The NSW EPA also issues mobilisation approvals in relation to the movement of such waste for disposal. Restricted waste, which includes materials that were previously classified and treated to reduce its hazardous characteristics, would need to be transported to the Kemps Creek facility. [117] In response to committee questioning about an existing market for residual materials, Mr Nicholas advised that the process of identifying the technical requirements for the recovered IBA, and the markets to which it could be sold, is ongoing with the NSW EPA. He expressed confidence that there would be an end-user market once the material's safe use in construction and road building applications is demonstrated. [118]

Current status of the Parkes Energy Recovery Facility

3.24 The Parkes Energy Recovery Facility is in the early stages of the planning process. [119] Parkes Energy Recovery is completing studies required by the SEARs and expects to have the EIS and Development Application on public exhibition by early September 2026. [120]

3.25 In March 2026, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces declared the Parkes proposal as a State Significant Development (SSD) given the significant level of community interest and the complexity of the proposal. [121] The Minister also

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115 Answers to supplementary questions, Mr Edward Nicholas, Director, Parkes Energy Recovery, 12 February 2026, p 3; Submission 224, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, p 5.

116 Answers to supplementary questions, Mr Nicholas, 12 February 2026, p 6.

117 Evidence, Mr Tony Chappel, Chief Executive Officer, NSW Environment Protection Authority, 1 July 2026, pp 36-37; Evidence, Mr Asela Atapattu, Executive Director, Policy, Programs and Finance, NSW Environment Protection Authority, 1 July 2026, pp 36-37.

118 Evidence, Mr Nicholas, 1 July 2026, p 22.

119 Evidence, Mr Ritchie, 4 May 2026, p 44.

120 Evidence, Mr Nicholas, 1 July 2026, p 22.

121 NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, *Assessment process for the Parkes energy from waste proposal: Factsheet* (May 2026),

requested that the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) determine the development application.[122] The Minister's decision is intended to provide an assessment pathway consistent with other WtE proposals in NSW.[123]

3.26 The Planning Secretary issued the SEARs on 17 March 2026. Parkes Energy Recovery is now preparing an EIS, which must assess risks to human health, agriculture and drinking water, air quality, social and economic impacts, and community and stakeholder engagement.[124]

3.27 Once the EIS is completed, it will be publicly exhibited for submissions which Parkes Energy Recovery must respond to. The proposal will subsequently undergo whole-of-government assessment, with community and environmental health and safety identified as key considerations. Following the assessment process, the application will be referred to the IPC for determination.[125]

3.28 DPHI has also undertaken community engagement during the early stages of the assessment process. On 7 May 2026, DPHI held a community information session in Parkes to answer questions about the proposal, its progress, and the assessment process.[126] The committee heard that further engagement sessions are likely following the lodgement of the Development Application, with Parkes Energy Recovery also expected to increase its community engagement at that stage.[127]

Other locations in New South Wales

3.29 As discussed in Chapter 1, the thermal treatment of waste may only occur in the precincts referred to in clause 144 of the *Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Regulation 2022*:

- Parkes Activation Precinct

https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2026-07/assessment-process-for-the-parkes-energy from waste-proposal-factsheet.pdf, p 1.

122 NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, *Assessment process for the Parkes energy from waste proposal: Factsheet* (May 2026), p 1.

123 NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, *Parkes Energy Recovery Facility*, NSW Government, https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/the-planning-system/energy from waste/parkes-energy-recovery-facility.

124 NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, *Parkes Energy Recovery Facility*, NSW Government; Planning Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements, *Parkes Energy Recovery Facility*, (17 March 2026), https://majorprojects.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/prweb/PRRestService/mp/01/getContent?AttachRef=SSD-109430741%2120260317T013354.740+GMT.

125 NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, *Assessment process for the Parkes energy from waste proposal: Factsheet* (May 2026); p 2.

126 NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, *Parkes Energy Recovery Facility*, NSW Government.

127 Evidence, Mr Ritchie, 4 May 2026, p 50.

- Southern Goulburn Mulwaree Precinct
- West Lithgow Precinct
- Richmond Valley Precinct.[128]

3.30 Two other proposals for large-scale WtE facilities have been identified by the NSW Government. However, both sites are located outside of the designated WtE precincts and, as a result, currently cannot proceed. These proposals are:

- The Cleanaway-led consortium proposal at the former Wallerawang power station site in the Lithgow region, and
- The Remondis-led proposal at its Tomago Resource Recovery facility in the Hunter region.[129]

3.31 The NSW Government has advised that changes will be made to the WtE precinct framework to accommodate additional locations for potential WtE development, including:

- removing the Richmond Valley Regional Jobs Precinct from the WtE framework, as there has been no interest in establishing a WtE facility in the Precinct area,
- redefining the boundaries of the former West Lithgow Precinct to include the site of the former Wallerawang Power Station, and
- creating a new WtE precinct at Tomago.[130]

3.32 The committee heard that the selection of the locations for potential WtE precincts is a Cabinet-level government decision, informed by factors such as access to infrastructure, electricity grid connectivity, and the potential to enable broader circular economy and industrial investment objectives. The level of interest from industry participants also played a role.[131]

Waste-to-energy in other jurisdictions

3.33 Waste-to-energy has developed differently across Australian jurisdictions, with some states supporting large-scale facilities subject to regulatory limits, while

[128] Submission 377, NSW Government, pp 9-10.

[129] NSW Environment Protection Authority, *NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan* (September 2025), https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-09/25p4616-nsw-waste-and-circular-infrastructure-plan.pdf, p 18.

[130] Answers to supplementary questions, Mr Asela Atapattu, Executive Director Policy, Programs & Finance and Mr Stephen Beaman, Executive Director, Regulatory Operations, NSW Environment Protection Authority, 30 July 2026, p 2; NSW Environment Protection Authority, *NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan* (September 2025), p 21; Submission 377, NSW Government, p 10.

[131] Evidence, Mr Chappel, 15 December 2025, p 56.

others have taken a more restrictive approach. These approaches are explored further below.

Western Australia

3.34 Western Australia has two large-scale WtE facilities that provide, or are being developed to provide, putrescible waste disposal services for municipal, commercial, and industrial waste.[132]

3.35 The Kwinana Energy Recovery facility is Australia's first operational large-scale WtE facility. It is designed to process up to 460,000 tonnes of non-recyclable waste, generate 38 megawatts of electricity, and recover 10,000 tonnes of metals for recycling and reuse per year.[133] The City of Kwinana identifies a 75 per cent reduction in emissions compared to other waste services as one of the facility's key benefits.[134]

3.36 The East Rockingham Waste to Energy project is currently under construction. It is intended to process up to 300,000 tonnes of residual waste annually, export 28.9 megawatts of electricity, with a stated target of achieving 96 per cent diversion from landfill.[135] The project commenced in August 2019, with completion anticipated in December 2026.[136] The committee heard that the project is currently under external administration.[137]

Victoria

3.37 Victoria has several large-scale WtE facilities under development. The state has adopted a processing cap on the amount of waste that can be heat-treated to generate energy, limited to 2.5 million tonnes annually. The cap is intended to support investment in waste-to-energy technologies while maintaining a focus on waste avoidance and recycling as Victoria transitions towards a circular economy.[138]

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132 Australian Competition & Consumer Commission, *Acciona's proposed acquisition of East Rockingham Waste to Energy Project raises concerns*, (17 July 2025), https://www.accc.gov.au/media-release/accionas-proposed-acquisition-of-east-rockingham-waste-to-energy-project-raises-concerns.

133 Kwinana Energy Recovery, *Kwinana Energy Recovery* (2024), https://kwinana.energy/about; Submission 120, Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia, p 5.

134 City of Kwinana, *Energy Recovery* (2026), https://www.kwinana.wa.gov.au/property-and-pets/waste-and-recycling/energy-recovery.

135 East Rockingham Waste to Energy, *Converting Perth's Waste into sustainable energy*, https://erwte.com.au/; Australian Renewable Energy Agency, *East Rockingham Waste to Energy* (2026), https://arena.gov.au/projects/east-rockingham-waste-to-energy/.

136 Australian Renewable Energy Agency, *East Rockingham Waste to Energy* (2026).

137 Evidence, Mr Nicholas, 15 December 2025, p 33.

138 State Government of Victoria, *Waste to energy* (25 July 2025), https://www.vic.gov.au/waste-energy.

3.38 Seven licences have been issued to waste-to-energy facility operators, with an anticipated total of 2,350,000 tonnes of waste to be processed. Victoria's cap licences 'do not specify a precise location' for proposed WtE facilities, as the proposed location is considered and confirmed through planning approvals processes. [139]

3.39 On 25 August 2026, the Victorian Parliament's Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee published its inquiry report into the development and expansion of waste-to-energy infrastructure in Victoria. The report noted that the majority of submissions opposed waste-to-energy facilities and called for stronger regulatory oversight and community safeguards. [140]

Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory

3.40 In Queensland, the Gold Coast City Council is proposing to construct and operate a WtE facility as part of its new Advanced Resource Recovery Centre. The proposed facility is forecast to process more than 300,000 tonnes of residual waste annually. [141]

3.41 In contrast, the Australian Capital Territory prohibits the incineration of waste for energy. [142]

International experience

3.42 There are approximately 2,000 facilities operating worldwide, including more than 1,000 facilities in Japan (Tokyo alone has 22 WtE facilities), around 80 in the United States, and more than 400 across Europe. [143]

3.43 Some evidence to the committee indicates that WtE remains an important component of the EU waste management policy, with older facilities being replaced and at least six new projects announced in the UK over the past two

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139 Environment Protection Authority Victoria, *Waste to Energy Scheme licences*, (27 August 2026), https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/waste-energy-scheme-licences.

140 Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee, Parliament of Victoria Legislative Council, *The development and expansion of waste-to-energy (WtE) infrastructure in Victoria* (2026), pp xi-xxiii and 2.

141 NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, *Energy from waste* (6 May 2026), https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/the-planning-system/energy from waste.

142 Submission 175, ACT Greens, p 1.

143 NSW Environment Protection Authority, *Energy from Waste in NSW* (9 March 2026), https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/Your-environment/Waste/waste-and-circular-infrastructure-plan/energy from waste-nsw; NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, *Energy from waste* (6 May 2026).

years.[144] Other evidence points to overcapacity and a policy shift towards decommissioning incineration capacity.[145]

3.44 The committee heard how the proposed technology in Australian WtE proposals compares with facilities operating internationally. Mr Stefan Dittrich, National Technical and Major Projects Manager at Remondis Australia, advised the committee that the proposed WtE technology in New South Wales is the same as technology already operating around the world:

> …the technology is the same that is applied overseas, whether that's a plant being built in Singapore, in Tokyo next to the Olympic Village, or in Copenhagen or Amsterdam, the technology is the same. The working principle is the same…The technology is known, the global suppliers of these technologies are known, and the operations, so you're really tapping into an experience pool. It's not a tailor-made, very different solution, not at all. These are standardised, large-scale, fully developed plants.[146]

Denmark

3.45 A number of stakeholders referred to Copenhagen as an example of how WtE facilities can coexist with residential communities, commercial centres, and public infrastructure without adverse health or environmental impacts.[147] The Amager Bakke facility, also known as CopenHill, is located close to residential communities in central Copenhagen and approximately 1.66km away from Amalienborg, the residence of the Danish Royal Family.[148]

3.46 Amager Bakke converts residual and commercial waste into heating and electricity. For each tonne of waste processed, the facility can produce approximately 2.7 MWh of district heating and 0.8 MWh of electricity.[149]

3.47 The facility is notable for its integration of waste infrastructure with public and recreational uses. Its functional design incorporates a rooftop recreational area, a ski slope and rock-climbing wall, hiking trails, and space for visitors to view the

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144 Submission 120, Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia, p 10.

145 Submission 233, Sydney Knitting Nannas and Friends, p 1; Evidence, Ms Keelah Lam, Member, Sydney Knitting Nannas and Friends, 4 May 2026, p 41.

146 Evidence, Mr Stefan Dittrich, National Technical and Major Projects Manager - Remondis Australia, 15 December 2025, p 10.

147 Evidence, Ms Gayle Sloan, Chief Executive Officer, Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia, 15 December 2025, p 2; Submission 236, Hunter Joint Organisation, p 7.

148 Submission 120, Waste Management & Resource Recovery Association, p 6; Answers to supplementary questions, Dr Jackie Wright, Principal/Director, Environmental Risk Sciences Pty Ltd (enRiskS), 12 February 2026, p 4.

149 ARC, *Teknik*, https://a-r-c.dk/amager-bakke/teknik/.

cityscape.[150] Mr Jeremy Manion, Regional Waste Coordinator, The Parks, Sydney's Parkland Councils, described CopenHill's ski slope as a 'good example' of community engagement in WtE projects.[151]

Sweden

3.48 Dr Richard Kirkman, former CEO and Managing Director, Veolia Australia New Zealand, pointed to Sweden as 'one of the world's cleanest countries' and an example of achieving 99 per cent diversion of waste from landfill through a combination of recycling, composting and WtE. He noted that approximately half of Sweden's waste is composted or recycled, while the other half is incinerated for energy recovery.[152]

3.49 Further, WtE in Sweden provides heat to 1.2 million Swedish households and electricity for another 800,000.[153] Local Government NSW pointed to Sweden as an example of the importance of pre-sorting waste to remove recyclables before combustion, ensuring that only non-recyclable residuals are treated thermally.[154]

France

3.50 Paris has three WtE facilities with the capacity to collectively treat approximately 1.8 million tonnes of residual household waste annually.[155] All of Paris' hospitals and many museums, including the Louvre, are heated by WtE plants.[156] The Rennes Métropole WtE facility in the Brittany region and the Remival Energy Recovery Centre in Reims have also operated in agricultural areas in France for decades.[157]

Best practice and international standards

3.51 A key issue for the inquiry was how the regulatory framework for waste-to-energy facilities in New South Wales compares with international practice. Evidence focused particularly on the use of best available techniques, emissions monitoring, and the extent to which NSW requirements align with standards developed in the European Union.

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150 ARC, *Grøn rekreativ tagpark*, https://a-r-c.dk/amager-bakke/groen-rekreativ-tagpark/; CopenHill, *Activities*, https://www.copenhill.dk/en/activities.

151 Evidence, Mr Jeremy Manion, Regional Waste Coordinator, The Parks, Sydney's Parkland Councils, 15 December 2025, p 21.

152 Evidence, Dr Kirkman, 15 December 2025, pp 27 and 36.

153 Submission 120, Waste Management & Resource Recovery Association, p 6.

154 Submission 221, Local Government NSW, p 7.

155 NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, *Energy from waste* (6 May 2026), https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/the-planning-system/energy from waste.

156 Submission 224, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, p 20.

157 Answers to supplementary questions, Dr Wright, 12 February 2026, p 6.

Regulatory framework and best available techniques

3.52 The EU's 2010 Industrial Emissions Directive (IED), supported by the 2019 Best Available Techniques Reference Document (BREF) for waste incineration, establishes a regulatory framework for continuous monitoring of emissions and facility operations based on best available techniques and technologies.[158]

3.53 These standards are widely regarded as global best practice.[159] The NSW EPA considers these standards 'comparable' to the NSW Clean Air Regulation Group 6 requirements.[160] The NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan states that the NSW EPA will apply the EU's Best Available Techniques to set licence conditions for emissions monitoring and operations. It will also review emission limits after performance testing and 12 months of operation to ensure they reflect efficient plant performance, revising licence limits where appropriate.[161]

3.54 Against this background, the committee heard that the regulatory framework for WtE facilities in New South Wales aligns with international best practice. Mr Stephen Beaman, Executive Director, Operations, NSW Environment Protection Authority, described the framework as 'consistent with world's best practice',[162] while his colleague, Mr Tony Chappel, Chief Executive Officer, NSW Environment Protection Authority, advised WtE facilities are subject to stringent development assessment processes, as well as ongoing monitoring:

> Just like any large industrial proposal or landfill, energy from waste facilities are subject to New South Wales's rigorous development assessment process, strict emissions standards that align with global best practice and ongoing adaptive regulation, through EPA licensing, to ensure that we deliver appropriate protections for facilities and the communities that neighbour them, no matter where they are located.[163]

3.55 Dr Jackie Wright, Director, Environmental Risk Sciences Pty Ltd, also agreed that Australia has 'robust' guidelines for community health assessments, aligned with international best practice. These guidelines provide a scientifically rigorous framework for assessing air emissions from WtE facilities and their potential

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158 NSW Environment Protection Authority, *NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan*, (September 2025), pp 19-20.

159 Evidence, Mr Brett Lemin, Executive Director, Waste Contractors & Recyclers Association of NSW, 15 December 2025, p 9.

160 NSW Environment Protection Authority, *NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan*, (September 2025), p 19.

161 NSW Environment Protection Authority, *NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan*, (September 2025), p 22.

162 Evidence, Mr Stephen Beaman, Executive Director, Operations, NSW Environment Protection Authority, 15 December 2025, p 58.

163 Evidence, Mr Chappel, 15 December 2025, p 55.

risks to human health.[164] Professor Hugh Durrant-Whyte, NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, Office of the Chief Scientist & Engineer, similarly described New South Wales' established guidelines, controls, and best-practice standards for managing waste in New South Wales as among the most stringent internationally.[165]

3.56 The regulatory framework also requires proponents to demonstrate that the technology proposed for a WtE facility has an established operational basis. Mr Chris Ritchie, Executive Director Energy, Resources and Industry Assessments, Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure advised that WtE development applications must identify an operational WtE facility using the same technology and waste feedstock in a similar jurisdiction. He explained that:

> That reference facility must also use the same technologies and the same waste feedstock as the proposal and be in a similar jurisdiction. The applicant must use current operational emissions data from that working facility to help us understand the air quality and human health impacts from a proposed facility. We expect them to use technologies that are consistent with global best practice and, noting the life of these types of facilities can be in the order of 25 years, we also expect the applicants to commit to continual improvement with respect to emission control techniques and practices.[166]

Emissions standards, monitoring and compliance

3.57 The NSW EPA's *Energy from Waste Technical Note* establishes the operational and technical requirements for WtE facilities in New South Wales, including air emissions standards, assessment requirements and continuous monitoring.[167]

3.58 Facilities proposing to thermally treat waste in New South Wales must demonstrate the use of current international best-practice techniques, including:

- process design and control
- emission control equipment design and control
- emission monitoring with real-time feedback to the controls of the process
- arrangements for the receipt of waste, and

[164] Evidence, Dr Jackie Wright, Director, Environmental Risk Sciences Pty Ltd (enRiskS), 15 December 2025, p 3.

[165] Evidence, Professor Hugh Durrant-Whyte, Chief Scientist & Engineer, Premier's Department, 4 May 2026, p 29.

[166] Evidence, Mr Ritchie, 4 May 2026, p 44.

[167] Evidence, Mr Beaman, 1 July 2026, p 35.

- management of residues from the energy recovery process.[168]

3.59 Proposed WtE facilities must demonstrate that they will protect community health and the environment through an air quality impact assessment. The assessment must show compliance with the health-protective criteria set out in the NSW Approved Methods for Modelling and Assessment of Air Pollutants in NSW.[169]

3.60 Further, WtE facilities are required to continuously monitor a range of air pollutants, including:

- oxides of nitrogen (NOX)
- CO (Carbon Monoxide)
- solid particles (Total)
- total organic compounds
- hydrogen chloride
- hydrogen fluoride (HF)
- sulphur dioxide (SO2) and,
- ammonia.[170]

3.61 Exemptions may apply to continuous ammonia and HF monitoring. The NSW EPA also requires periodic monitoring of air pollutants, such as metals, mercury, cadmium and thallium, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and dioxins and furans. Monitoring is required quarterly during the first year of operation and twice annually thereafter.[171]

3.62 The NSW EPA may impose additional requirements through environmental protection licence conditions. Continuous monitoring of mercury is still an emerging technology, and it is not currently technically possible to continuously monitor dioxins and furans. Consequently, the NSW EPA requires the continuous monitoring of relevant precursors as proxies instead.[172]

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168 NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA), *Energy from Waste Technical Note* (8 May 2026), https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/Your-environment/Waste/waste-and-circular-infrastructure-plan/energy-waste-technical-note.

169 Submission 377, NSW Government, p 12; NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA), *Energy from Waste Technical Note* (8 May 2026).

170 Answers to supplementary questions, Mr Tony Chappel, Chief Executive Officer, NSW Environment Protection Authority, received 13 February 2026, p 1; Evidence, Mr Beaman, 1 July 2026, p 35.

171 Answers to supplementary questions, Mr Chappel, 13 February 2026, p 2.

172 Answers to supplementary questions, Mr Chappel, 13 February 2026, p 2.

Residues produced by waste-to-energy facilities

3.63 The waste-to-energy process produces some waste, such as ash, which needs to be safely managed. There are two main forms of this ash:

- Incinerator Bottom Ash (IBA), often referred to as 'bottom ash'. This is residue that is left at the bottom of the furnace after waste is incinerated, and typically contains metals, glass, ceramics and other materials. After processing, bottom ash can potentially be used as an aggregate in construction material. [173]
- Air Pollution Control Residue (APCR), often referred to as 'fly ash', is a hazardous material captured by emission control systems and must be safely managed at licensed facilities or treated for reuse under strict regulation. [174]

3.64 The NSW EPA advises that Per-and poly-fluoroalkyl (PFAS) is an emerging area of study, but current evidence indicates that a large proportion of PFAS is destroyed during thermal treatment and that 'risks from PFAS in emissions are low.' [175] The NSW EPA will continue to require up-to-date health and environmental risk assessments for PFAS and is also working with other Australian jurisdictions to develop consistent approaches to regulating IBA and APCR. [176]

Modern waste-to-energy technology and legacy incineration

3.65 Throughout the inquiry, stakeholders were clear to emphasise the distinction between modern WtE technology and older incinerators, cautioning that they should not be 'conflated'. [177] They made clear that modern WtE technologies and controls are more sophisticated than older incineration facilities. [178]

[173] Evidence, Mr Beaman, 15 December 2025, p 60; Evidence, Mr Andrew Short, Director of Project Development ANZ, O.C.O Technology Australia Pty Ltd, 4 May 2026, pp 27-28; Evidence, Mr Ritchie, 4 May 2026, p 46; Evidence, Mr Nicholas, 1 July 2026, p 22; Submission 120, Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia, p 10.

[174] Submission 120, Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia, p 10; Parkes Energy Recovery, *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs); what pollution control equipment will be used?,* https://parkesenergy.com.au/faq; Evidence, Mr Amal Jugdeo, Sales Director, Kanadevia Inova Australia Pty Ltd, 4 May 2026, p 23; Evidence, Mr Short, 4 May 2026, pp 23 & 25; Evidence, Mr Beaman, 1 July 2026, p 36.

[175] NSW Environment Protection Authority, *Energy from Waste in NSW* (9 March 2026).

[176] NSW Environment Protection Authority, *Energy from Waste in NSW* (9 March 2026).

[177] Evidence, Dr Wright, 15 December 2025, p 3; Evidence, Ms Sloan, 15 December 2025, p 2; Evidence, Mr Lemin, 15 December 2025, p 9; Evidence, Mr Kevin Souster, Engineering and Delivery Director, Parkes Energy Recovery, 15 December 2025, p 30; Submission 362, Waste Contractors and Recyclers Association of NSW (WCRA), p 4.

[178] Evidence, Mr Beaman, 1 July 2026, p 35; Evidence, Dr Ali El Hanandeh, Associate Professor, Environmental Engineering and Built Environment, Griffith University, 4 May 2026, p 21; Evidence, Dr Kirkman, 15 December 2025, pp 36.

3.66 For example, Mr Brett Lemin, Executive Director of Waste Contractors & Recyclers Association of NSW, asserted that 'Modern energy from waste facilities bear no resemblance to legacy incinerators of past decades', pointing to controlled operating environments, continuous emissions monitoring, multi-stage flue gas treatment, and independent regulatory oversight as improvements featured in the newer technology.[179]

3.67 Dr Ron Wainberg, Technical Director of MRA Consulting, advised the committee that 'Older plants created pollution problems, and those images still shape public opinion.'[180]

3.68 Mr Kevin Souster, Engineering and Delivery Director, Parkes Energy Recovery, similarly described contemporary WtE technology as operating within a significantly more advanced regulatory and technological environment.[181]

3.69 According to the NSW Government's *Energy from waste factsheet*, emission control technology for WtE facilities has improved significantly over the past 25 years as emissions standards have become more stringent. For example, technological improvements in Japan's WtE sector contributed to a 99 per cent reduction in dioxin emissions between 1997 and 2010.[182]

3.70 Evidence before the committee identified several differences between older incineration facilities and contemporary WtE facilities. Older technologies were characterised by:

- operation at lower temperatures (below 850°C), which was described as insufficient to destroy harmful pollutants like dioxins and furans,[183]
- limited or less sophisticated flue gas treatment and emissions control systems, resulting in higher emissions and
- less controlled emission points, making emissions monitoring and management more difficult.[184]

3.71 Modern WtE technologies are characterised by:

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179 Evidence, Mr Lemin, 15 December 2025, p 9.

180 Evidence, Dr Ron Wainberg, Technical Director, MRA Consulting, 1 July 2026, p 7.

181 Evidence, Mr Souster, 15 December 2025, p 30.

182 NSW Government, *Energy from Waste: Fact Sheet* (January 2023) https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-01/J0022- EfW-fact-sheet_web2.pdf, p 2.

183 Evidence, Mr Souster, 15 December 2025, p 30.

184 Evidence, Mr Souster, 15 December 2025, p 30; Evidence, Mr Beaman, 15 December 2025, pp 60 and 65; Evidence, Dr Kirkman, 15 December 2025, pp 35-36; Evidence, Dr El Hanandeh, 4 May 2026, p 21; Evidence, Chappel, 15 December 2025, p 65; Submission 120, Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia, pp 2, 9 and 12.

- operation at high combustion temperatures (above 850°C), which has been demonstrated to destroy dioxins, furans and other pollutants;
- advanced flue gas treatment and emissions control systems;
- continuous monitoring of emissions from a single stack, providing real-time emissions data and supporting regulatory oversight; [185]
- automatic shutdowns if any systems fail; [186]
- design and operation in accordance with stringent emissions standards, including the EU IED and BREF, which have been reflected in New South Wales regulatory requirements. [187]

3.72 The Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia submits that emissions from WtE facilities are below limits set by the World Health Organisation and the European Union. They note that these emissions are controlled using advanced monitoring and cleaning systems, such as:

- Continuous Emissions Monitoring Systems check pollutants such as nitrogen oxides (NO_x), carbon monoxide (CO), dust and acid gases.
- Flue gas cleaning removes particles and gases using lime scrubbers, activated carbon and baghouse filters.
- Combustion temperatures of around 850–1,100°C destroy harmful compounds.
- Independent testing verifies results and compliance. [188]

3.73 Evidence received by the committee indicates that contemporary WtE facilities differ materially from older incineration technologies in their combustion controls, emissions treatment, monitoring and regulatory oversight. However, some witnesses raised differing views about the extent to which existing regulatory controls can address potential long-term health and environmental uncertainties. These concerns will be discussed in Chapter 4.

[185] Evidence, Mr Souster, 15 December 2025, p 30; Submission 120, Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia, p 10; Evidence, Dr Wainberg, 1 July 2026, p 7; Evidence, Mr Lemin, 15 December 2025, p 9; Evidence, Dr El Hanandeh, 4 May 2026, p 21; Evidence, Ms Sloan, 15 December 2025, p 3.

[186] Submission 120, Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia, p 2.

[187] Evidence, Mr Beaman, 1 July 2026, p 35; Evidence, Ms Sloan, 15 December 2025, p 3; Evidence, Mr Dittrich, 15 December 2025, p 10; Submission 120, Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia, p 6.

[188] Submission 120, Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia, p 10.

Committee comment

3.74 The committee acknowledges that New South Wales is facing a waste challenge. Increasing waste volumes and constrained landfill capacity are placing growing pressure on the resilience of the waste management system and increasing the risk of a waste management crisis.

3.75 However, this is not the first time that New South Wales has been warned of a waste crisis, accompanied by calls for urgent and novel solutions. The experience of the 1990s is instructive: the waste pressures of that period ultimately contributed to the development of the Woodlawn Bioreactor Landfill. The committee therefore notes that, while the NSW Government is exploring waste-to-energy technologies as a potential response to the current challenge, this proposal should be considered in the context of that history. It is also notable that waste-to-energy was comprehensively examined by the Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 6 - Planning and Environment over 9 years ago, and that many of the findings of that inquiry remain unaddressed.

Finding 1

New South Wales, particularly Greater Sydney, is facing increasing waste volumes and declining landfill capacity, placing growing pressure on the resilience of the waste management system and increasing the risk of a waste management crisis.

Finding 2

Many of the findings of the 2017 Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 6 - Planning and Environment inquiry into energy from waste technology were reinforced by evidence received during this inquiry, with many of the issues remaining inadequately addressed.

Finding 3

The 2017 Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 6 - Planning and Environment inquiry recommended that the proposed Eastern Creek waste-to-energy facility not be approved, citing unresolved concerns about human health and environmental risks, uncertainty around feedstock and emissions, limited reference data, the appropriateness of the proposed location and a lack of community support.

Finding 4

The waste crisis in Sydney in the 1990s was a catalyst for the development of the Woodlawn Bioreactor Landfill.

3.76 While large-scale waste-to-energy technology is established internationally, it remains relatively new in Australia, particularly in New South Wales. Indeed, the proposals at Parkes and Goulburn Mulwaree would represent the first introduction of the technology to the east of Australia. Despite their novelty, the committee notes that both proponents and government representatives were adamant that waste-to-energy facilities could safely operate in any location, provided they are appropriately designed, regulated and managed.

3.77 While this international and interstate experience provides valid information and reference points for New South Wales, we believe enthusiasm for such technology must be balanced and considered alongside the particular characteristics of each proposed facility, including its waste feedstock, location, surrounding land uses and regulatory environment. International experience demonstrating that waste-to-energy can operate successfully does not, of itself, establish that a particular facility is appropriate for a particular location. Potential impacts on human health, the environment, surrounding communities, agriculture, water resources, transport and waste management outcomes require critical independent analysis. Waste-to-energy cannot displace or be seen as a replacement for waste avoidance, reuse, recycling and other higher-order resource recovery.

Finding 5

Proponents and other witnesses, including government representatives, maintained that modern waste-to-energy facilities can operate safely irrespective of location provided they are appropriately designed, regulated and managed.

Finding 6

Although Western Australia has an operational waste-to-energy facility, the proposed facilities at Parkes and Goulburn Mulwaree would be the first of their kind on the eastern seaboard.

3.78 The committee also accepts that contemporary facilities operate differently from older technologies, including in design, operating temperatures, advanced flue gas treatment and emissions control and monitoring systems.

Finding 7

Modern waste-to-energy facilities operates differently from older facilities, including in design, operating temperatures, advanced flue gas treatment, emissions control and monitoring systems.

3.79 The committee also heard that the New South Wales regulatory framework incorporates a range of safeguards, including requirements for best available techniques, operational reference facilities, health and air-quality assessments, emissions monitoring and ongoing NSW Environment Protection Authority oversight. However, some witnesses questioned whether the NSW Environment Protection Authority has sufficient capability and capacity to discharge these responsibilities comprehensively.

3.80 Moreover, these safeguards must extend beyond emissions to the appropriate management of residues generated by WtE processes. In particular, the committee heard that Incinerator Bottom Ash and hazardous Air Pollution Control Residues require safe treatment, reuse or disposal, while the facilities and capabilities available in New South Wales to manage these residues remain exceptionally limited.

Finding 8

Waste-to-energy processes generate Incinerator Bottom Ash (IBA) and hazardous Air Pollution Control Residues (APCR) which require appropriate management. Existing facilities and capabilities for the safe management and treatment of these residues remain exceptionally limited.

Chapter 4 Potential risks and impacts of waste-to-energy

This chapter examines stakeholder views on the potential health, environmental, social, and economic risks of waste-to-energy (WtE) facilities in regional New South Wales. It considers concerns about emissions, long-term health effects, vulnerable populations, and potential impacts on soil, water, agricultural produce, food safety, market access, and the reputation of regional agricultural and viticultural industries. It also considers community wellbeing, regulatory oversight, and confidence in project proponents. Finally, the chapter examines the financial and economic implications of WtE, including infrastructure and waste transport costs, host-community benefits, the waste levy, council and ratepayer impacts, and the comparative costs and risks of WtE and landfill.

Health and environmental concerns

4.1 Community concerns about proposed WtE facilities extended beyond potential direct health impacts to encompass community wellbeing, impacts on vulnerable populations, agricultural production, food safety, viticulture, and regional economic and reputational interests.

Community concerns and health impacts

4.2 Potential health impacts associated with emissions from WtE facilities were a significant concern raised by stakeholders, particularly in regional communities. Concerns focused on the potential exposure to emissions and associated by-products, and about the possible long-term health effects of such exposure, particularly for vulnerable populations. [189]

4.3 Stakeholders identified a range of potential health impacts and areas of uncertainty associated with WtE facilities, including:

- cumulative effects of long-term exposure to emissions, including dioxins, PFAS and heavy metals, and to by-products such as 'toxic ash', [190]

[189] Submission 134, Parkes Shire Council, pp 6 and 41; Submission 185, Parkes Christian School, p 2; Submission 199, Parkes Country Women's Association, pp 1-2.

[190] Submission 134, Parkes Shire Council, pp 10; Submission 192, Lachlan Shire Council, p 1; Submission 46, Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, p 2; Submission 189, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, pp 2 and 4-5; Submission 193, Yass Valley Council, p 3; Evidence, Mr Xavier Martin, President, NSW Farmers Association, 15 December 2025, p 22; Evidence, Ms Alexandra Barratt, Emeritus Professor of Public Health, University of Sydney and Member, Sydney Knitting Nannas and Friends, 4 May 2026, p 37; Submission 232, Long Water Agricultural Association, p 11; Submission 174, NSW Farmers Association, pp 2-3; Submission 175, ACT Greens, p 1; Evidence, Mrs Julie Macaulay, President, Parkes Country Women's Association, 14 April 2026, p 15.

- adverse health outcomes, such as cancer, respiratory diseases, and reproductive impacts, [191]
- pollutants entering the food chain and accumulating in livestock, milk, eggs, and crops, with potential consequences for human health and food safety, [192]
- concerns about exposure to emissions from older incinerators and conditions including 'neoplasia, reproductive issues, and other diseases.' [193]

4.4 These concerns were reflected in the positions adopted by affected local councils. The two councils in whose local government areas WtE facilities are currently proposed — Parkes Shire Council and Goulburn Mulwaree Council — have both formally and unanimously objected to the proposals on the basis of perceived risks to their local communities. [194]

4.5 Parkes Shire Council submitted that the proposed WtE facility should not proceed unless its safety can be 'unequivocally demonstrated through independent, peer-reviewed scientific evidence'. The council emphasised that the health and wellbeing of residents, the integrity of the environment, and the reputation of Parkes as a clean and green agricultural region are 'non-negotiable.' [195]

4.6 Goulburn Mulwaree Council similarly expressed concern about residents' long-term social and mental wellbeing. It referred to significant community distress arising from concerns about health, property values, soil contamination, and impacts on local agricultural products. Council observed that these concerns had left the community 'socially tired, understandably angry and unable to move ahead with any certainty into the future.' [196]

4.7 Nearby councils, including Lachlan Shire Council, Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council and Yass Valley Council, also expressed strong and unanimous opposition to the WtE proposals. [197]

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191 Submission 427, Member for Goulburn, The Hon Wendy Tuckerman MP, p 4; Evidence, Ms Barratt, 4 May 2026, p 42; Submission 233, Sydney Knitting Nannas and Friends, p 2; Submission 234, Communities Against the Tarago Incinerator (CATTI) Inc, p 20.

192 Submission 199, Parkes Country Women's Association, p 2; Submission 217, Peak Hill Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee, p 2; Submission 218, Parkes Clean Future Alliance, p 6.

193 Submission 233, Sydney Knitting Nannas and Friends, p 2; Evidence, Ms Barratt, 4 May 2026, p 38 and 42.

194 Evidence, Councillor Neil Westcott, Mayor, Parkes Shire Council, 14 April 2026, pp 3-4; Submission 189, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, p 2.

195 Submission 134, Parkes Shire Council, p 1.

196 Submission 189, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, p 2.

197 Evidence, Mr Patrick Ruettjes, Director Environment and Planning, Lachlan Shire Council, 14 April 2026, p 3; Evidence, Councillor Kenrick Winchester, Mayor of the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, 15 May 2026, p 19; Evidence, Councillor Jasmin Jones, Mayor, Yass Valley Council, 15 May 2026, p 19.

Vulnerable populations and community wellbeing

4.8 The potential health effects of WtE facilities on children and vulnerable people was one of the key issues raised by local communities. The Parkes Christian School, located approximately 4 kilometres away from the proposed WtE facility in Parkes, stated that the potential daily exposure of hundreds of children and staff to airborne contaminants presents an 'unacceptable level of risk.'[198] Mr Glen Westcott, Principal, told the committee that uncertainty over the proposed facility's potential health impacts had caused stress and could prompt families to leave Parkes, reducing enrolments.[199]

4.9 The Parkes Aboriginal Working Party similarly expressed concern that air pollution and toxic emissions could increase rates of respiratory illness and cardiovascular disease, particularly among Aboriginal families who already face poorer health outcomes.[200]

4.10 Aboriginal organisations also voiced worries about broader consequences of the proposed facility for Aboriginal communities. The Peak Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council explained that the potential mental health impacts associated with ongoing fear, uncertainty, and environmental degradation of the proposed WtE facility are significant, particularly for Aboriginal families who have 'already experienced generations of dispossession and environmental harm.'[201] Aboriginal groups further identified risks of spiritual and cultural harm arising from potential threats to Country and cultural heritage.[202]

4.11 The committee also heard that uncertainty about proposed WtE facilities is affecting community wellbeing. Stakeholders in both Parkes and Goulburn Mulwaree described anxiety, stress, and concern for their families, livelihoods, and communities.[203]

198 Submission 185, Parkes Christian School, p 1.

199 Evidence, Mr Glen Westcott, Principal, Parkes Christian School, 14 April 2026, p 16.

200 Submission 177, Parkes Aboriginal Working Party, p 3.

201 Submission 182, Peak Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council, p 4.

202 Submission 177, Parkes Aboriginal Working Party, p 4; Submission 182, Peak Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council, p 3; Submission 214, Condobolin Local Aboriginal Land Council, pp 1 and 4-5; Submission 217, Peak Hill Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee, pp 2-4.

203 Evidence, Councillor Joy Paddison, Parkes Shire Council, 14 April 2026, p 2; Evidence, Mrs Julie Macaulay, 14 April 2026, p 15; Evidence, Mr Westcott, 14 April 2026, p 16; Evidence, Councillor Nina Dillon, Mayor, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, 15 May 2026, p 16; Evidence, Mr Andrew Wood, President, Shooters Fishers & Farmers Party Goulburn Branch, 15 May 2026, p 24; Evidence, Mrs Margaret Cameron, Hon Secretary/Treasurer, NSW Farmers Association Goulburn Branch, 15 May 2026, p 32; Submission 218, Parkes Clean Future Alliance, p 11.

4.12 Councillor Neil Westcott, Mayor of Parkes Shire Council, described the effect of the proposed facility on the Parkes community as leading people to question whether they should remain in the area:

> The anxiety already present in our community is significant. Families are worried about their health, their children and their future. People are asking whether they should stay or whether they should leave. [204]

4.13 Councillor Nina Dillon, Mayor of Goulburn Mulwaree, similarly described the uncertainty associated with the proposed facility on the Parkes community:

> The energy from waste facility proposed within our economy—a technology that remains unproven, unfamiliar and concerning to many within our region and indeed right across Australia—has created considerable fear, uncertainty, anxiety and worry to our local residents and our primary producers. The ongoing stress associated with proposals of this scale can have very real impacts on our community's wellbeing, including their mental health. [205]

Uncertainty about long-term health effects

4.14 Many of the concerns described above were exacerbated by a perceived absence of independent evidence demonstrating the long-term safety of WtE technologies. [206] A number of witnesses told the committee that the lack of clear, accessible, and trusted information about the operation of WtE facilities was fuelling much of uncertainty within affected regional communities. [207]

4.15 For example, Mr Xavier Martin, President of the NSW Farmers Association, stated that while compliance may be monitored by the regulator, this does not necessarily mean emissions are harmless, and that even low-level exposure may result in cumulative or irreversible impacts on communities and the environment. [208]

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[204] Evidence, Councillor Westcott, 14 April 2026, p 3.

[205] Evidence, Councillor Dillon, 15 May 2026, p 16.

[206] Submission 134, Parkes Shire Council, p 1; Evidence, Mrs Wendy Tuckerman MP, Member for Goulburn, NSW Legislative Assembly, 15 May 2026, pp 2-4; Evidence, Mr James Innes, President, Communities Against the Tarago Incinerator, 15 May 2026, p 33-34; Evidence, Mr Damian Thomas, Director Advocacy, Local Government NSW, 15 December 2025, p 52; Evidence, Mr Jacob Unger, Member, Parkes Clean Future Alliance, 14 April 2026, p 11.

[207] Evidence, Mr Chris Dart, Program Lead, Waste and Circular Economy, Hunter Joint Organisation, 4 May 2026, p 12; Evidence, Councillor Westcott, 14 April 2026, p 3; Evidence, Mr Jeromie Fitzpatrick, Vice President, Parkes Clean Future Alliance, 14 April 2026, p 11; Evidence, Mrs Frances Robinson, Chairperson, Peak Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council, 14 April 2026, p 24; Evidence, Mr Michael Pilbrow, President, ALP Goulburn Branch, 15 May 2026, p 26.

[208] Evidence, Mr Martin, 15 December 2025, p 22.

4.16 Mrs Wendy Tuckerman MP, Member for Goulburn, NSW Legislative Assembly, similarly questioned whether monitoring and regulatory controls could fully address concerns about long-term exposure:

> While proponents emphasise that this is newer technology than older incinerators, the health literature is clear that many impacts associated with incineration do not emerge for decades. Regulatory frameworks and approval conditions operate on short- to medium-term horizons. Human health does not. Emission monitoring, even where continuous, does not prevent exposure. It can only identify exceedences or trends after exposure has already occurred. [209]

4.17 The committee heard that the Parkes Clean Future Alliance has undertaken independent monitoring of local weather conditions. The Alliance has installed a community-funded weather station at the Parkes Special Activation Precinct to collect data on wind and weather conditions, which it said would provide a baseline for comparison with data provided by the project proponents. [210]

Public forums – Concerns about health and wellbeing

During the inquiry, the Committee hosted public forums in Parkes in April 2026 and Goulburn in May 2026 to hear directly from local communities about proposals to build WtE facilities. While some participants expressed support, most participants who spoke opposed the proposals.

Stakeholders expressed significant concern over the potential health risks of WtE facilities. A sample of the concerns heard by the committee are as follows:

- 'My greatest fear is for the health and wellbeing of my family, grandchildren and the wider Parkes community about this proposal to go ahead. Our region already faces a severe shortage of doctors, nurses and psychologists, leaving us ill-equipped to manage any additional health impact that could arise from a facility of this nature.' [211]
- 'The impacts of that incinerator—if you look at Tarago, they're already calling for an inquiry into the health impacts on the wider community. High blood pressure—we already have diabetes and heart problems. You have a very aged community here who can't breathe anyway, so the emissions are going to cause asthma and a lot of problems for health in this community.' [212]
- 'You really need to take into consideration the mental health effect that you are having on this community.' [213]

[209] Evidence, Mrs Tuckerman MP, 15 May 2026, p 2.

[210] Evidence, Mr Fitzpatrick, 14 April 2026, p 11; Evidence, Mr Unger, 14 April 2026, p 11.

[211] Public forum, Ms Barbara Orr, 14 April 2026, p 5.

[212] Public forum, Ms Isabel Goolagong, 14 April 2026, p 4.

[213] Public forum, Ms Karen Skinner, 14 April 2026, p 7.

- 'An incinerator will be detrimental to the health of nearby residents.' [214]
- 'I moved to Goulburn with my family only a few years ago to get away from the smog and the fumes. Since moving to Goulburn, it has been noticeably healthier and positive for us. I can breathe much better, without Ventolin or any other intervention, and I'd hate to have to move again and isolate myself or my family. We cannot approve of the decline of our health or our future—not for this.' [215]

Evidence on health risks from modern waste-to-energy facilities

4.18 The committee heard evidence that challenged the view that modern WtE technology is unsafe. Industry and academic witnesses argued that modern WtE can operate safely when facilities are designed, operated, and regulated to contemporary standards. [216]

4.19 Ms Gayle Sloan, Chief Executive Officer of the Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia, and Dr Jackie Wright, Director of Environmental Risk Sciences Pty Ltd (enRiskS), who had been engaged by the proponents as a consultant, described WtE as a 'well-established and proven technology' that can operate safely in urban, residential, commercial and agricultural areas when designed and managed to 'modern standards'. [217]

4.20 Proponents of the proposed New South Wales facilities also pointed to international experience. Mr Craig Barker, Chief Executive Officer, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, told the committee that Veolia operates 65 WtE facilities worldwide, processing 12 million tonnes annually, and described the technology as ‘decades-old’ and ‘proven’. [218] Mr Edward Nicholas, Director of Parkes Energy Recovery, similarly described WtE as a safe and proven technology used in thousands of facilities worldwide. [219]

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214 Public forum, Mr Christopher Kloster, 14 May 2026, p 9.

215 Public forum, Ms Jane Smolinski, 14 May 2026, p 9.

216 Evidence, Ms Gayle Sloan, Chief Executive Officer, Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia, 15 December 2025, pp 2-3; Evidence, Dr Jackie Wright, Director, Environmental Risk Sciences Pty Ltd (enRiskS), 15 December 2025, p 4; Evidence, Mr Stefan Dittrich, National Technical and Major Projects Manager - Remondis Australia, 15 December 2025, p 10; Evidence, Mr Brett Lemin, Executive Director, Waste Contractors & Recyclers Association of NSW, 15 December 2025, p 9; NSW Environment Protection Authority, *Energy from Waste in NSW* (9 March 2026), https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/Your-environment/Waste/waste-and-circular-infrastructure-plan/energy-from-waste-nsw.

217 Evidence, Ms Sloan, 15 December 2025, pp 2-3; Evidence, Dr Wright, 15 December 2025, pp 3 and 5.

218 Evidence, Mr Craig Barker, Chief Executive Officer, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, 1 July 2026, p 13.

219 Evidence, Mr Edward Nicholas, Director, Parkes Energy Recovery, 15 December 2025, p 27; Submission 228, Parkes Energy Recovery, p 1.

4.21 The committee also heard that comprehensive human health risk assessments provide an important regulatory safeguard. These assessments follow internationally recognised and precautionary enHealth 2012 guidelines and consider all exposure pathways, such as air, soil, water, and food, and sensitive populations. [220]

4.22 However, the Public Health Association of Australia stated that:

> Most of the evidence for harm comes from research on older types of incinerators. Industry claims newer incinerators are better designed and safer. However, most have not been in operation long enough for evidence for or against their safety to emerge. Therefore, a precautionary approach is warranted.
>
> Existing research is of varying quality and subject to multiple confounders making comparison of incinerators and effects incomplete. [221]

4.23 WtE was also described as 'one of the few technologies' capable of destroying PFAS. Municipal solid waste contains low levels of PFAS, and WtE facilities can destroy and capture these substances through pollution control technology, resulting in only trace levels being emitted. [222] Dr Wright advised that, in terms of human health risks, 'the margin of safety is extremely large'. [223]

4.24 Some witnesses argued that it was important to understand the risks associated with WtE relative to those associated with landfill, noting that landfills also generate environmental risks, including leachate and uncontrolled air emissions. [224] Unlike landfill, WtE facilities were described as 'self-contained,

[220] Evidence, Dr Victor Carey, Public Health Physician, Western NSW Public Health Unit, NSW Health, 1 July 2026, p 27; Evidence, Dr Wright, 15 December 2025, p 3; Evidence, Mr Stephen Beaman, Executive Director, Operations, NSW Environment Protection Authority, 15 December 2025, p 59.

[221] Submission 376, Public Health Association of Australia, p 3.

[222] Evidence, Dr Wright, 15 December 2025, p 3; NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) 2025, *NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan*, (September 2025), /https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-09/25p4616-nsw-waste-and-circular-infrastructure-plan.pdf, p 19.

[223] Evidence, Dr Wright, 15 December 2025, p 3.

[224] Evidence, Dr Wright, 15 December 2025, p 3; Submission 120, Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia, p 4; Evidence, Ms Sloan, 15 December 2025, p 2; Evidence, Mr Lemin, 15 December 2025, p 9; Evidence, Mr Tony Chappel, Chief Executive Officer, NSW Environment Protection Authority, 15 December 2025, p 61; Evidence, Mr Chris Horsey, Manager Waste Management, Hornsby Shire Council, 1 July 2026, p 4; Evidence, Dr Ali El Hanandeh, Associate Professor, Environmental Engineering and Built Environment, Griffith University, 4 May 2026, p 18.

tightly regulated and continually monitored' and capable of being upgraded or replaced without leaving a 'legacy environmental burden'. [225]

Emissions controls, monitoring and operational safeguards

4.25 As discussed above, regional stakeholders also raised concerns about the potential release of pollutants from WtE facilities, including dioxins. In response, the committee heard evidence that modern WtE facilities incorporate multiple controls intended to prevent or minimise the release of pollutants, particularly dioxins.

4.26 Dr Richard Kirkman, former CEO and Managing Director, Veolia Australia New Zealand, stated that modern WtE facilities emit extremely low levels of dioxins and destroy more dioxins in incoming waste than they release. [226] Mr Kevin Souster, Engineering and Delivery Director, Parkes Energy Recovery, similarly advised that the high temperatures of modern WtE facilities operate to destroy dioxins and furans, with any remaining pollutants managed through a multi-stage flue-gas treatment process, involving lime, activated carbon, and baghouse filters. [227] He said that continuous emissions monitoring, supported by control systems, standard operating procedures, and emergency response plans is designed to keep emissions well below applicable regulatory limits. [228]

4.27 Witnesses also referred to the existence of safeguards to prevent emissions breaches and contamination from WtE facilities. Mr Amal Jugdeo, Sales Director at Kanadevia Inova Australia Pty Ltd, also advised that in addition to continuous emissions monitoring, WtE facilities have advanced control systems to detect potential exceedances of pollutant limits. Where emissions approach or are likely to exceed regulatory limits, the WtE facility is designed to shut down safely, preventing exceedances of its emissions limits. [229] Similar comments were made by Dr Kirkman, who noted:

> '...if there's any sign that a facility could be heading towards a breach of any of the emission limits, it's automatically shut down. There are safeguards in place to prevent that from happening in the first place, and that's why it's a very robust technology. [230]

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225 Evidence, Ms Sloan, 15 December 2025, p 2; Evidence, Mr Kevin Souster, Engineering and Delivery Director, Parkes Energy Recovery, 15 December 2025, p 30; Evidence, Mr Lemin, 15 December 2025, p 9.

226 Evidence, Dr Richard Kirkman, former CEO, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, 15 December 2025, p 37,

227 Evidence, Mr Souster, 15 December 2025, p 36.

228 Evidence, Mr Souster, 15 December 2025, p 36.

229 Evidence, Mr Amal Jugdeo, Sales Director, Kanadevia Inova Australia Pty Ltd, 4 May 2026, p 25.

230 Evidence, Dr Kirkman, 15 December 2025, pp 33-34.

4.28 As discussed in Chapter 3, ongoing emissions sampling, monitoring, and reporting will be mandatory conditions of approval for any WtE facility in New South Wales.[231] Mr Tony Chappel, Chief Executive Officer of the NSW Environment Protection Authority (NSW EPA), advised that the NSW EPA would take immediate enforcement action if emissions exceeded licence limits or threaten community or environmental health, including suspending a facility's licence or operations where necessary.[232]

Site-specific environmental monitoring

4.29 Some stakeholders expressed concern that the proposed WtE technologies lack demonstrated performance under Australian conditions and called for site-specific data to inform proposals.[233] In response, proponents pointed to the additional specific monitoring they have both undertaken, and propose to undertake, in response to concerns about potential adverse impacts of the technology.

4.30 For example, Mr Nicholas advised that Parkes Energy Recovery had established an onsite weather station and air-quality monitoring station to generate site-specific data for the Environmental Impact Statement:

> We've established onsite at Parkes a weather station and an air quality monitoring station. The reason we're doing that is because, as part of the incredibly rigorous environmental impact assessment that we need to do for the New South Wales Government's regulatory requirements, there's no point us just relying on what's been done in Dublin or what's been done in Copenhagen. We have to show site-specific data for our particular location.[234]

4.31 He explained that while the local weather station at Parkes Airport, approximately 10 kilometres from the site, could provide indicative data, site-specific monitoring was necessary to provide a scientifically robust basis for assessing air emissions. The onsite monitoring station would collect 12 months of data to establish a baseline and provide evidence-based information about anticipated emissions, their dispersion, and resulting ground-level concentrations. He emphasised that this would provide the community with reliable, site-specific information about the potential impacts of the proposed WtE facility.[235]

4.32 The committee also heard that Veolia has committed to additional environmental monitoring in response to community concerns, including four

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231 NSW Government, *Energy from Waste: Fact Sheet* (January 2023), p 2.

232 Evidence, Mr Chappel, 15 December 2025, p 57.

233 Evidence, Councillor Khal Asfour, Vice President (Metropolitan/Urban), Local Government NSW, 15 December 2025, p 48; Evidence, Mr Thomas, 15 December 2025, p 52; Evidence, Mr Innes, 15 May 2026, p 33; Evidence, Mr Martin, 15 December 2025, p 23.

234 Evidence, Mr Nicholas, 15 December 2025, p 29.

235 Evidence, Mr Nicholas, 15 December 2025, pp 29-30.

ambient air quality monitoring stations rather than the two or three originally proposed, as well as baseline soil testing. Mr Craig Barker, Chief Executive Officer, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, stated that while initial technical assessments indicate negligible health risks and limited potential for measurable soil impacts, these additional measures were important to provide greater community confidence. [236]

Agriculture, food safety and viticulture

4.33 Many of the concerns raised in relation to human health also extended to agriculture. These included the potential impacts of WtE facilities on primary production, export markets certification, regional economies, and community confidence.

4.34 A number of stakeholders emphasised the economic importance of the agriculture industry to New South Wales, with the NSW Farmers Association noting that it produces more than $24 billion in food and fiber annually. [237] It identified Parkes in particular as one of the state's 'most productive agricultural areas', with significant wheat, barley, oats, canola, and pulse production, as well as sheep grazing for wool and meat. [238]

4.35 The Tarago and surrounding region were similarly described as supporting a diverse agricultural economy, including export-accredited livestock, cropping, fodder production, organic agriculture, high-quality food and fibre enterprises, as well as viticulture and tourism. [239]

4.36 Against this background, stakeholders expressed concerns that pollutants, including heavy metals, dioxins, and furans, could disperse from WtE facilities and accumulate in soils, crops, pastures, and waterways, affecting livestock, agricultural production, and human health. [240]

4.37 Mrs Wendy Tuckerman MP told the committee that these concerns are 'heightened' at Tarago because the region is located within the Sydney drinking water catchment. She noted that many households rely on harvested rainwater as their primary source of drinking water, while local farming operations depend

[236] Evidence, Mr Barker, 1 July 2026, p 13; Evidence, Ms Kathryn Whitfield, Chief Growth Officer, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, 1 July 2026, p 18.

[237] Submission 174, NSW Farmers Association, p 1.

[238] Submission 174, NSW Farmers Association, p 3.

[239] Evidence, Mrs Tuckerman MP, 15 May 2026, p 3.

[240] Submission 174, NSW Farmers Association, pp 2-3; Evidence, Mr Martin, 15 December 2025, p 22; Evidence, Councillor Dillon, 15 May 2026, p 17; Evidence, Ms Karryn Schaefer, Chair, Peak Hill Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee, 14 April 2026, p 30; Evidence, Mrs Robinson, 14 April 2026, p 24; Evidence, Mrs Macaulay, 14 April 2026, p 15; Evidence, Mrs Heather Green, President, NSW Farmers Association Peak Hill, 14 April 2026, p 16; Evidence, Mrs Tuckerman MP, 15 May 2026, p 2.

on uncontaminated soil and pasture.[241] The committee heard that, in rural communities, rainwater tanks can represent a 'direct and immediate exposure pathway'.[242]

4.38 Mr Stan Moore, Chair of the NSW Farmers Association, Goulburn Branch and primary producer, identified three principal risks of the proposed WtE facility to agricultural land:

- Food safety.
- Agricultural produce being prevented from entering domestic or export markets if contamination is suspected; and
- Farmer's livelihoods being put at risk if their land becomes contaminated.[243]

Market access, certification and reputational risks

4.39 For stakeholders working in agricultural settings, particularly farmers producing organic products, the potential effects of contamination, or even the perception of contamination, on consumer confidence and market access was a significant issue. The NSW Farmers Association and other representatives told the committee that these concerns, even in the absence of regulatory breaches, could damage the reputation of agricultural products, particularly those exported to premium overseas markets.[244]

4.40 Mrs Julie Macaulay, President of the Parkes Country Women's Association, emphasised the importance of maintaining confidence in the reputation of regional agricultural produce:

> Our reputation depends on clean, safe, high-quality food. The presence of an incinerator, regardless of assurances, creates a real risk to that

241 Evidence, Mrs Tuckerman MP, 15 May 2026, p 2; Evidence, Ms Thalia Sadumiano Treasurer, Communities Against the Tarago Incinerator, 15 May 2026, p 33; Evidence, Mrs Josephine Beverley, Member, Long Water Agricultural Association, 15 May 2026, p 42; ; Evidence, Mr Thomas Martin, President, Long Water Agricultural Association, 15 May 2026, p 39; Submission 178, NSW Farmers Association - Goulburn Branch, p 1.

242 Evidence, Mrs Tuckerman MP, 15 May 2026, p 2.

243 Evidence, Mr Stan Moore, Chair of the Goulburn Branch, NSW Farmers Association, 15 May 2026, p 32.

244 Evidence, Mrs Tuckerman MP, 15 May 2026, p 3; Evidence, Mrs Jennifer Fischer, Member, Viticultural Society of the Canberra District, 15 May 2026, p 39; Evidence, Mr Fitzpatrick, 14 April 2026, p 10; Evidence, Mr Martin, President, 15 May 2026, p 42; Evidence, Mr Martin, 15 December 2025, p 23; Evidence, Councillor Paddison, 14 April 2026, p 2; Evidence, Ms Rhiannon Heath, Environmental Policy Advisor, NSW Farmers Association, 15 December 2025, p 24; Evidence, Mr Brendan Westcott, Vice President, NSW Farmers Association Peak Hill, 14 April 2026, p 19; Evidence, Mrs Cameron, 15 May 2026, p 34.

> reputation. Once confidence in clean and green produce is lost, it's very difficult to restore. That is a market reality. [245]

4.41 Local producers explained that they must complete declarations to market their products, such as the National Vendor Declaration (NVD), which certify the food safety, treatment history and biosecurity status of livestock. [246] Mr Xavier Martin, NSW Farmers Association, questioned how producers could complete these declarations with confidence if livestock were raised near a WtE facility:

> The reality is now that not only are you putting your whole industry, your whole sector, at risk, but you're also putting your own business at liability of being instantly put out of business with an unmanageable claim, in terms of costs, against what may be a misadventure because you just happened to be grazing your livestock a bit too close to the Parkes energy from waste facility and you didn't realise that they were contaminated with those molecules. That's the reality. [247]

4.42 These concerns are amplified by the absence of what Mrs Wendy Tuckerman MP called 'enforceable guarantees' to protect agricultural industries from potential impacts associated with nearby WtE facilities. In particular, Mrs Tuckerman referred to the risk that organic and export-certified producers could lose certification or market access based on proximity or perceived contamination, even without proven contamination. She told the committee that this was a risk borne entirely by local producers, and is both uninsurable and uncompensated, with the potential for lasting reputational damage to regional agriculture, viticulture and regional food security. [248]

4.43 Mr Jeromie Fitzpatrick, Vice President of the Parkes Clean Future Alliance, similarly argued that uncertainty about potential contamination leaves local producers carrying the commercial risk: 'The risk ends up coming back onto us, and we can by no means guarantee or assure what's possibly going to be in our stock or our produce because we simply don't know.' [249]

Public forums – Agricultural concerns

During the public forums, stakeholders also expressed significant concern over the potential risks of WtE facilities on food production in surrounding areas:

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245 Evidence, Mrs Macaulay, 14 April 2026, p 15.

246 Integrity Systems, *National Vendor Declaration (NVD)*, https://www.integritysystems.com.au/on-farm-assurance/national-vendor-declaration-nvd; Evidence, Mrs Green, 14 April 2026, p 16; Evidence, Mr Westcott, 14 April 2026, pp 17 and 19; Evidence, Mrs Cameron, 15 May 2026, p 32; Evidence, Mr Moore, 15 May 2026, p 34; Evidence, Mr Fitzpatrick, 14 April 2026, p 10.

247 Evidence, Mr Martin, 15 December 2025, p 25.

248 Evidence, Mrs Tuckerman MP, 15 May 2026, p 3.

249 Evidence, Mr Fitzpatrick, 14 April 2026, p 11.

- 'Parkes sits in the heart of one of the most productive food and fibre regions in New South Wales, and agriculture here sustains families, businesses and export markets. We cannot risk compromising these foundations for short-term industrial experiments that put our region's farming families' long-term future at stake.' [250]
- 'I am dead against this incinerator primarily because we have a clean, green image in this area of agriculture. Why put it in an agricultural area? It will decimate us.' [251]
- 'I am a farmer, and my family has been in the Parkes shire and farming for over 105 years. My big concern is the contamination of crops, livestock and, of course, wool and our great asset—our land and our water.' [252]
- 'Any doubt cast over the integrity of our produce will collapse consumer confidence and destroy market access, locally and internationally.' [253]
- 'Bioaccumulative contamination of agricultural land jeopardises our supply of safe food. This in turn decimates primary producers' livelihoods as export markets lose confidence in affected produce. This reduces our safe food supply, driving up supermarket prices.' [254]
- 'When uncertainty exists about the long-term impact to air, land, water, agriculture, livestock and human health, then the precautionary principle matters. It exists for moments like these because, once contamination occurs, trust in clean country is damaged.' [255]

Proponents' views on agricultural and food-safety risks

4.44 In response to these concerns, proponents and experts advised that agricultural risks are considered as part of the environmental and human health assessment process. [256]

4.45 Ms Kathryn Whitfield, Chief Growth Officer at Veolia Australia New Zealand, advised that Veolia had submitted a human health risk assessment for the proposed Woodlawn Advanced Recovery Centre. This was based on conservative worst-case emissions modelling, and found that even so, the facility would operate within NSW guidelines to protect human health, water quality, and food production. [257]

250 Public forum, Ms Sharon Woods, 14 April 2026, p 3.

251 Public forum, Mr Max Swift, 14 April 2026, p 4.

252 Public forum, Mr Edgar Orr, 14 April 2026, p 5.

253 Public forum, Ms Elizabeth Tanswell, 14 April 2026, p 5.

254 Public forum, Ms Kristen Neems, 14 April 2026, p 6.

255 Public forum, Mr James Innes, 14 May 2026, p 2.

256 Evidence, Ms Whitfield, 15 December 2025, p 37.

257 Evidence, Ms Whitfield, 15 December 2025, p 37.

4.46 In response to questions about whether the proposed Woodlawn facility could affect declarations required by farmers and producers to market their produce, Ms Whitfield advised that Veolia's human health and agricultural risk assessments had considered community concerns, including requirements relating to national vendor declarations, and found that emissions would remain within levels considered safe for agriculture, the environment and human health. She also asserted that the facility would comply with relevant food safety requirements, including those applying to agricultural products supplied to domestic and international markets. [258]

4.47 Mr Edward Nicholas of Parkes Energy Recovery maintained that the studies they are undertaking for the proposal 'will demonstrate very clearly that there isn't an impact to human health or environmental health.'. The committee also heard that Parkes Energy Recovery has voluntarily commissioned an agricultural risk assessment in response to community concerns, which they believe will demonstrate no adverse impacts on agricultural production or marketability. [259]

Viticulture and wine quality

4.48 Similar concerns were expressed by those involved in the viticulture industry, particularly those working in wine districts near Veolia's proposed facility in Goulburn Mulwaree. Many were concerned about the potential for airborne contaminants from this facility to affect grapevines, vineyard soils and wine quality, noting that the wine industry is particularly sensitive to contamination and reputational risk.

4.49 Viticulture and wine tourism are important contributors to the regional economy. Mrs Wendy Tuckerman described Tarago and surrounding areas as home to 'thriving viticulture' and an important wine tourism industry. [260] The committee heard that the visitor economy in the Yass Valley alone is valued at approximately $127 million annually. [261] The Canberra District wine region comprises approximately 40 wineries and 140 vineyards and generates around $57 million in annual wine production. [262]

4.50 Local wine growers and councillors raised particular concerns about the vulnerability of grapes and wine production to even low levels of contamination. [263] Councillor Jasmin Jones, Mayor of Yass Valley Council, told the committee:

[258] Evidence, Ms Whitfield, 1 July 2026, p 14.

[259] Evidence, Mr Nicholas, 1 July 2026, p 20.

[260] Evidence, Mrs Tuckerman MP, 15 May 2026, pp 3-4.

[261] Evidence, Councillor Jones, 15 May 2026, p 18.

[262] Evidence, Mrs Fischer, 15 May 2026, p 38.

[263] Evidence, Councillor Jones, 15 May 2026, p 18; Evidence, Mrs Fischer, 15 May 2026, p 38.

> What we do know is that the level required to destroy an entire harvest is one thousand times less than the national health standard for you and I to go out and eat it off a grapevine and be okay. For it to wreck a harvest, it can be 1,000 times less than the national health standard. [264]

4.51 Mr Allan Pankhurst, Vice President of the Viticultural Society of the Canberra District, echoed these concerns about the effect of the Tarago facility on surrounding grape quality and wine characteristics. He said the potential impacts would not necessarily be limited to direct exposure of grapevines to airborne emissions:

> It's not only the actual emissions but it's the absorption of those chemicals and other chemicals into the soils, and the potential biotransformation of those into volatile substances, that will actually cause damage to the wine industry. [265]

4.52 The Viticultural Society of the Canberra District asserted that Veolia's Environmental Impact Statement does not adequately address the potential for contamination of wine grapes and vineyard soils, or the risk of wine taint. Representatives also referred to advice from the Australian Wine Research Institute recommending that the proposed WtE project in Goulburn Mulwaree not proceed. [266]

4.53 The committee also heard that, in addition to any direct effects on grape quality or wine characteristics, contamination could have significant consequences for consumer confidence and the reputation of the Canberra District wine industry. Mrs Jennifer Fischer, Member of the Viticultural Society of the Canberra District, told the committee that: 'People expect their wine to be clean and green, that we're sustainable and that we do all the right things. It would irreparably damage our reputation.' [267]

4.54 In response to these concerns, Ms Kathryn Whitfield advised that, following consultation with the wine industry, Veolia had commissioned a dedicated viticulture assessment, which concluded that no impacts on viticulture or wine taint were expected. Ms Whitfield also referred to Veolia's operation of WtE facilities in premium wine-producing regions, including in Champagne and the Rhône, without reported impacts on wine quality. [268]

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[264] Evidence, Councillor Jones, 15 May 2026, p 18.

[265] Evidence, Mr Allan Pankhurst, Vice President, Viticultural Society of the Canberra District, 15 May 2026, p 38.

[266] Evidence, Mrs Fischer, 15 May 2026, p 38.

[267] Evidence, Mrs Fischer, 15 May 2026, p 39.

[268] Evidence, Ms Whitfield, 1 July 2026, p 19.

Community confidence and regulatory oversight

4.55 Stakeholders stated that many of their concerns were heightened by Veolia's poor compliance history at the Woodlawn Eco Precinct in Goulburn Mulwaree, where the proposed WtE facility would be located, as well as the adequacy of regulatory enforcement offered by the NSW EPA.

4.56 Mrs Wendy Tuckerman MP stated that Veolia had been 'in breach on a number of occasions', citing ongoing odour and leachate issues and complaints to the NSW EPA about its current Woodlawn facility.[269] Mrs Tuckerman also questioned the effectiveness of penalties imposed by the NSW EPA in response to these breaches, noting that one fine issued to the 'multibillion-dollar company' was only $15,000.[270]

4.57 Mr Jason Shepherd, Councillor of Goulburn Mulwaree Council, also referred to a lack of trust in Veolia to operate a new facility safely, remarking: 'My level of trust is not there, and I don't think the community trust them either, and that's the problem.'[271] He cited the fact that the facility had received nine penalty infringement notices, with a further three pending, relating to matters including odour, spillage, and leachate.[272]

4.58 Other community representatives also expressed a lack of confidence in Veolia's compliance with regulatory requirements. Mr James Innes, President of Communities Against the Tarago Incinerator, referred to the community's experience of 'odour' and 'noncompliance' over the preceding 20 years and called for an independent review of Veolia's compliance record.[273] Mr Thomas Martin, President of the Long Water Agricultural Association, similarly described having no confidence in Veolia, citing that their Environmental Impact Statement 'does not meet the SEARs and it should not have been put forward in its current form.'[274]

4.59 Within this context, Mrs Josephine Beverley, Member of the Long Water Agricultural Association, also raised concerns about the NSW EPA's ability to effectively regulate the proposed facility and ensure safe operations:

> This inquiry has heard from many sources that there is no confidence in the applicant to operate a waste-to-energy incineration facility. This lack of confidence goes back over a 20-year period of Veolia's operation at the Woodlawn Tarago facility. Furthermore, this community does not have

269 Evidence, Mrs Tuckerman MP, 15 May 2026, p 3.

270 Evidence, Mrs Tuckerman MP, 15 May 2026, p 6.

271 Evidence, Councillor Jason Shepherd, Councillor, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, 15 May 2026, p 22.

272 Evidence, Councillor Shepherd, 15 May 2026, p 22.

273 Evidence, Mr Innes, 15 May 2026, pp 32-33.

274 Evidence, Mr Martin, 15 May 2026, p 41.

> confidence in the ability of the EPA to administer the controls needed to operate a safe environment for an incinerator. [275]

4.60 When asked by the committee if he agreed that public confidence in the EPA's ability to effectively regulate Veolia's existing facility at Tarago was extremely low, Mr Stephen Beaman, Executive Director, Regulatory Operations at NSW Environment Protection Authority, asserted that the EPA was taking action, but understood that this did not always satisfy everyone in the community:

> … the EPA takes seriously its responsibilities to enforce compliance. Not everyone is always satisfied with our decisions. We understand that. But when we do make those decisions, we have the community and the environment's interests at heart. As I've said, you can see from recent actions, we are taking action. I know the community's concerned about odour from the Woodlawn facility. We've taken strong action to address odour. I think recently we've issued about $45,000 or $48,000 worth of fines in relation to the operation of the Woodlawn facility, so we do take that role seriously. [276]

4.61 The NSW EPA provided further information on the 'significant regulatory action' taken against Veolia since 2021 in answers to questions on notice, including:

- 10 penalty notices have been issued for breaches including leaking containers, licence conditions and environmental reporting requirements.
- Three $15,000 fines issued and a prevention notice requiring improvements to container design, operation, and management following 13 community reports about leaking containers being transported to the Woodlawn Eco precinct.
- Following an unannounced May 2026 inspection, Veolia was issued a further $30,000 fine for breaching its environmental protection licence.
- Four prevention notices and 2 clean-up notices issued in response to incidents and non-compliance.
- The NSW EPA has added comprehensive pollution reduction programs and other conditions to Veolia's environment protection licences to address environmental issues. [277]

4.62 Mr Beaman also said that the NSW EPA 'recognises' that communities want access to 'credible, independent information', rather than assurances from proponents alone. He said this is why the NSW EPA publishes guidance materials, regulatory decisions, and compliance information publicly, to promote accessibility and transparency. [278]

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275 Evidence, Mrs Beverley, 15 May 2026, p 41.

276 Evidence, Mr Beaman, 1 July 2026, p 41.

277 Answers to questions on notice, NSW Environment Protection Authority, 30 July 2026, p 2.

278 Evidence, Mr Beaman, 1 July 2026, p 35.

Veolia's response to compliance concerns

4.63 Noting these concerns, the committee sought to understand what action, if any, Veolia had taken in response to compliance issues. Dr Richard Kirkman, former CEO, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, advised that Veolia's operations are extensively monitored and incidents are self-reported, referring to the non-compliances at the Woodlawn Eco Precinct as technical in nature that had not caused environmental harm. However, Veolia further advised that, given the site has over 1,000 approval conditions, breaches can occur despite best efforts, particularly during extreme or unseasonal weather, and that a breach does not necessarily indicate environmental harm or pollution. [279]

4.64 In relation to the site's odour issues, representatives from Veolia and the NSW EPA identified excessive rainfall as a contributing factor. Dr Kirkman described the region as having experienced 'a period of five years of extraordinary rain', and the NSW EPA advised that the resulting excess water at the site contributed to the generation of odorous landfill gas. [280] Veolia acknowledged that odour events have occurred and stated that it is committed to addressing them through technological solutions to monitor and mitigate their occurrence. [281] Further, Dr Kirkman pointed to Veolia's global experience in operating waste-to-energy facilities: 'An important part of our proposition is that we can clearly point to the 65 we operate—and we don't have any noncompliances.' [282]

Stakeholder proposals for protections

4.65 Many regional stakeholders expressed the view that the proposed WtE facilities should not proceed. [283] However, where WtE is considered, stakeholders identified a range of protections they consider necessary to safeguard human health, the environment, and regional communities. These include:

- Require the use of internationally recognised best-practice WtE technology, with mandatory upgrades as technology and emissions-control standards

279 Answers to supplementary questions, Dr Richard Kirkman, former CEO and Managing Director, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, 12 February 2026, p 3.

280 Evidence, Dr Kirkman, 15 December 2025, p 28; Evidence, Mr Beaman, 15 December 2025, p 59.

281 Answers to supplementary questions, Dr Kirkman, 12 February 2026, p 4.

282 Evidence, Dr Kirkman, 15 December 2025, p 33.

283 Evidence, Councillor Westcott, 14 April 2026, p 3; Evidence, Mr Ruettjes, 14 April 2026, p 3; Evidence, Ms Hmanda Corcoran, Member, Peak Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council, 14 April 2026, p 27; Evidence, Mrs Macaulay, 14 April 2026, p 15; Evidence, Councillor Dillon, 15 May 2026, p 19; Evidence, Councillor Winchester, 15 May 2026, p 19; Evidence, Councillor Jones, 15 May 2026, p 19; Evidence, Mrs Tuckerman MP, 15 May 2026, p 3; Evidence, Mr Innes, 15 May 2026, p 32.

improve. Technology performance should also be subject to rigorous, independent evaluation under Australian conditions. [284]

- Commission independent, multidisciplinary health and environmental impact assessments to establish robust baseline conditions and enable future impacts to be measured reliably. [285]
- Establish independent community–scientist monitoring arrangements to provide communities with direct access to environmental and emissions data. Monitoring and reporting should be transparent, independently verified and not solely reliant on information provided by project proponents or government agencies. [286]
- Provide regional communities with independently verified evidence that potential risks to human health, soil, water, livestock, and agricultural production are acceptably low before any WtE facility is approved. [287]
- Require continuous emissions monitoring, real-time public reporting, and independent verification of emissions performance, benchmarked against relevant international standards and best practice, including applicable European and OECD approaches. [288]

Financial and economic considerations

4.66 This section examines the financial implications of waste-to-energy for local communities surrounding the proposed facilities. It considers the economic benefits identified by proponents of the proposed facilities at Tarago and Parkes, alongside stakeholder concerns about the distribution of those benefits, pressures on local infrastructure, potential impacts on regional economies and ratepayers, and the broader costs of waste-to-energy compared with other waste management options. It also considers proposals for greater reinvestment of waste levy revenue and other forms of financial support for host communities.

Financial effects on local communities

4.67 The proponents of the Goulburn Mulwaree and Parkes projects both referred to the economic benefits the projects would bring to host communities through increased investment in the region, as well as employment and other economic opportunities.

[284] Evidence, Ms Vanessa Parkes, Director City Living, Blacktown City Council, 4 May 2026, p 3.

[285] Evidence, Mr Innes, 15 May 2026, p 33.

[286] Evidence, Mr Innes, 15 May 2026, p 33.

[287] Evidence, Mr Martin, 15 December 2025, p 23.

[288] Evidence, Councillor Asfour, 15 December 2025, p 48.

4.68 According to Veolia, the proposed waste-to-energy facility at the Woodlawn Eco Precinct is a $600 million investment that is expected to generate $2 billion in regional economic benefit over the project's 25-year operational period. The Economic Assessment undertaken in response to the SEARs estimates that this benefit would comprise:

- Construction economic impact (with construction estimated to take 3 years): $681 million in regional output or business turnover, $294 million in regional value added, $135 million household income, and 603 jobs.
- Operational regional economic impact: $925 million in regional output or business turnover, $975 million in regional value added, $175 million in household income and 120 direct and indirect jobs. [289]

4.69 Veolia also pointed to the existing contributions it makes in Goulburn Mulwaree and surrounding communities through the Veolia Mulwaree Trust, established in 2005, and operational host fees from its current facility. Mr Craig Barker, Chief Executive Officer, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, stated that these arrangements have supported the distribution of more than $30 million to councils, local clubs, community groups, arts centres, and school projects, as well as scholarships and other community initiatives. [290]

4.70 Goulburn Mulwaree Council acknowledged the financial contributions flowing from the Woodlawn Eco Precinct, describing these as 'positive impacts that should be recognised.' [291] These benefits include community grants provided through the Veolia Mulwaree Trust community benefit scheme, as well as host fees that have contributed to community infrastructure, including the Veolia Arena at the Goulburn Recreation Area and the Tarago District Men's Shed.

4.71 Parkes Energy Recovery similarly submitted that its proposed WtE facility would act as a catalyst for economic growth in regional NSW. It identified benefits including approximately 400 local jobs during construction and 50 permanent positions, as well as the generation of 70 megawatts of electricity. It stated that this electricity could be used by businesses and other facilities within the Parkes Special Activation Precinct, and by businesses and households in the surrounding Parkes area. [292]

4.72 Mr Nicholas also referred to their commitment to establish a Community Benefits Fund, as part of a Voluntary Planning Agreement, starting at $1.2 million

[289] Anwers to questions on notice, Mr Craig Barker, Chief Executive Officer and Ms Kathryn Whitfield, Chief Growth Officer, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, 30 July 2026, pp 4-5.

[290] Evidence, Mr Barker, 1 July 2026, p 13; Submission 224, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, p 2.

[291] Submission 189, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, p 6.

[292] Submission 228, Parkes Energy Recovery, p 3.

per year and increasing over time, which he projected would provide more than $80 million over the life of the facility. [293]

Distribution of benefits and impacts on host communities

4.73 Notwithstanding these stated benefits, the committee heard that a number of local residents in Parkes and Goulburn Mulwaree, as well as regional councils, remained concerned about the true costs associated with hosting these facilities. These concerns include increased pressure on local infrastructure and a lack of adequate compensation or benefit-sharing arrangements, as well as the effects of transporting waste from Sydney to regional sites would have on road and rail traffic and on wear and tear of local infrastructure.

4.74 Some stakeholders questioned whether these projections would translate into sustained benefits for local communities. [294] Councillor Joy Paddison of Parkes Shire Council expressed concern that electricity generated by the facility would remain within the Parkes Special Activation Precinct and would not provide a direct benefit to Parkes Shire residents, such as reduced electricity costs. She also suggested that much of the financial return of the Parkes Energy Recovery project would accrue to the proponent and the State, while the local community would bear the long-term impacts. [295]

4.75 Councillor Neil Westcott, Mayor, Parkes Shire Council, similarly claimed that his community is being asked to shoulder the burden of the proposal without adequate recognition or support:

> At present, Parkes is being asked to carry that burden and receive nothing in return— no compensation, no investment, no acknowledgement. That's not a partnership; it's really just the definition of being treated as a second-class citizen. [296]

4.76 On the issue of local infrastructure, councils have expressed concern about the financial burden of maintaining roads and other services. [297] For example, Goulburn Mulwaree Council said it receives approximately $1 million per year from Veolia in relation to the Woodlawn Eco Precinct, which they describe as insufficient to cover the damage to local roads caused by heavy truck movements. [298]

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293 Evidence, Mr Nicholas, 1 July 2026, pp 24-25; Submission 228, Parkes Energy Recovery, p 3.

294 Evidence, Mr Fitzpatrick, 14 April 2026, p 14; Evidence, Councillor Liz Mckeon, Vice President, Goulburn Branch, Australian Labor Party, 15 May 2026, p 25.

295 Evidence, Councillor Paddison, 14 April 2026, p 2.

296 Evidence, Councillor Westcott, 14 April 2026, p 3.

297 Submission 221, Local Government NSW, p 10; Submission 134, Parkes Shire Council, pp 6 and 19; Evidence, Councillor Dillon, 15 May 2026, p 17.

298 Evidence, Councillor Dillon, 15 May 2026, p 21.

4.77 Given these concerns, some stakeholders argued that communities hosting waste infrastructure should receive a greater share of the economic benefits generated by these facilities. Ms Sharon Houlihan, Executive Officer, Canberra Region Joint Organisation, said that regional communities already manage a disproportionate share of Sydney's residual waste and associated impacts, and therefore should receive mandated, long-term community benefit payments to ensure fairness and maintain community trust. [299]

4.78 As a means to compensate the local community, Parkes Shire Council suggested that a community-hosting levy of $15 per tonne be applied to all waste sent to the WtE facility, collected at the point of waste generation and directed to host communities. The Council argued that such a levy would provide fair compensation to regional communities, support local infrastructure and circular economy initiatives, and help strengthen the social licence of waste facilities. [300]

4.79 Stakeholders also raised concerns that WtE facilities could have negative regional economic impacts, affecting nearby property values and businesses, tourism and agritourism. Many stressed that odours, potential contamination and reputational impacts could reduce the appeal of regions near facilities, discouraging property investment, visitors and demand for local produce. [301]

Public forum – economic impacts

Participants at the public forum also expressed concerns about the potential financial impacts of the proposed WtE facilities, including on property values and the costs associated with developing and operating the facilities. Their views included:

- I want our land values guaranteed, so if this all turns to—whatever you want to call it—we're backed up, like, the Government is going to back us up, or someone's going to. That money needs to go into a trust now for every landholder out there, or any resident, so if this all turns to crap, we've got something to fall back on, because an average house out there is a million dollars, just in town. If this goes pear-shaped and we walk away for $100,000, you can't sell your house. Anyway, that's my view. [302]

[299] Evidence, Ms Sharon Houlihan, Executive Officer, Canberra Region Joint Organisation, 15 May 2026, p 9.

[300] Submission 134, Parkes Shire Council pp 20, 25-27.

[301] Submission 182, Peak Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council, p 4; Submission 214, Condobolin Local Aboriginal Land Council, p 4; Submission 189, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, p 2; Submission 197, NSW Farmers Association - Peak Hill Branch, p 2; Submission 218, Parkes Clean Future Alliance, p 11; Submission 46, Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, p 2; Submission 178, NSW Farmers Association - Goulburn Branch, p 1; Submission 234, Communities Against the Tarago Incinerator (CATTI) Inc., p 50; Evidence, Mr Thomas, 15 December 2025, p 49; Evidence, Mrs Cameron, 15 May 2026, pp 32 and 37; Evidence, Councillor Dillon, 15 May 2026, p 16; Evidence, Mr Westcott, 14 April 2026, p 16.

[302] Public forum, Mr Paul Beileiter, 14 May 2026, p 6.

- 'My concerns are the cost—the $1.5 billion—to build. In these current times, a project must provide a positive return on investment. How is this project going to return this positive return? Who is going to pay for all these fees? The ratepayers? The taxpayers? What's the cost of running the multiple trains from Sydney each week?' [303]
- 'The property value is going to drop, if you want to talk about money.' [304]
- 'I'd like the Committee to just think for a little while: Would you like to buy a house within a few kays of one of these establishments?' [305]
- 'I don't have much to say besides the fact that this [proposed WtE facility in Parkes] is 500 metres from my house. How would the Committee feel if you had it built 500 metres from your doorstep? The value of my property is going to be zip, zero, zilch. I would not want to buy next door to a smelter, and I would never assume anyone else would want to buy next door to a smelter.' [306]

Financial burden on councils and ratepayers

4.80 The committee also heard from local councils based in Sydney and areas outside those intended for facilities about their concerns that WtE could increase costs for ratepayers. [307] These stakeholders noted that local councils are already facing significant financial pressures with rates being their primary source of revenue, which they feel they have limited capacity to increase during a cost-of-living crisis. At the same time, they noted that councils have legislated responsibilities for waste management. [308] New mandates, such as the FOGO rollout, together with rising operational, infrastructure and transport costs, are adding to their financial pressures, often without corresponding increases in NSW Government funding. [309]

4.81 Mr Chris Horsey, Manager, Waste Management, Hornsby Shire Council also stated that domestic waste management charges have doubled in the past decade, with further increases likely if transport distances increase. [310] Stakeholders suggested that as the regional location of proposed WtE facilities would require waste to be transported long distances from metropolitan Sydney, this could significantly increase costs, which would ultimately be borne by councils and

303 Public forum, Mr Ian Leonard Rowe, 14 April 2026, p 4.

304 Public forum, Ms Isabel Goolagong, 14 April 2026, p 4.

305 Public forum, Mr Max Swift, 14 April 2026, p 4.

306 Public forum, Ms Karen Skinner, 14 April 2026, p 7.

307 Evidence, Mr Thomas, 15 December 2025, pp 50-51; Evidence, Mr Horsey, 4 May 2026, p 6.

308 Evidence, Ms Joanna Kubota, Executive Director, The Parks, Sydney's Parkland Councils, 15 December 2025, p 15; Evidence, Councillor Asfour, 15 December 2025, p 49.

309 Evidence, Mr Thomas, 15 December 2025, pp 49-50; Evidence, Ms Houlihan, 15 May 2026, p 13-14; Evidence, Mr Horsey, 4 May 2026, p 6.

310 Evidence, Mr Horsey, 4 May 2026, p 6.

passed on to ratepayers.[311] The Waste Contractors & Recyclers Association of NSW estimated that restricting WtE facilities to four regional precincts could result in up to $25 million a year in additional transport costs.[312]

4.82 Separately from these transport costs, concerns were raised that the financial risks associated with large-scale waste infrastructure, such as WtE facilities, could be shifted onto councils and ratepayers if the projects are not financially viable or if costs escalate.[313] Local Government NSW advised that there is no apparent research comparing New South Wales WtE and landfill gate fees. It argued that, to secure long-term council contracts, WtE facilities would need to remain cost-competitive with landfill while accounting for the full life-cycle costs of transport, processing, and residual waste management. These costs could increase both ratepayer charges and transport-related carbon emissions.[314]

4.83 Mr Khal Asfour similarly raised concerns about the financial uncertainty associated with waste-to-energy projects:

> Energy from waste projects in New South Wales and Australia face significant financial uncertainty, which we have seen in Western Australia with investor losses and cost blowouts. Risks must not be shifted onto councils and ratepayers, and it's important that government-backed co-investment, risk-sharing models and long-term energy offtake agreements are in place to ensure financial stability. Any undue burdens on communities must be avoided.[315]

4.84 At the same time, stakeholders were worried that the higher capital and operating costs of WtE would translate into higher fees.[316] Hornsby Shire Council suggested that WtE could 'lock councils into long-distance, costly long-term contracts, potentially undermining future recycling or circular economy initiatives.'[317] Noting that these uncertain costs could ultimately be passed on to the community, Mr Chris Horsey, Manager, Waste Management at Hornsby Shire Council, called for the risks to be assessed upfront.[318]

4.85 Mr Edward Nicholas, Parkes Energy Recovery, asserted that proponents were aware that cost remains the primary consideration for local councils and that WtE is financially competitive with landfill and can provide protection against future landfill levy increases, as the Western Australian facility demonstrates. He

311 Evidence, Mr Lemin, 15 December 2025, p 11; Answers to questions on notice, Mr David Reynolds, Chief Executive, Local Government NSW, 11 February 2026, pp 6-7.

312 Submission 362, Waste Contractors & Recyclers Association of NSW, p 2.

313 Evidence, Mr Thomas, 15 December 2025, p 50; Evidence, Mr Lemin, 15 December 2025, p 11.

314 Answers to questions on notice, Mr Reynolds, 11 February 2026, p 13.

315 Evidence, Councillor Asfour, 15 December 2025, p 48.

316 Evidence, Mr Horsey, 4 May 2026, p 2; Evidence, Mr Lemin, 15 December 2025, p 11.

317 Submission 148, Hornsby Shire Council, p 8.

318 Evidence, Mr Horsey, 4 May 2026, p 5.

emphasised that the Parkes Energy Recovery facility would struggle to secure waste volumes necessary to operate if it were not competitive with the price currently charged by landfill operators, and that the proponent recognised that councils are unlikely to pay a premium for sustainability benefits alone. [319]

The waste levy

4.86 Against this background, a number of stakeholders identified greater reinvestment of waste levy revenue as one way of alleviating the financial pressures waste disposal places on councils. The NSW waste levy is a state government charge applied to waste disposed of at landfills and is intended to encourage waste avoidance, resource recovery, and recycling. [320] In the 2026-2027 financial year, the levy is $180.20 per tonne in the Metropolitan Levy Area and $103.80 per tonne in the Regional Levy Area. [321]

4.87 The committee heard that the waste levy generates almost $1 billion in revenue each year, but that less than 10 per cent is reinvested into waste and environmental programs, while the majority is directed to consolidated revenue. [322] Councils and local government bodies argued that returning a greater proportion of the waste levy revenue to the waste sector could help offset rising waste costs and support investment in FOGO (Food Organics and Garden Organics), recycling and new technologies, as well as assisting councils to meet state and national waste targets. [323]

4.88 Mr Mike Ritchie, Managing Director of MRA Consulting, noted that local government pays around 30 per cent of the waste levy but receives back only about one-third of its contributions. He recommended increasing the return to 50 per cent in the short term, with a longer-term goal of 100 per cent reimbursement. He pointed to Queensland's model, which initially returned $1.05 for every dollar

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319 Evidence, Mr Nicholas, 1 July 2026, p 21.

320 NSW Environment Protection Authority, *Waste levy* (2026) https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/Your-environment/Waste/waste-levy.

321 NSW Environment Protection Authority, *Waste levy areas and levy rates* (2026) https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/Your-environment/Waste/waste-levy/levy-regulated-area-and-levy-rates.

322 Evidence, Mr Mike Ritchie, Managing Director, MRA Consulting, 1 July 2026, p 12; Evidence, Councillor Asfour, 15 December 2025, p 49; Answers to supplementary questions, Canberra Region Joint Organisation, 17 July 2026, p 6, Evidence, Mr Jeremy Manion, Regional Waste Coordinator, The Parks, Sydney's Parkland Councils, 15 December 2025, p 16.

323 Evidence, Mr Manion, 15 December 2025, p 16; Evidence, Ms Houlihan, 15 May 2026, pp 9 and 11; Evidence, Ms Veronica Lee Executive Director City Service, City Services Management, City of Sydney Council, 15 December 2025, p 17; Evidence, Mr Horsey, 4 May 2026, pp 4-5; Evidence, Ms Parkes, 4 May 2026, p 5; Evidence, Mr Tim Askew, Director of Programs, Hunter Joint Organisation, 4 May 2026, p 12; Evidence, Mr Ritchie, 1 July 2026, p 12; Answers to questions on notice, Mr Reynolds, 11 February 2026, p 13; Submission 221, Local Government NSW, p 16.

of levy contributions to incentivise recycling before gradually reducing the reimbursement rate. [324]

4.89 The committee also heard differing views about how the levy could be used to provide additional support. Mr Ritchie suggested incrementally increasing the waste levy by between $6 and $10 per tonne and dedicating that additional revenue to local government and infrastructure programs. [325] By contrast, Local Government NSW cautioned that increasing the waste levy to improve the financial viability of WtE would be 'unpalatable' to councils and communities. [326]

4.90 Hornsby Shire Council proposed a different model, recommending that the waste levy be abolished by 2030 while suggesting, in the interim, that all levy revenue be redirected to priority waste infrastructure projects. [327] It also suggested that discounts or exemptions from the levy could be used to encourage innovation by local government and industry. [328]

Cost-benefit analysis and comparative costs

4.91 Noting these concerns about costs, a number of stakeholders expressed concern that there has been no comprehensive and transparent cost-benefit analysis comparing landfill and WtE options in New South Wales. Many queried the appropriateness of entering into long-term contracts or investing in expensive infrastructure without clear evidence of best value for money or lowest community impact. [329] Others emphasised that they were 'technology-agnostic' and that they really just wanted access to transparent criteria that would allow councils to select the most cost-effective and environmentally sound waste management option. [330]

4.92 The committee examined the relative costs and timeframes associated with establishing landfill and WtE facilities. Veolia acknowledged that while WtE facilities have higher upfront capital costs, they can offer longer-term benefits through lower legacy costs, reduced methane emissions, a smaller land footprint, greater resilience to weather disruptions, and fewer litter and amenity impacts for surrounding communities. [331]

4.93 Some witnesses observed that new landfill capacity could be delivered more quickly and at substantially lower cost. Mr Chris Horsey, Manager Waste

[324] Evidence, Mr Ritchie, 1 July 2026, p 12.

[325] Evidence, Mr Ritchie, 1 July 2026, p 12.

[326] Submission 221, Local Government NSW (LGNSW), p 9.

[327] Submission 148, Hornsby Shire Council, p 19.

[328] Submission 148, Hornsby Shire Council, pp 5 and 11.

[329] Evidence, Mrs Tuckerman MP, 15 May 2026, p 2; Evidence, Mr Horsey, 4 May 2026, p 2; Evidence, Ms Lee, 15 December 2025, p 18;

[330] Evidence, Mr Horsey, 4 May 2026, p 7; Evidence, Mr Ritchie, 1 July 2026, p 8.

[331] Answers to supplementary questions, Mr Craig Barker, Chief Executive Officer, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, 30 July 2026, p 3.

Management, Hornsby Shire Council, estimated that establishing a landfill would cost between $100 and $400 million, compared with an estimated $750 million to $1.5 billion for a WtE facility. [332]

4.94 Mr Jack Thrower, Senior Economist at The Australia Institute, similarly described new landfill capacity as 'faster, less capital-intensive and more flexible' than WtE infrastructure. [333] He noted that WtE projects can take many years to deliver because of complex approvals, extensive community engagement, financing challenges, and construction delays. Mr Thrower cited the Kwinana Energy Recovery Facility in Western Australia, which took more than 15 years to deliver from EPA approval in 2012 to opening in 2025. [334]

4.95 Other stakeholders disputed that landfill is necessarily the lower-cost option when the full life-cycle costs are considered. Mr Andrew Short, Director Project Development ANZ, O.C.O Technology Australia, asserted that WtE can be economically competitive with landfill when greenhouse gas emissions, long-term environmental liabilities, and the value of recovered energy and materials are taken into account. He also noted that developing and maintaining landfill capacity can involve significant social licence challenges and long-term financial and environmental liabilities, including post-closure monitoring. [335] In his view, given many of these factors, landfill should remain the last resort, with greater emphasis on recovering and reusing waste, including WtE residues, to support circular economy outcomes and reduce transport impacts. [336]

Committee comment

4.96 The committee acknowledges the depth of concern expressed by regional communities about the potential health, environmental, social, and economic impacts of waste-to-energy facilities. The evidence before us demonstrates that these concerns extend well beyond general opposition to new waste infrastructure. They include anxiety about long-term exposure to emissions, including concerns about the effect on drinking water, as well as the possible effects on children and vulnerable populations, impacts on Aboriginal communities and Country, and the consequences of uncertainty for community wellbeing.

[332] Evidence, Mr Horsey, 1 July 2026, p 5.

[333] Anwers to questions on notice, Mr Jack Thrower, Senior Economist, The Australia Institute, 18 February 2026, p 4.

[334] Answers to supplementary questions, Mr Jack Thrower, Senior Economist, The Australia Institute, 18 February 2026, p 1.

[335] Answers to supplementary questions, Mr Andrew Short, Director Project Development ANZ, O.C.O Technology Australia Pty Ltd, 20 May 2026, pp 3 and 5.

[336] Answers to supplementary questions, Mr Short, 20 May 2026, pp 3 and 5.

Finding 9

The proposed facility at Woodlawn is located within the Sydney drinking water catchment.

Finding 10

There is genuine and understandable community concern about the potential cumulative impacts and other risks associated with waste-to-energy facilities, particularly in agricultural regions and communities reliant on rainwater harvesting.

4.97 The committee considers that these concerns are heightened by the limited Australian experience with large-scale waste-to-energy facilities. Although evidence about contemporary technology and international practice is relevant, it does not resolve community questions about the cumulative and long-term effects of facilities operating in particular regional settings.

4.98 In our view, this uncertainty has particular significance for communities located near the proposed facilities. It reinforces the importance of site-specific evidence that examines local conditions, potential exposure pathways and the circumstances of vulnerable populations, rather than relying solely on international experience or assessments prepared by project proponents.

Finding 11

While proponents point to the safety of modern waste-to-energy technology, there is not yet long-term assessment of their impact. In this context, asking communities to accept even the possibility of long-term health impacts is likely to heighten concern and, understandably, reinforces expectations for a high threshold of demonstrated and enforceable health protections.

4.99 In particular, we acknowledge the evidence of Aboriginal Land Councils, including Peak Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council, and believe that the concerns raised by Aboriginal communities must be given specific weight. Potential impacts extend beyond physical health and environmental risks to include community wellbeing, cultural heritage and relationships with Country. These concerns must be addressed through meaningful engagement and through assessment processes that are capable of considering their cumulative and community-specific effects.

Finding 12

The Peak Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council identified potential significant mental health impacts for Aboriginal families arising from ongoing fear and uncertainty associated with the proposed waste-to-energy facility and concerns regarding environmental degradation.

4.100 The strength of regional opposition demonstrates that community concerns have not been resolved by the information, consultation and assurances provided to date. Many regional stakeholders therefore considered that the proposed facilities at Parkes and Goulburn Mulwaree should not proceed. Where waste-to-energy is nevertheless considered, the committee believes that any proposal must be supported by rigorous, independently verified safeguards that protect human health, the environment and regional communities, and provide affected communities with information they can understand and trust.

Finding 13

Many regional stakeholders expressed the view that the proposed waste-to-energy facilities in Parkes and Goulburn Mulwaree should not proceed. However, where waste-to-energy is proposed, stakeholders identified a range of protections they consider necessary to safeguard human health, the environment and regional communities.

4.101 For any waste-to-energy projects, the committee considers that the NSW Government must ensure that the proposal is informed by robust baseline health and environmental data established through independent, multidisciplinary assessments. These assessments should comprehensively evaluate potential impacts before a facility proceeds and provide a reliable benchmark against which future impacts can be measured. The NSW Government should also establish independent community-scientist monitoring arrangements that involve affected communities and provide them with direct and timely access to transparent, independently verified environmental and emissions data, that can incorporate citizen science, rather than relying solely on information provided by proponents or government agencies.

Recommendation 1

That, for any waste-to-energy projects, the NSW Government commission independent, multidisciplinary health and environmental impact assessments to establish robust baseline conditions and enable future impacts to be measured reliably.

Recommendation 2

That, where waste-to-energy facilities are supported by councils and communities, the NSW Government establish independent community–scientist monitoring arrangements that provide communities with direct access to environmental and emissions data, with monitoring and reporting conducted transparently and that can be independently verified and support the incorporation of citizen science, and that are not solely reliant on information provided by project proponents or government agencies.

4.102 The committee also recognises that communities in Parkes, Tarago and surrounding regions place significant value on the safety, reputation and marketability of their agricultural, viticultural and food production industries. We consider that risks to soil, water, livestock, crops, wine quality, certification and market access must be taken seriously, including where those risks arise from perceived contamination or loss of consumer confidence rather than proven regulatory breaches. These industries are central to regional identity and economic resilience, and any assessment of proposed waste-to-energy facilities must fully account for those potential consequences.

Finding 14

Perceived or actual contamination from waste-to-energy facilities could adversely affect consumer confidence, the reputation of regional produce and access to domestic and export markets, particularly for premium agricultural products. Concerns are heightened where contamination could affect legally enforceable export certification and market-access requirements.

4.103 At the same time, we acknowledge the evidence from industry witnesses, technical experts, proponents and the NSW Environment Protection Authority that modern waste-to-energy facilities can incorporate advanced emissions controls, continuous monitoring, human health risk assessments and regulatory safeguards. We accept that this evidence is relevant to assessing the risks of contemporary waste-to-energy technology. However, we also consider that assurances about best-practice technology and compliance frameworks will not, of themselves, be sufficient to address the level of concern identified in this chapter unless communities have access to clear, independent, site-specific and trusted information.

4.104 The committee is particularly concerned that a lack of confidence in the proponent and in regulatory oversight has magnified perceived and actual risks. Evidence about Veolia's compliance history at Woodlawn, community experience of odour and leachate issues, and concerns about the adequacy of penalties and enforcement have contributed to distrust in affected communities. To remedy this, we believe an independent review is required – one that considers the complete picture of Woodlawn's compliance history, including any regulatory

breaches and the adequacy of any rectification measures undertaken. The committee also considers that any future assessment and approval process must not only test whether a facility can comply with licence conditions, but also whether the regulatory framework, monitoring arrangements and enforcement tools are capable of maintaining public confidence over the long term.

Finding 15

Community confidence in the NSW Environment Protection Authority has been eroded by compliance issues at the Woodlawn Eco Precinct and perceived limited enforcement. Community concerns also extend to the NSW Environment Protection Authority's capacity and resourcing to regulate emerging waste-to-energy technologies, and its dual role in implementing waste-to-energy policy and regulating the sector.

Recommendation 3

That the NSW Government commission an independent review of the Woodlawn Eco Precinct examining its compliance history, regulatory breaches and rectification measures.

4.105 On the issue of the financial and economic implications of WtE, we recognise that these are contested. While both proponents identified potential benefits, including regional investment, jobs, electricity generation and community benefit funds, local councils and residents raised concerns about infrastructure wear, waste transport, property values, tourism, ratepayer costs and the distribution of benefits between metropolitan waste generators, private proponents, the State and host communities. The committee considers that regional communities should not be left to bear disproportionate impacts without transparent benefit-sharing, appropriate infrastructure support and clear protection from unreasonable financial risk.

Finding 16

Waste-to-energy facilities may have the potential to deliver regional investment and employment, support electricity generation, and provide community benefits through mechanisms such as community benefit funds.

4.106 The financial impacts of the proposed waste-to-energy facilities require careful consideration, particularly given the existing pressures expressed by local government. Councils are already experiencing increases in waste management costs, with at least one Sydney council reporting that domestic waste charges

have doubled over the past decade and further increases possible if waste must be transported greater distances to regional waste-to-energy facilities.

4.107 These costs need to be considered alongside broader concerns about who ultimately bears the costs and who benefits from waste-to-energy infrastructure. Given that the waste levy generates almost $1 billion annually, the committee believes that greater direct reinvestment of levy revenue in councils and the waste sector may help alleviate these pressures and support the infrastructure and circular-economy initiatives required to manage future waste.

Finding 17

Local councils and residents are concerned about potential impacts on infrastructure, waste transport, property values and tourism, as well as the distribution of costs and benefits between metropolitan waste generators, private proponents, the State and host communities.

Finding 18

At least one Sydney council has reported that domestic waste management charges have doubled in the past decade, and further increases are likely if transport distances increase.

Finding 19

The waste levy generates almost $1 billion in revenue each year, with less than 10 per cent reinvested in waste and environmental programs and the majority directed to consolidated revenue.

Recommendation 4

That the NSW Government commit to dramatically increased direct reinvestment of the waste levy to councils and the waste sector for infrastructure, education, and circular economy initiatives and outcomes.

4.108 On the topic of projected benefits, the committee finds that the financial implications of waste-to-energy infrastructure for councils and ratepayers remain uncertain. They will depend on factors including facility location, transport requirements, gate fees, contract terms, project financing and whole-of-life environmental costs. The committee notes the Waste Contractors & Recyclers Association of NSW's estimate that restricting waste-to-energy facilities to four regional precincts could add up to $25 million each year in transport costs. Moving waste from Sydney hundreds of kilometres to the regions

poses various risks beyond the financial, including transport-related carbon emissions. These consequences must be fully considered when assessing the comparative costs and benefits of different waste management approaches.

4.109 The committee also recognises evidence from some stakeholders that new landfill capacity could be delivered more quickly and at substantially lower cost than waste-to-energy facilities, offering a more cost-predictable solution. Where necessary, the NSW Government should therefore be prepared to expand landfill capacity and support improved performance to maintain safe and reliable waste management services while other measures are assessed and developed.

4.110 However, the relative merits of landfill and waste-to-energy cannot be determined by upfront costs and delivery timeframes alone. Comparative assessments must account for the full life-cycle costs of each option. In particular, Local Government NSW advised that waste-to-energy facilities would need to remain cost-competitive with landfill, including the costs of transport, processing and residual waste management, if they are to secure long-term council contracts.

4.111 Given the range of variables and competing views, the committee considers that a transparent and comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of waste management approaches in New South Wales is necessary to provide communities, councils and industry with a sound basis for future decisions.

Finding 20

Some stakeholders are of the view that new landfill capacity could be delivered more quickly and at substantially lower cost than waste-to-energy facilities.

Finding 21

Transporting waste from Sydney hundreds of kilometres to the regions poses various risks, such as increased ratepayer charges and transport-related carbon emissions, with some industry sources estimating that this cost could be as high as $25 million.

Finding 22

Local government representatives are of the view that, to secure long-term council contracts, waste-to-energy facilities would need to remain cost-competitive with landfill, including the full life-cycle costs of transport, processing and residual waste management.

Recommendation 5

That the NSW Government, where necessary, expand and support improvements to landfill capacity to ensure safe and reliable continuity of waste management in the short-to-medium term while other waste management measures are assessed and developed.

Recommendation 6

That the NSW Government immediately undertake and publish a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of approaches to waste management, including environmental and emissions impacts, in New South Wales to provide greater clarity to communities, councils and industry.

4.112 Overall, this chapter points to a clear view by stakeholders that, for any waste-to-energy proposal to proceed in New South Wales, a precautionary, transparent and community-centred approach is needed. This should include rigorous independent assessment of health, environmental, agricultural and economic impacts; robust baseline and ongoing monitoring; real-time public reporting where appropriate; independent verification of emissions and environmental data; meaningful engagement with agricultural producers and local residents; and mechanisms to ensure that host communities are fairly compensated and protected.

Chapter 5 Regional opposition to waste-to-energy

This chapter examines concerns raised by regional stakeholders about the proposed waste-to-energy (WtE) facilities at Parkes and Goulburn Mulwaree. It considers opposition from host communities, beginning with perceptions that regional areas would bear a disproportionate share of the impacts associated with metropolitan waste, and calls for waste to be managed closer to where it is generated. It also examines concerns about the transparency of site selection, the adequacy of community consultation and engagement, and the role of government in providing trusted information. Finally, the chapter considers the consequences of these issues for community trust and social licence, together with evidence from proponents about their efforts to address the issue of community acceptance.

Concerns raised by regional communities

5.1 Regional communities raised concerns that the current NSW Government waste management policy unfairly burdens them. In particular, they argued that it places a disproportionate share of the impacts of managing metropolitan residual waste on communities that already host significant waste infrastructure and other major developments. Stakeholders characterised this as an issue of equity, highlighting concerns about the cumulative pressures on local infrastructure, services, agricultural and community interests, and questioned whether these impacts are adequately recognised or whether communities are adequately compensated.

Perceived inequality and regional burden

5.2 As discussed in Chapter 1, current NSW Government policy restricts the development of WtE facilities to four regional areas: Parkes, Goulburn Mulwaree, West Lithgow and Richmond Valley. Of the two facilities currently proposed, both are intended to process residual waste mostly from Sydney.

5.3 Given this, a consistent theme among regional stakeholders was the perception that the proposed WtE facilities would impose an unfair burden on communities that are not the primary source of the waste.[337] Stakeholders argued that the facilities would shift the responsibility for managing Sydney's residual waste to smaller regional communities, who would bear potential environmental, health,

[337] Evidence, Councillor Nina Dillon, Mayor, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, 15 May 2026, pp 16-17; Evidence, Councillor Neil Westcott, Mayor, Parkes Shire Council, 14 April 2026, pp 3-4; Evidence, Councillor Joy Paddison, Parkes Shire Council, 14 April 2026, pp 2-3; Evidence, Mr Jeromie Fitzpatrick, Vice President, Parkes Clean Future Alliance, 14 April 2026, p 12; Evidence, Councillor Kenrick Winchester, Mayor, Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, 15 May 2026, p 17.

infrastructure and social impacts of the facilities. Many argued that this burden is not adequately offset by compensation or recognition of regional impacts, nor supported by sufficient evidence that the associated risks are justified. [338]

5.4 The NSW Farmers Association framed its concerns as a question of equity, asking why rural communities should bear impacts considered unacceptable in metropolitan areas. It noted that regional communities already host substantial renewable energy and transmission infrastructure, while also making a significant contribution to New South Wales's food and fibre production. [339]

5.5 Other regional stakeholders described their communities as 'dumping grounds' or 'sacrificial communities' for Sydney's waste. [340] In this regard, many stakeholders were clear that their concern centred on Sydney's waste being transported to regional areas. They considered this both inequitable and inefficient, and called for waste to be managed closer to its source.

5.6 Witnesses questioned why regional communities should accept risks that metropolitan communities are unwilling to accept and argued that, if WtE facilities are considered safe, they should be located closer to where waste is generated. [341] Ms Sharon Houlihan, Executive Officer at the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, said that restricting WtE facilities to regional areas creates a perception that WtE is considered unsafe for Sydney but acceptable for regional communities. In her view, the current policy settings are eroding public trust and undermining social licence. [342]

5.7 Councillor Kenrick Winchester, Mayor of Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, described Veolia's WtE proposal as 'an inequitable transfer of Sydney's residual waste burden onto regional communities'. [343] Councillor Nina Dillon, Mayor of Goulburn Mulwaree Council, similarly argued that facilities should be located closer to waste-generating areas, including major industrial centres near metropolitan Sydney, noting that this would reduce the costs and resources

338 Evidence, Mrs Julie Macaulay, President, Parkes Country Women's Association, 14 April 2026, p 15; Submission 221, Local Government NSW, p 10; Submission 134, Parkes Shire Council, p 2.

339 Submission 174, NSW Farmers Association, p 2.

340 Submission 174, NSW Farmers Association, p 1; Evidence, Mrs Margaret Cameron, Hon Secretary/Treasurer, NSW Farmers Association Goulburn Branch, 15 May 2026, p 32; Evidence, Councillor Dillon, 15 May 2026, pp 16-17; Evidence, Mr Michael Pilbrow, President, ALP Goulburn Branch, 15 May 2026, p 24.

341 Evidence, Mr Pilbrow, 15 May 2026, p 24; Evidence, Ms Jo Clay MLA, Member for Ginninderra, ACT Legislative Assembly; and Deputy Leader, ACT Greens, 15 May 2026, p 25; Evidence, Councillor Westcott, 14 April 2026, p 3; Evidence, Mr Patrick Ruettjes, Director Environment and Planning, Lachlan Shire Council, 14 April 2026, pp 3-4; Evidence, Ms Sharon Houlihan, Executive Officer, Canberra Region Joint Organisation, 15 May 2026, p 9.

342 Evidence, Ms Houlihan, 15 May 2026, p 9.

343 Evidence, Councillor Winchester, 15 May 2026, p 18.

associated with transporting waste over distances of more than 200 kilometres. [344]

5.8 Mr Patrick Ruettjes, Director Environment and Planning at Lachlan Shire Council, also argued that transporting waste hundreds of kilometres from Sydney was inefficient: 'Sydney's waste needs to be dealt with in Sydney. It is absolutely inappropriate to cart it for hundreds of kilometres with diesel trains to a regional location.' [345] Similar concerns were raised by Mr Mike Ritchie, Director of MRA Consulting, who described transporting waste to Parkes as costly and impractical. Mr Ritchie considered that WtE facilities should be located within the Sydney Basin, or in locations such as the Woodlawn Eco Precinct where existing rail infrastructure could be better used. [346]

5.9 Professor Hugh Durrant-Whyte, NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, Office of the Chief Scientist & Engineer, also agreed that it would generally make more sense to process waste closer to where it is generated. He noted that transporting waste to regional facilities and subsequently returning hazardous residues, such as Air Pollution Control Residue (APCR), to the Greater Sydney region creates additional logistical issues. While acknowledging that the safe transport of hazardous materials is technically feasible, he considered it more sensible, in principle, to locate processing and disposal facilities closer together. [347]

Public forums – regions bearing the burden

Participants across Parkes and Goulburn strongly feel that their communities are being asked to bear the burden of waste generated in metropolitan areas.

- 'I acknowledge that Sydney has a waste problem. That problem should be managed at the source, not exported to regional communities like Parkes. If this technology was deemed unsafe for Sydney, then it is unsafe anywhere and certainly not appropriate in an agricultural region that feeds the State, nation and the world.' [348]
- 'Once farming regions become associated with industrial waste and processing, there is no simple undo button. The bush already carries much of the burden for the nation. We carry the transmission lines, the mines, the freight routes, the quarries and, increasingly, the waste infrastructure.' [349]

344 Evidence, Councillor Dillon, 15 May 2026, p 17.

345 Evidence, Mr Ruettjes, 14 April 2026, pp 3-4.

346 Evidence, Mr Mike Ritchie, Managing Director, MRA Consulting, 1 July 2026, pp 10-11.

347 Evidence, Professor Hugh Durrant-Whyte, Chief Scientist & Engineer, Premier's Department, 4 May 2026, p 30.

348 Public forum, Ms Barbara Orr, 14 April 2026, p 5.

349 Public forum, Mr James Innes, 14 May 2026, p 2.

- 'Regional New South Wales should not be treated as a dumping ground for metropolitan waste simply because our population is smaller and our political voice deemed less.' [350]
- 'The Goulburn district has done more than its fair share. Why are there no turbines at Bondi Beach? Let Sydney take care of their own waste, rather than our backyard.' [351]
- 'The locals get all of the impact and none of the benefit.' [352]
- 'It's Sydney's waste—why don't they burn it in their own backyard? It's because, like their hamburgers and their lamb chops, people in Sydney want someone else, somewhere else, to do the dirty work.' [353]
- 'Enough is enough. Tarago has just copped the end of the stick.' [354]
- 'An incinerator in Woodlawn does not address the waste issue facing Sydney.' [355]
- 'It is lazy Government policy that does not deal with the root causes of our waste problem in Sydney. We are aghast that Sydney should propose to ban it for themselves but allow it here.' [356]

Existing waste and infrastructure burdens

5.10 Stakeholders argued that the proposed waste-to-energy facilities raised broader questions of fairness for regional communities. In their view, communities already hosting waste, extractive, renewable energy and other major infrastructure were being asked to absorb further impacts for the benefit of metropolitan areas, without adequate recognition, compensation or support.

Goulburn Mulwaree

5.11 Concerns about equity were particularly pronounced in Goulburn Mulwaree, where the community already hosts significant waste infrastructure and other State Significant Developments.

5.12 Goulburn Mulwaree Council also said that the region already bears a disproportionate share of Sydney's waste. The local Woodlawn Eco Precinct, which Goulburn Mulwaree Council does not use, receives around 800,000 tonnes of

350 Public forum, Ms Elizabeth Tanswell, 14 April 2026, p 5.
351 Public forum, Mr John Mendl, 14 May 2026, p 9.
352 Public forum, Ms Charlotte Payne, 14 May 2026, p 5.
353 Public forum, Mr Darrell Weekes, 14 May 2026, p 7.
354 Public forum, Mr Paul Beileiter, 14 May 2026, p 6.
355 Public forum, Mr Damian Poulter, 14 May 2026, p 2.
356 Public forum, Reverend Paul Davey, 14 May 2026, p 7.

waste transported more than 200 kilometres from Sydney each year, accounting for approximately 40 per cent of Sydney's residual waste. [357]

5.13 The committee heard that Tarago has carried Sydney's waste burden for decades, [358] with residents lamenting the odour, heavy vehicle traffic, and pollution incidents associated with the Woodlawn Eco Precinct. [359] Mrs Wendy Tuckerman MP, Member for Goulburn in the NSW Legislative Assembly, told the committee that pollution incidents, regulatory breaches and limited enforcement outcomes at the precinct have eroded community trust. She argued that the proposed WtE facility would exacerbate, rather than address, the community's existing burdens. [360]

5.14 Despite the longstanding arrangement, Councillor Jason Shepherd, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, suggested that many Sydney residents weren't aware where their rubbish ends up:

> We already do our fair share, and I don't think Sydney people realise just what they're putting on our community. When Sydney people put their rubbish in the bin, it comes here. It goes in a hole here, and this incinerator is about making that hole last longer. [361]

5.15 Councillor Nina Dillon also referred to the major role the region already plays in supporting other waste management, extractive industries and renewable energy projects across NSW and the ACT, hosting around 40 State Significant Development projects. She said these place significant pressure on local infrastructure, accommodation, health services and community resources and that the approximately $1 million per year the council receives from the Woodlawn Eco Precinct is insufficient to cover the damage to local roads caused by heavy truck movements. [362] In the council's view, the community already bears

[357] Evidence, Councillor Dillon, 15 May 2026, pp 16-17; Evidence, Ms Houlihan, 15 May 2026, p 9; Evidence, Mr Jeremy Manion, Regional Waste Coordinator, The Parks, Sydney's Parkland Councils, 15 December 2025, p 14.

[358] Evidence, Mrs Wendy Tuckerman MP, Member for Goulburn, NSW Legislative Assembly, 15 May 2026, p 3; Evidence, Councillor Dillon, 15 May 2026, pp 16-17.

[359] Evidence, Councillor Dillon, 15 May 2026, pp 16-17; Evidence, Councillor Jason Shepherd, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, 15 May 2026, p 22; Evidence, Mr Andrew Wood, President, Shooters Fishers & Farmers Party Goulburn Branch, 15 May 2026, p 28; Evidence, Mr James Innes, President, Communities Against the Tarago Incinerator, 15 May 2026, p 32; Evidence, Ms Thalia Sadumiano Treasurer, Communities Against the Tarago Incinerator, 15 May 2026, p 36; Evidence, Mr Thomas Martin, President, Long Water Agricultural Association, 15 May 2026, p 42; Evidence, Mrs Tuckerman MP, 15 May 2026, p 3.

[360] Evidence, Mrs Tuckerman MP, 15 May 2026, p 3.

[361] Evidence, Councillor Shepherd, 15 May 2026, p 16.

[362] Evidence, Councillor Dillon, 15 May 2026, p 21.

an 'over-significant burden' in sustaining infrastructure and developments that primarily benefit others outside the region. [363]

5.16 Stakeholders also raised concerns about the potential financial and infrastructure impacts of transporting waste from Sydney to regional areas, particularly through increased road maintenance costs. [364]

Parkes

5.17 Parkes Shire Council similarly argued that the community was being asked to accommodate the impacts of the proposed facility without adequate recognition or support. Councillor Neil Westcott, Mayor of Parkes Shire Council, told the committee:

> At present, Parkes is being asked to carry that burden and receive nothing in return— no compensation, no investment, no acknowledgement. That's not a partnership; it's really just the definition of being treated as a second-class citizen. [365]

5.18 Mrs Frances Robinson, Chairperson of the Peak Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council, also highlighted the potential social and cultural impacts of the proposed Parkes facility on regional and Aboriginal communities. She expressed concern that smaller rural communities had limited capacity to respond to or recover from environmental damage and that impacts on Aboriginal heritage and culturally significant places could be irreversible. [366]

Consultation and community engagement

5.19 Regional stakeholders, including councils, community organisations and Aboriginal representatives, considered consultation on the proposed facilities to be inadequate, insufficiently transparent and too heavily reliant on project proponents.

[363] Evidence, Councillor Dillon, 15 May 2026, p 16.

[364] Evidence, Councillor Khal Asfour, Vice President (Metropolitan/Urban), Local Government NSW, 15 December 2025, pp 48-49; Evidence, Mr Xavier Martin, President, NSW Farmers Association, 15 December 2025, p 22, Submission 221, Local Government NSW, p 11.

[365] Evidence, Councillor Westcott, 14 April 2026, p 3.

[366] Evidence, Mrs Frances Robinson, Chairperson, Peak Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council, 14 April 2026, p 24.

Transparency in site selection

5.20 Regional stakeholders called for a more transparent, clearly defined and criteria-based approach to selecting locations for waste-to-energy facilities. [367]

5.21 Councillor Joy Paddison, Parkes Shire Council, questioned why Parkes had been identified as a suitable location when a waste-to-energy proposal in Sydney had been rejected twice. [368] Local Government NSW (LGNSW) and the Canberra Region Joint Organisation also reported frustration among councils about the lack of transparency in site selection. [369] LGNSW recommended that the NSW Government 'commit to transparent, criteria-based site selection processes that balance urban and regional impacts.' [370]

5.22 The Parkes Clean Future Alliance also questioned the basis on which the regional precincts had been selected. It reported that a Government Information (Public Access) request by the Tarago community revealed that most documents supporting the selection of the precincts were classified as 'cabinet-in-confidence'. According to the Alliance, this made it very difficult for the community to gain any insight into the reasons for the decision. [371]

5.23 Stakeholders, including the Parkes Clean Future Alliance, pointed to the NSW Independent Planning Commission's 2018 rejection of an application for a WtE facility at Eastern Creek in Western Sydney, citing 'uncertainty in relation to the human health risks and site suitability', as an example of an approach that protects metropolitan populations from WtE risks while exposing selected regional communities to the same risks.' [372]

5.24 The Alliance argued that the selection of smaller regional communities raised questions of environmental and social inequity:

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367 Evidence, Mr Brett Lemin, Executive Director, Waste Contractors and Recyclers Association of NSW, 15 December 2025, p 10; Evidence, Mr Stefan Dittrich, National Technical and Major Projects Manager - Remondis Australia, 15 December 2025, p 10; Answers to supplementary questions, Mr Mike Ritchie, Managing Director and Dr Ron Wainberg, Technical Director, MRA Consulting Group, 22 July 2026, pp 5-6.

368 Evidence, Councillor Paddison, 14 April 2026, p 3.

369 Submission 221, Local Government NSW (LGNSW), p 10; Submission 459, Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO), p 3.

370 Submission 221, Local Government NSW (LGNSW), p 11.

371 Submission 218, Parkes Clean Future Alliance, p 2.

372 Submission 218, Parkes Clean Future Alliance, p 3; Submission 90, Shooters Fishers & Farmers Party - Goulburn Branch, p 2; Submission 232, Long Water Agricultural Association, p 8; Independent Planning Commission, *Independent Planning Commission Statement of Reasons Eastern Creek Energy from Waste Facility (SSD 6236)* (19 July 2018), https://majorprojects.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/prweb/PRRestService/mp/01/getContent?AttachRef=SSD-6236%2120190227T060550.337+GMT, p 40.

> It appears the NSW Government has deliberately chosen smaller regional areas to endure the most of these facilities, knowing that communities like ours lack the population size and political leverage to mount the same level of resistance as metropolitan areas. This is not just poor policy it is a clear case of environmental and social inequity. [373]

5.25 As explored in Chapter 1, the selection of WtE precincts considers access to infrastructure and transport, electricity grid connectivity and capacity, opportunities for broader circular economy and industrial investment, and industry interest. [374] Mr Tony Chappel, Chief Executive Officer of the NSW Environment Protection Authority, advised the committee that the final precinct locations and their configuration were ultimately determined by the Government as a policy decision at Cabinet level. However, he confirmed that such facilities can be safely located within major population centres, pointing to those operating in Paris, Vienna, Copenhagen and Tokyo as examples. [375]

5.26 Mr Stephen Beaman, Executive Director, Regulatory Operations, NSW Environment Protection Authority, added that limiting WtE facilities to four designated precincts was a 'deliberate policy choice' intended to mitigate their potential impacts on broader resource recovery efforts by restricting where they can be developed. [376]

5.27 Mr Edward Nicholas, Director of Parkes Energy Recovery, said that the site was not selected by the proponent. Rather, its location had been determined through the NSW Government's planning framework and tender process. He nevertheless supported the location, arguing that locating the facility in a regional area would deliver greater benefits to Parkes and the surrounding region. [377]

Proponent's engagement and community consultation

5.28 As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, once a site has been identified, waste-to-energy applicants must undertake comprehensive and transparent community consultation as part of their development applications. This includes informing the public about the proposal and its potential impacts, addressing community concerns, reporting on how feedback has been considered, and outlining plans for ongoing engagement. [378]

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373 Evidence, Councillor Dillon, 15 May 2026, p 17.

374 Submission 377, NSW Government, p 10; Evidence, Mr Tony Chappel, Chief Executive Officer, NSW Environment Protection Authority, 15 December 2025, p 56.

375 Evidence, Mr Chappel, 15 December 2025, p 55.

376 Evidence, Mr Stephen Beaman, Executive Director, Regulatory Operations, NSW Environment Protection Authority, 1 July 2026, p 35.

377 Evidence, Mr Edward Nicholas, Director, Parkes Energy Recovery, 1 July 2026, p 20.

378 Submission 377, NSW Government, p 11-12.

5.29 The committee heard from Veolia representatives that the company has 'worked exceptionally hard to deliver meaningful engagement', including connecting Tarago residents with people living alongside operating facilities in the United Kingdom. [379] They provided an outline of stakeholder engagement and community consultation undertaken, which included:

- 80 briefings with government agencies, officials and local communities,
- 10 presentations to the Community Liaison Committee, and
- 10 site visits with elected representatives, government agencies and local councils.
- Community outreach which included distributing 579 project guides and flyers, issuing 18 newsletters, and conducting seven letterbox drops to properties within a 10 km radius of the Woodlawn Eco Precinct. [380]

5.30 Dr Kirkman, former CEO and Managing Director of Veolia Australia and New Zealand, also acknowledged the ongoing concerns of regional communities and emphasised Veolia's commitment to open and transparent engagement regarding the proposed Woodlawn facility. [381]

5.31 Parkes Energy Recovery similarly submitted that it is 'actively and deeply' involved in community engagement, noting that its consultation efforts are ongoing and have included:

- briefings with all levels of government,
- facilitating community forums, comprehensive questions-and-answers materials and fact sheets,
- culturally informed consultation with the Parkes Aboriginal Working Party and the leadership of the Wiradjuri Council of Elders,
- taking a stall at the Parkes Show,
- and engaging with media to provide 'accurate' information about Parkes Energy Recovery. [382]

5.32 Mr Edward Nicholas, Parkes Energy Recovery, advised that the committee's inquiry had increased both community engagement in Parkes and the quality of engagement with the proponent, noting that there is greater scrutiny and information available about the project. [383]

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379 Evidence, Mr Craig Barker, Chief Executive Officer, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, 1 July 2026, p 13.

380 Submission 224, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, p 23.

381 Evidence, Dr Richard Kirkham, former CEO, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, 15 December 2025, p 27.

382 Submission 228, Parkes Energy Recovery, pp 6-7.

383 Evidence, Mr Nicholas, 1 July 2026, p 20.

5.33 Despite this, many regional stakeholders, including councils, community organisations and Aboriginal representatives, considered consultation on the proposed facilities to be inadequate, insufficiently transparent and too heavily reliant on project proponents.

5.34 Mrs Frances Robinson said that consultation had not met the standards of prior and informed consent. She argued that genuine consultation must be ongoing, transparent and allow sufficient time for informed community deliberation. [384]

5.35 Aboriginal representatives similarly described the consultation process as a 'box-ticking' exercise that was inadequate, inconsistent, and culturally inappropriate. [385]

5.36 The Parkes Clean Future Alliance characterised the consultation in Parkes as 'lacklustre at best', referring to a three-day drop-in session attended by 275 people. It contrasted this with an information evening organised by the alliance, which had more than 500 attendees. [386]

5.37 Lachlan Shire Council, which adjoins the proposed Parkes site, also described consultation as lacking. The council reported that it had been required to 'insert' itself into the process and seek recognition from both the NSW Government and the proponents, despite being an affected council. [387]

Calls for stronger government leadership

5.38 Given these shortcomings, several stakeholders argued that responsibility for consultation should not rest primarily with local councils or project proponents and called for greater government leadership to provide trusted and impartial information. [388]

5.39 Mr Chris Dart, Program Lead, Waste and Circular Economy at the Hunter Joint Organisation, said that the absence of a trusted body providing impartial and reliable information had contributed to public confusion and uncertainty. [389] He

[384] Evidence, Mrs Robinson, 14 April 2026, p 23.

[385] Submission, 177, Parkes Aboriginal Community Working Party, p 1; Submission 214, Condobolin Local Aboriginal Land Council, p 1; Submission 217, Peak Hill Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee, p 1; Evidence, Mrs Robinson, 14 April 2026, p 24.

[386] Evidence, Mr Jacob Unger, Member, Parkes Clean Future Alliance, 14 April 2026, p 8.

[387] Evidence, Mr Ruettjes, 14 April 2026, p 4.

[388] Evidence, Mr Manion, 15 December 2025, p 15; Evidence, Mrs Tuckerman MP, 15 May 2026, p 2; Evidence, Mr Ritchie, 1 July 2026, p 8; Submission 261, The Parks - Sydney's Parkland Councils, pp 4-5.

[389] Evidence, Mr Chris Dart, Program Lead, Waste and Circular Economy, Hunter Joint Organisation, 4 May 2026, p 10.

also observed that communities may be sceptical of information provided by proponents because they have a vested interest in their projects proceeding. [390]

5.40 The Hunter Joint Organisation argued that limited government involvement had increased community resistance and left councils and proponents to respond to concerns. It advocated for a stronger NSW Government role in consultation and community engagement on WtE policy. [391]

5.41 Mr Mike Ritchie, Director of MRA Consulting, similarly argued that the NSW Chief Scientist, the NSW EPA and other representative bodies should provide authoritative information about WtE technology rather than leaving proponents to explain the technology and its risks to communities. [392] He said:

> At the moment, it is left solely to proponents to weave their way through what is a fairly difficult planning approval process. It is not clear, it is not transparent, and it is very difficult for proponents to both get a social licence and get through the planning approval process, which is why there are many, many more proposals in other States. [393]

5.42 LGNSW similarly considered that the limited visibility of the NSW EPA in community engagement had contributed to reduced confidence. [394] Parkes Shire Council also expressed concern that the lack of coordinated government engagement and public education, despite the NSW Government identifying WtE as an important transitional solution to the state's waste crisis, had contributed to community concern and reduced confidence in the planning process. The council therefore called for 'affirmative government leadership' rather than passive observation. [395]

5.43 Councillor Neil Westcott told the committee that the Parkes community had repeatedly sought information from NSW Health, the NSW EPA and the Chief Scientist, including independent and peer-reviewed evidence about the safety of WtE. He argued that the absence of clear answers had allowed conflicting information and community fears to persist. [396]

Public forums – Lack of confidence and trust in proponents

Stakeholders in Parkes and Goulburn expressed a lack of confidence in the proponents to operate facilities safely:

390 Evidence, Mr Dart, 4 May 2026, p 12.

391 Submission 236, Hunter Joint Organisation, p 9.

392 Evidence, Mr Ritchie, 1 July 2026, p 11.

393 Evidence, Mr Ritchie, 1 July 2026, p 11.

394 Submission 221, Local Government NSW, p 12.

395 Submission 134, Parkes Shire Council, pp 1 and 4.

396 Evidence, Councillor Westcott, 14 April 2026, p 3.

- 'In Tarago, we can predict the outcome based on Veolia's current behaviour—persistent odour, leaking containers, probable groundwater contamination. Even with strict conditions, Veolia's incinerator will lead to more environmental failures.' [397]
- 'Neither of the proposed energy from waste incinerators for New South Wales has at this point in time been able to demonstrate that they are capable of compliance with the legislative and regulatory requirements applicable to these facilities. [398]
- 'A company [Veolia] that cannot consistently operate an existing waste facility within licence conditions cannot credibly be entrusted with a toxic waste incinerator that depends on zero tolerance for failure.' [399]
- 'We do not dispute that these facilities are currently operating in these environments internationally; however, the scientific evidence that they are operating safely and that there has been no impact upon the health of these communities or regional produce has yet to become available.' [400]

Community trust and acceptance

5.44 The committee heard that these concerns about consultation and engagement were closely linked to the broader question of social licence. Multiple witnesses, including representatives of local government, industry and community groups, argued that community trust and acceptance are critical to the successful progression of WtE projects. Without that trust, projects can face sustained opposition, reputational risk and difficulty securing community acceptance. [401]

5.45 Councillor Khal Asfour, Vice President (Metropolitan/Urban) of Local Government NSW told the committee that 'energy from waste cannot succeed without social licence' and added that community confidence depends on transparency and on safety. [402] Mr Damian Thomas, Director Advocacy, LGNSW, similarly described social licence as ‘really important’ and something that could not be left to local government alone, given that inadequate information and education can heighten community concerns. [403]

397 Public forum, Mr Poulter, 14 May 2026, p 2.

398 Public forum, Mr Colin Bosworth, 14 May 2026, p 1.

399 Public forum, Ms Paige Davis, 14 May 2026, p 3.

400 Public forum, Mr Bosworth, 14 May 2026, p 1.

401 Evidence, Mr Lemin, 15 December 2025, p 13; Evidence, Mr Manion, 15 December 2025, p 15; Evidence, Councillor Asfour, 15 December 2025, p 49; Evidence, Ms Alexandra Barratt, Emeritus Professor of Public Health, University of Sydney; and Member, Sydney Knitting Nannas and Friends, 4 May 2026, p 37.

402 Evidence, Councillor Asfour, 15 December 2025, p 48.

403 Evidence, Mr Damian Thomas, Director Advocacy, Local Government NSW, 15 December 2025, p 49.

Current levels of community acceptance

5.46 Several witnesses considered that insufficient work had been undertaken to build that confidence. Mr Chris Horsey, Manager Waste Management at Hornsby Shire Council, noted that there had been no substantive social licence campaigns for WtE projects to address community concerns on a broader scale.[404]

5.47 Against this background, local representatives were unequivocal about their assessment of the current level of community acceptance, calling for further work to gain support for the projects.

5.48 Councillor Jason Shepherd told the committee that 'there is no social licence for this project', while Councillor Neil Westcott said the Parkes proposal had proceeded 'without genuine engagement, without clear explanation and without the social licence required for a project of this magnitude.'[405]

Public forums – community acceptance and social licence

Participants at the public forums told the committee that the proposed facilities did not have community acceptance or social licence.

- 'The New South Wales Government's own energy from waste policy states that these projects can only proceed where community acceptance has been obtained. There is no community acceptance here.'[406]
- 'I am here to say that there is no social licence for the building of waste incinerators in this area. Our community stands united against waste incineration here or anywhere.'[407]
- 'For many years now, we have put everything into building a life and investing our heart and money into this area. I can't believe it's all being undermined by a fundamentally flawed proposal.'[408]

Building social licence

5.49 Witnesses emphasised that building social licence could not be left to proponents or local councils alone. Mr Jeremy Manion, Regional Waste Coordinator, The Parks, Sydney's Parkland Councils, acknowledged that further work was needed to build the social licence for WtE, and suggested that a NSW

404 Evidence, Mr Chris Horsey, Manager Waste Management, Hornsby Shire Council, 4 May 2026, p 2.

405 Evidence, Councillor Shepherd, 15 May 2026, p 18; Evidence, Councillor Westcott, 14 April 2026, p 3.

406 Public forum, Mr Weekes, 14 May 2026, p 7.

407 Public forum, Reverend Davey, 14 May 2026, p 7.

408 Public forum, Ms Rachelle Trudgett, 14 April 2026, p 3.

Government-led public education campaign could help improve community acceptance. [409]

5.50 Mr Andrew Short, Director of Project Development ANZ, O.C.O Technology Australia Pty Ltd, argued that social licence needs to extend beyond an individual facility to the broader waste management system. In his view, communities need confidence in the way waste is managed overall, rather than relying solely on acceptance of individual facilities. [410] MRA Consulting similarly described WtE as inherently 'controversial' and noted the difficulty of establishing social licence for both landfills and WtE facilities. [411]

5.51 Stakeholders identified several conditions they considered could strengthen social licence for WtE, including:

- Early and ongoing community engagement throughout the project lifecycle, supported by clear information about risks, benefits, environmental performance and regulatory compliance; [412]
- Demonstrated, proven technology, tightly controlled emissions, and independent monitoring and reporting; [413]
- 'Tangible, lasting benefits' for host communities, such as employment, infrastructure investment, affordable energy and financial contributions, supported by clear benefit-sharing arrangements; and [414]
- Transparency and stronger government leadership to improve public understanding of WtE, such as through public education campaigns. [415]

409 Evidence, Mr Manion, 15 December 2025, p 15.

410 Evidence, Mr Andrew Short, Director of Project Development ANZ, O.C.O Technology Australia Pty Ltd, 4 May 2026, p 27.

411 Evidence, Dr Ron Wainberg, Technical Director, MRA Consulting, 1 July 2026, p 7; Evidence, Mr Ritchie, 1 July 2026, p 8.

412 Submission 134, Parkes Shire Council, p 2; Submission 459, Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO), p 3; Evidence, Councillor Asfour, 15 December 2025, p 49.

413 Submission 362, Waste Contractors and Recyclers Association of NSW (WCRA), p 6; Submission 221, Local Government NSW, p 13; Submission 259, Dr Ali El Hanandeh, p 4.

414 Submission 134, Parkes Shire Council, pp 2 and 4; Evidence, Councillor Asfour, 15 December 2025, p 48; Evidence, Councillor Shepherd, 15 May 2026, p 19; Evidence, Ms Vanessa Parkes, Director City Living, Blacktown City Council, 4 May 2026, p 3; Evidence, Mr Innes, 15 May 2026, p 33.

415 Evidence, Councillor Westcott, 14 April 2026, p 4; Evidence, Mr Ritchie, 1 July 2026, p 11; Evidence, Mr Thomas, 15 December 2025, p 49; Submission 134, Parkes Shire Council, p 2; Evidence, Ms Parkes, 4 May 2026, p 3.

Proponents' approach to social licence and community benefits

5.52 In response to these concerns, both Veolia and Parkes Energy Recovery acknowledged that transparent and ongoing engagement with communities is central to building community trust and achieving social licence.

5.53 Mr Edward Nicholas, Director of Parkes Energy Recovery, acknowledged that there is always more work to do to build social licence. He said the project team remains committed to progressing its studies, providing the community with fact-based information, and engaging openly and candidly with stakeholders. He noted that this approach has been followed since the team was selected to develop the Parkes Energy Recovery Facility and will continue throughout the project. [416]

5.54 Mr Nicholas also pointed to the proposed Community Benefits Fund as one way of delivering tangible benefits to the host community. Parkes Energy Recovery has committed to contributing $1.67 per tonne of waste, initially around $1.2 million annually, with increases each year. Mr Nicholas said that contributions are expected to exceed $80 million over the project's 40–50-year lifespan, with the fund's structure being developed in consultation with Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation and Parkes Shire Council. [417]

5.55 Veolia similarly characterised social licence as requiring more than community engagement alone. Mr Craig Barker, CEO of Veolia Australia and New Zealand, told the committee that Veolia believes it has 'unequivocally' satisfied the three elements it considers fundamental to social licence: genuine community engagement, rigorous independent environmental and health assessments, and meeting a pressing need for the people of NSW. [418]

5.56 Mr Barker also pointed to changes made to the proposed Woodlawn facility in response to community concerns. These included baseline soil testing, additional ambient air-quality monitoring stations, and revisions to the human health risk assessment to consider additional PFAS and viticulture concerns. [419]

5.57 Ms Kathryn Whitfield, Chief Growth Officer at Veolia Australia and New Zealand, likewise emphasised the importance of genuine, long-term engagement in maintaining social licence, noting that Veolia had undertaken 80 face-to-face briefings and 35 in-person events and tours over the preceding four years. She said that, even where residents continued to disagree with the proposal, they had recognised Veolia's willingness to continue participating in difficult conversations: [420]

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[416] Evidence, Mr Nicholas, 15 December 2025, p 29.

[417] Evidence, Mr Nicholas, 1 July 2026, pp 24-25.

[418] Evidence, Mr Barker, 1 July 2026, p 13.

[419] Evidence, Mr Barker, 1 July 2026, p 13.

[420] Evidence, Ms Kathryn Whitfield, Chief Growth Officer, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, 1 July 2026, p 17.

> I have had people in the community come up to me and say, "While I may not necessarily agree with this proposal or may not have the same view as you, I do appreciate that you've continued to turn up and you've continued to engage in these difficult conversations. [421]

5.58 Ms Whitfield also stressed that Veolia has been part of the community for more than 20 years and is committed to remaining there for the long term. She also acknowledged that maintaining social licence required ongoing engagement, including taking responsibility when things go wrong, responding to community feedback, remediating issues and continually seeking to improve. [422]

5.59 Veolia also relied on the broader economic and community benefits of the proposal as contributing to social licence. It said the project will deliver significant long-term economic and community benefits, including a $600 million capital investment, $2 billion in regional economic activity, electricity for 40,000 homes, and 350 jobs across construction and ongoing operations. It also pointed to the long-term community contributions already provided through the Veolia Mulwaree Trust and host fees, which have provided more than $30 million to councils, community groups, schools, arts centres, clubs and scholarships. [423]

Committee comment

5.60 The committee acknowledges the depth and intensity of concern expressed by regional communities about the proposed waste-to-energy facilities at Parkes and Goulburn Mulwaree. These concerns go well beyond opposition to waste-to-energy technology itself. They reflect a strong sense that regional communities are being asked to carry the social, environmental and economic consequences of managing Sydney's residual waste.

Finding 23

There is strong and sustained regional opposition to the current waste-to-energy proposals in New South Wales.

5.61 Of particular note is the perception that regional communities are being asked, once again, to host major infrastructure primarily for the benefit of metropolitan areas, despite already carrying a significant share of the State's waste, renewable energy, transport and other State Significant Development infrastructure. We believe that this sense of unfairness cannot be dismissed as simple opposition to development. It warrants serious consideration and response from the NSW Government.

421 Evidence, Ms Whitfield, 1 July 2026, p 17.

422 Evidence, Ms Whitfield, 1 July 2026, p 17.

423 Evidence, Mr Barker, 1 July 2026, p 13.

Finding 24

Regional communities perceive that they are being unfairly asked to bear a disproportionate share of the risks associated with managing metropolitan waste, without commensurate benefits.

Finding 25

The Woodlawn Eco Precinct receives approximately 800,000 tonnes of waste annually, transported more than 200 kilometres from Sydney, representing around 40 per cent of Sydney's residual waste.

5.62 These concerns about fairness are compounded by the lack of transparency around waste-to-energy site selection. Communities should be able to understand the criteria and evidence informing site selection, including consideration of waste sources, transport, environmental and health impacts, existing infrastructure and the distribution of costs and benefits. Transparent decision-making is essential to maintaining community confidence and strengthening major infrastructure projects. Without that transparency, mistrust is inevitable.

5.63 The committee heard that the existing policy framework is too restrictive. Despite their openness to waste-to-energy, we heard from Wagga Wagga City Council that the restriction of the technology to four regional precincts is discouraging investment in the Wagga Wagga Special Activation Precinct, with some proponents reportedly abandoning plans to establish projects there and instead relocating to Queensland. Greater flexibility is needed to assess projects and locations outside the designated precincts where there is demonstrated local community support, subject to rigorous, merit-based assessment. This would help ensure regional areas are not excluded from projects that could contribute to environmental sustainability, economic development, industry growth and regional employment.

Finding 26

The existing policy framework, which prohibits waste-to-energy facilities across Greater Sydney while permitting them in four nominated regional precincts, has fuelled perceptions of a 'double standard'. The absence of clear, consistent and transparent reasoning for selecting these precincts has contributed to community opposition.

Finding 27

The existing policy framework excludes the development of waste processing infrastructure outside identified precincts and is impacting proposals that are perceived to incorporate waste-to-energy elements.

5.64 In the committee's view, the NSW Government must first explain how the existing locations were selected and why the framework restricts large-scale thermal waste-to-energy facilities to regional areas. Greater transparency about these decisions is necessary to address the perception that different standards are being applied to metropolitan and regional communities.

5.65 Given the broad and sustained community opposition to the proposed waste-to-energy facilities in Parkes and Goulburn Mulwaree, the committee considers that a moratorium should be imposed on all current proposals pending a comprehensive review of the designated precincts. The review should consider the adequacy of the site-selection criteria and processes, the rationale for restricting facilities to regional areas, and the inconsistencies arising from the current regional precinct model.

Recommendation 7

That the NSW Government impose a moratorium on all current waste-to-energy proposals and commission an independent, transparent review of all designated precincts, including the site-selection criteria and processes, the restriction to regional areas, and the inconsistencies of the current restricted regional precinct model, with the full findings and analysis publicly released.

5.66 Clarifying the basis of previous site-selection decisions is necessary, but will not, of itself, resolve the structural limitations and inconsistencies of the restricted precinct model. The committee considers that the NSW Government should review the existing model and consider an alternative framework under which potential sites may be nominated and assessed on their merits against clear and consistently applied criteria.

5.67 These criteria should include environmental performance, proximity to waste generation, infrastructure availability, cumulative impacts and demonstrated community acceptance. The assessment process and its outcomes should be published to provide communities, councils and proponents with confidence that proposals are being considered robustly, consistently and transparently, rather than being permitted or excluded primarily because they fall within or outside a government-nominated precinct.

Recommendation 8

That the NSW Government review the existing precinct model and give consideration to an alternative model for potential various forms of waste-to-energy facilities, focusing on:

- The need to evaluate proposals on their merits, including environmental performance, proximity to waste generation, infrastructure availability, cumulative impacts and community support
- The opportunity for potential sites to be nominated and considered against strict criteria, including community acceptance and
- The publication of results to ensure robust, consistent and comprehensive assessment.

5.68 A criteria-based framework should also provide clear minimum safeguards for communities surrounding a proposed facility. The evidence received by the committee demonstrates the importance of considering the proximity of facilities to homes, schools, agricultural land, water catchments and other sensitive land uses. While appropriate separation distances may vary according to the characteristics of a proposal and its location, the committee considers that clear minimum requirements would improve consistency, transparency and community confidence.

Recommendation 9

That the NSW Government establish clear minimum buffer distances between proposed waste-to-energy facilities, ensuring safe and appropriate distances from food production, schools and hospitals.

5.69 The location of waste-to-energy facilities must also be considered in relation to where residual waste is generated and where the resulting residues can be safely managed. Transporting waste over long distances imposes financial, environmental and infrastructure costs, while the return transport of hazardous residues creates additional logistical considerations. The committee considers that proximity to waste generation, transport networks and appropriate treatment and disposal infrastructure should therefore be central to future siting decisions.

Finding 28

Waste could be more effectively managed closer to where it is generated, reducing the costs, resources and impacts associated with transporting waste over long distances.

5.70 Where a proposal nevertheless proceeds with the support of the relevant councils and communities, the financial consequences for local government must be clearly identified and appropriately allocated. Councils should not be exposed to unforeseen transport, infrastructure or contractual costs, nor should contractual arrangements discourage waste avoidance, recycling or other higher-order resource recovery measures by penalising reductions in residual waste volumes.

Recommendation 10

That, where waste-to-energy facilities are supported by councils and communities, the NSW Government require clear financial transparency and contingency planning to minimise local government exposure to cost overruns, as well as prohibit contract terms that penalise councils for reducing waste sent to waste-to-energy facilities.

5.71 Financial transparency must be accompanied by regulatory transparency. The committee heard that confidence in waste-to-energy proposals is affected by the accessibility of information about incidents, compliance and enforcement. Although relevant information may be published through existing regulatory processes, communities should not be required to search across multiple sources to understand a facility's compliance history. A central register would provide a clearer and more consistent account of regulatory performance and the resolution of identified issues.

Recommendation 11

That the NSW Environment Protection Authority establish a central, publicly accessible waste-to-energy compliance register to record breaches, incidents, audits, enforcement actions and outcomes. The register should be searchable by facility and date, distinguish alleged from confirmed breaches, and show whether matters have been resolved.

5.72 The committee heard extensive evidence from proponents about the consultation and community engagement they have undertaken in host communities, including briefings, forums, site visits and information materials. However, there is clearly a striking gap between the engagement they have undertaken, and the level of trust and acceptance expressed. In the committee's view, the quality of engagement is as important, if not more so, than its quantity, and consultation must provide genuine opportunities for communities to have their concerns heard and addressed. Consultation cannot be measured simply by the number of meetings held, brochures distributed or events attended. It must give communities a genuine opportunity to be heard, to obtain clear answers and to be presented with outcomes that demonstrate that their concerns have been taken into account.

Finding 29

Community consultation and engagement for proposed regional waste-to-energy facilities has been inadequate, particularly in potential host communities.

5.73 The committee also considers that responsibility for addressing these shortcomings cannot rest primarily with proponents or local councils. Proponents have a direct interest in their projects proceeding, while councils may not have the resources, expertise or authority to provide comprehensive information about waste-to-energy technology, health and environmental risks, or the regulatory framework.

5.74 Indeed, we are particularly concerned that communities have too often been left to navigate complex and contested information without sufficiently visible leadership from government. Clear minimum requirements for consultation on large-scale infrastructure projects are needed to ensure that engagement is not primarily controlled by proponents and that host communities have funded access to independent technical, environmental and health information. This is particularly important where proponents have an interest in the progression of their projects, the NSW Environment Protection Authority has a dual role, and communities have expressed a lack of confidence in the information available to them.

5.75 At Woodlawn, these concerns are compounded by the facility's location within the Sydney drinking water catchment. Regular and independent site monitoring, undertaken by the NSW Environment Protection Authority in consultation with WaterNSW, is therefore essential to ensure ongoing compliance with the facility's environmental protection licence and the requirement to have a neutral or beneficial effect on water quality.

Finding 30

Community consultation concerning proposed waste-to-energy facilities should not rest primarily with local councils or project proponents. The absence of a trusted body providing impartial and reliable information has contributed to public uncertainty and opposition.

Recommendation 12

That, given the proposed facility at Woodlawn is located within the Sydney drinking water catchment, the NSW Environment Protection Authority, in consultation with WaterNSW, establish a regime of regular and independent site monitoring to ensure ongoing compliance with the facility's environmental protection licence and with the requirement that the development have a neutral of beneficial effect on water quality.

Recommendation 13

That the NSW Government establish clear minimum requirements for consultation on large-scale infrastructure projects, ensuring engagement is not solely proponent-led, requires minimum thresholds for community engagement, consultation and provides host communities with access to independent technical, environmental and health information.

5.76 The committee is concerned that some Aboriginal stakeholders consider the NSW Government and the project proponent to have failed to properly consult with and recognise the interests of the local Aboriginal community in Parkes. These stakeholders consider that this failure may constitute a failure to meet consultation obligations under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1993.*

Recommendation 14

That the NSW Government investigate and publicly report on the Peak Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council's claim that the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1993* has been breached in relation to the Parkes waste-to-energy proposal.

5.77 The committee acknowledges the proponents' projected economic and community benefits, including employment, investment and community benefit funds. However, the adequacy of this is a subjective matter, and they cannot buy social licence. While such benefits may assist in building community acceptance, they should not be regarded as a substitute for addressing legitimate concerns about environmental performance, health, transport, infrastructure and the appropriateness of a facility's location. This is particularly important in the context of State Significant Developments, where the impacts experienced by regional communities as a result of these projects have contributed to concerns about social licence, community distress and wellbeing, and, in some cases, placed pressure on social relationships and community cohesion.

5.78 Social licence must ultimately be earned, and it is clear that some stakeholders feel that in the two cases proposed, it has not been. It depends on transparency, credible information, meaningful engagement, demonstrated environmental performance and accountability. The evidence before the committee indicates that social licence should not be treated as a one-off threshold to be satisfied during project approval, but as an ongoing relationship between proponents, government and host communities from the outset.

5.79 Accordingly, the committee considers that the NSW Government should not approve the current proposed regional waste-to-energy facilities in the absence of demonstrated community acceptance, including support from the relevant local councils and Aboriginal Land Councils.

Finding 31

Social licence has been further eroded by the impacts and unintended consequences of State Significant Developments on regional communities, contributing to avoidable distress, mental health impacts and, in some instances, strains on social cohesion.

Recommendation 15

That the NSW Government not proceed with approval of the current proposed regional New South Wales waste-to-energy facilities in the absence of numerous critical elements, but most significantly, the absence of conclusive social licence and community acceptance, including from local councils and Aboriginal Land Councils.

5.80 The committee considers that meaningful community engagement must begin before a site is selected and a proposal is substantially developed. Consultation should enable affected communities, councils and First Nations peoples to influence fundamental decisions about location, design, safeguards and local benefits, rather than simply respond to a proposal after those matters have largely been determined.

5.81 A consistent siting and engagement framework is therefore required to ensure that future proposals are assessed transparently and against clear minimum standards. Proponents should be required to demonstrate that community and environmental impacts have been avoided or appropriately managed, that engagement has been early and meaningful, and that host communities will receive tangible and lasting benefits.

Recommendation 16

That the NSW Government establish a consistent siting and community-engagement framework for large-scale waste-to-energy facilities. The framework should establish minimum siting principles, require proponents to demonstrate that community and environmental impacts have been avoided or appropriately managed, mandate early and meaningful engagement with affected communities, local councils and First Nations peoples, and require proponents to identify tangible local community benefits.

5.82 We believe that this approach would provide greater consistency and certainty while ensuring that the location and design of large-scale waste-to-energy facilities properly account for community, environmental and infrastructure impacts. It would also shift engagement towards an earlier stage of project

development, allowing community and local knowledge to inform site selection and project design rather than being considered primarily after a location has been determined. This is reflective of our view that regional communities must be genuine partners in waste management planning from the outset. Overall, if waste-to-energy is to form part of New South Wales's response to the residual waste challenge, regional communities must not feel that they are simply being expected to accept infrastructure to address metropolitan waste. The NSW Government must ensure that decisions about waste-to-energy are equitable and transparent, that host communities receive appropriate and lasting benefits, and that environmental and social impacts are properly identified, managed and monitored.

Chapter 6 Strengthening waste management in New South Wales

This chapter examines the evidence received about how waste management in New South Wales can be strengthened beyond reliance on any single treatment or disposal option. It considers the need to prioritise the transition to a circular economy, the potential role of waste-to-energy within an integrated waste management system, and proposals to shift greater responsibility upstream through product stewardship and producer responsibility. It also discusses the contribution of food and garden organics collection, alternative waste treatment and resource recovery technologies, and broader concerns about strategic planning, infrastructure, funding and coordination.

Waste-to-energy is not a 'silver bullet'

6.1 Throughout the inquiry, the committee heard that New South Wales' waste management challenges cannot be addressed through any single treatment or disposal option. Rather, stakeholders emphasised the need for a broader, integrated system in which waste avoidance, resource and energy recovery and landfill each have a defined role. Dr Ron Wainberg, Technical Director at MRA Consulting, described this as requiring 'no single solution' or 'silver bullet'.[424] Mr Edward Nicholas, Director of Parkes Energy Recovery, similarly characterised waste-to-energy (WtE) as one of a 'smorgasbord of solutions', noting that different waste streams require different management options.[425]

6.2 While stakeholders expressed differing views about the role of WtE, there was broad recognition that where it is used, it should form part of a wider waste management system rather than be treated as a standalone solution. This includes measures to prevent waste generation, increase reuse and repair, improve recycling and resource recovery, and divert organic waste from landfill.

6.3 The following sections examine the approaches proposed by inquiry participants to strengthen waste management in New South Wales and reduce reliance on landfill and other end-of-life solutions.

Prioritising the transition to a circular economy

6.4 A key theme throughout the inquiry was that transitioning to a circular economy should be an overarching priority. Consistent with the evidence that treatment and disposal options should not be considered in isolation, stakeholders argued that greater priority should be given to preventing waste, retaining products and materials in use, and recovering resources before relying on energy recovery or landfill.

[424] Evidence, Dr Ron Wainberg, Technical Director, MRA Consulting, 1 July 2026, p 7.

[425] Evidence, Mr Edward Nicholas, Director, Parkes Energy Recovery, 1 July 2026, p 23.

6.5 The NSW Government defines the circular economy as:

> … an economic system aimed at minimising waste and promoting the continual reuse of resources. The circular economy aims to keep products, equipment and infrastructure in use for longer, thus improving the productivity of these resources. Waste materials and energy should become input for other processes… [426]

6.6 NSW has not achieved its target of 80 per cent diversion from landfill via recycling in line with the agreed National Waste Policy targets, with recovery currently at only 64 per cent. [427]

6.7 Many stakeholders argued that the NSW Government should prioritise this transition as an appropriate response to the waste crisis. They emphasised that a circular economy promotes higher-order waste management options, including reducing, reusing and recycling waste and can contribute to:

- Minimising waste and pollution, [428]
- Keeping products and materials in use for longer, [429]
- Maximising the value of resources, [430] and
- Reducing reliance on landfill and other end-of-life solutions. [431]

6.8 Stakeholders proposed a range of measures to advance this transition, including greater producer responsibility, improved collection and recovery of organic waste, investment in resource recovery infrastructure and consideration of alternative waste treatment technologies.

6.9 The committee heard about a practical example of local resource recovery and circularity in the Bega Valley. Ms Sharon Houlihan, Executive Officer, Canberra

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426 Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, *NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041* (June 2021), https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/nsw-waste-and-sustainable-materials-strategy-2041.pdf, p 9.

427 Answers to supplementary questions, Mr Mike Ritchie and Dr Ron Wainberg, MRA Consulting, 22 July 2026, p 4.

428 Submission 95, Boomerang Alliance and Total Environment Centre, p 1; Submission 233, Sydney Knitting Nannas and Friends, p 3.

429 Submission 221, Local Government NSW, p 5; Evidence, Ms Joanna Kubota, Executive Director, The Parks, Sydney's Parkland Councils, 15 December 2025, p 19; Evidence, Mr Damian Thomas, Director Advocacy, Local Government NSW, 15 December 2025, p 50.

430 Submission 95, Boomerang Alliance and Total Environment Centre, p 1; Evidence, Ms Gayle Sloan, Chief Executive Officer, Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia, 15 December 2025, p 2; Submission 573, O.C.O Technology Australia Pty Ltd, p 6.

431 Evidence, Ms Sloan, 15 December 2025, p 2; Dr Richard Kirkman, CEO and Managing Director, Veolia Australia New Zealand, 15 December 2025, p 27; Evidence, Mr Edward Nicholas, Director, Parkes Energy Recovery, 15 December 2025, p 27.

Region Joint Organisation, described the Bega Valley as an example of collaboration between local government, industry and the private sector to reduce waste and reuse materials. One initiative involves working with the building and construction industry to process materials such as concrete onsite, rather than transporting them to landfill. Ms Houlihan noted that grant funding for plant and equipment could enable councils and businesses to expand such approaches by capturing, separating and processing waste closer to where it is generated. [432]

Waste-to-energy as part of an integrated waste management system

6.10 Stakeholders expressed differing views about the appropriate role of WtE within a circular economy. The NSW Government and industry generally supported its use to manage unavoidable residual waste and reduce reliance on landfill. [433] Other stakeholders were concerned that WtE could divert materials from higher-order uses, undermine long-term efforts to improve waste management and risk perpetuating waste generation. [434]

6.11 General agreement was that if WtE is implemented, it should complement, rather than substitute, higher-order waste management measures. Stakeholders emphasised that it should operate alongside waste avoidance, reuse, repair, recycling and other resource recovery measures. [435] The City of Sydney submitted that WtE should only be considered after higher-order waste hierarchy options have been exhausted and as part of an integrated waste and materials management strategy. [436]

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[432] Evidence, Ms Sharon Houlihan, Executive Officer, Canberra Region Joint Organisation, 15 May 2026, p 12.

[433] Submission 377, NSW Government, p 6; Submission 224, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, pp 1-2; Submission 228, Parkes Energy Recovery, pp 2-3; Evidence, Ms Sloan, 15 December 2025, p 2; Evidence, Mr Brett Lemin, Executive Director, Waste Contractors & Recyclers Association of NSW, 15 December 2025, p 9; Evidence, Mr Tony Chappel, Chief Executive Officer, NSW Environment Protection Authority, 15 December 2025, p 55; Evidence, Mr Chris Dart, Program Lead, Waste and Circular Economy, Hunter Joint Organisation, 4 May 2026, p 10.

[434] Submission 227, The Australia Institute, pp 1-3; Submission 233, Sydney Knitting Nannas and Friends, p 3; Submission 95, Boomerang Alliance and Total Environment Centre, p 1 and 4; Evidence, Mr Jeff Angel, Director, Boomerang Alliance and Total Environment Centre, 15 December 2025, p 40.

[435] Submission 236, Hunter Joint Organisation, p 8; Evidence, Ms Sloan, 15 December 2025, p 2; Evidence, Mr Lemin, 15 December 2025, p 9; Evidence, Ms Houlihan, 15 May 2026, p 9; Evidence, Mr Amal Jugdeo Sales Director, Kanadevia Inova Australia Pty Ltd, 4 May 2026, p 22; Submission 221, Local Government NSW (LGNSW), p 5.

[436] Submission 190, City of Sydney, pp 1-2.

6.12 The City of Sydney also argued that WtE proposals should be considered in the context of expanding existing or establishing new landfill capacity, which it identified as the current alternative for managing residual waste.[437]

6.13 Similarly, the Waste Contractors and Recyclers Association of NSW characterised WtE as complementary to, rather than competing with, recycling and resource recovery. It argued that residual waste will remain even where recycling rates are high, and that WtE should proceed alongside investment in advanced materials recovery facilities (MRFs), commercial Food and Garden Organics (FOGO) expansion, anaerobic digestion and enhanced product stewardship.[438]

6.14 This systems-based view was also reflected in other evidence. Ms Gayle Sloan, Chief Executive Officer of the Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia, described WtE, recycling and landfill as essential services but as the 'last line of defence' rather than the root cause of the waste crisis. She emphasised the need to manage increasing volumes of waste through a broader, systems-based approach.[439] The Hunter Joint Organisation also supported WtE as a means of replacing landfill and modernising residual waste processing, while stressing that WtE must be accompanied by investment in resource recovery infrastructure and measures to 'increase circularity within the economy.'[440]

6.15 Other stakeholders placed greater emphasis on the risk that investment in WtE could undermine waste prevention. The Australia Institute cautioned that a WtE industry could create incentives to burn plastic and other fossil fuel-derived waste products, making it more difficult to reduce demand for these products and increase their reuse and recycling. It argued that preventing waste at its source would reduce waste management costs and emissions and support the achievement of New South Wales environmental targets.[441]

Product stewardship and greater producer responsibility

6.16 The evidence about preventing waste at its source also directed attention to decisions made before products become waste, including how they are designed, manufactured and placed on the market. Stakeholders therefore called for greater responsibility to be placed on producers and other participants in the supply chain through product stewardship and extended producer responsibility (EPR).[442]

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437 Submission 190, City of Sydney, pp 1-2.

438 Submission 362, Waste Contractors and Recyclers Association of NSW, p 6.

439 Evidence, Ms Sloan, 15 December 2025, p 3.

440 Submission 236, Hunter Joint Organisation, p 8.

441 Submission 227, The Australia Institute, pp 2-3.

442 Evidence, Ms Sloan, 15 December 2025, pp 2 and 7; Submission 95, Boomerang Alliance and Total Environment Centre, pp 4-5; Submission 227, The Australia

6.17 Product stewardship promotes responsibility for the environmental impacts of products across their lifecycle, from design and manufacture through to use and end-of-life management. The NSW Environment Protection Authority (NSW EPA) identified product stewardship as an important element of its broader response to the waste crisis.[443] It advised that New South Wales and other Australian jurisdictions are working towards nationally aligned product stewardship schemes. The NSW EPA describes product stewardship as promoting responsibility across a product's lifecycle and supporting the circular economy by reducing the environmental and human health impacts of products.[444]

6.18 EPR is a particular approach to product stewardship that places greater responsibility on producers for the products they place on the market, including responsibility for their management at the post-consumer stage.[445] Stakeholders identified EPR as a mechanism for shifting responsibility towards producers and encouraging greater consideration of how products are designed and managed at the end of their useful life.[446]

6.19 Mr Tony Chappel, Chief Executive Officer of the NSW Environment Protection Authority (NSW EPA), similarly emphasised that product stewardship will be integral to improving resource recovery in New South Wales. He pointed to:

- The 'ongoing success' of the container deposit scheme,
- The recently passed Product Lifecycle Responsibility Act 2025, which establishes a legislative product stewardship framework in New South Wales and,
- The ongoing work to establish product stewardship approaches for hazardous material in the recycling streams, such as batteries.[447]

6.20 Mr Chappel also described the NSW Government's broader approach to waste management as requiring 'systemic solutions' rather than a single intervention. He identified the Reuse and Repair Strategy as a significant initiative that

Institute, p 3; Submission 233, Sydney Knitting Nannas and Friends, p 3; Submission 362, Waste Contractors and Recyclers Association of NSW, p 6.

443 Answers to supplementary questions, Mr Tony Chappel, Chief Executive Officer, NSW Environment Protection Authority, received 13 February 2026, p 8.

444 NSW Environment Protection Authority, *Product stewardship schemes* (16 April 2026), https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/Your-environment/Recycling-and-reuse/warr-strategy/product-stewardship-schemes.

445 United Nations Environment Programme, *Extended Producer Responsibility*, https://www.unep.org/ietc/what-we-do/extended-producer-responsibility.

446 Evidence, Ms Sloan, 15 December 2025, p 2; Evidence, Mr Jeremy Manion, Regional Waste Coordinator, The Parks, Sydney's Parkland Councils, 15 December 2025, p 18; Evidence, Mr Angel, 15 December 2025, pp 42-43.

447 Answers to supplementary questions, Mr Chappel, p 8.

considers repair, recycling and reuse from the point at which products enter the market, through to their end of life. [448]

6.21 Mr Jeff Angel, Director of the Boomerang Alliance and Total Environment Centre, characterised Australia's current circular economy policies as an 'embryonic work in progress', noting that while government had begun addressing significant waste streams and establishing a framework for product stewardship and extended producer responsibility, implementation remained at an early stage. He called for further action to advance a cleaner, more circular economy. [449]

6.22 While stakeholders supported these initiatives, they also called for producer responsibility to be applied more broadly, including through requirements that influence product design. Ms Sloan highlighted the need for greater responsibility across the product supply chain, including stronger obligations on producers and generators to support a circular economy. She argued that this responsibility should extend to how products are designed and placed on the market, noting that Australia currently has limited requirements to ensure products are safe and can be effectively managed at end of life. [450] She said:

> A critical gap in Australia's policy framework is insufficient regulation of what is placed on market. We do need stronger, enforceable requirements to ensure products and materials are safe, recoverable, non-toxic and designed for re-use, recycling or responsible end-of-life treatment. [451]

6.23 The Boomerang Alliance and Total Environment Centre similarly placed product design and resource use at the beginning of the waste hierarchy. They submitted that, under a circular economy approach, waste and pollution should be eliminated by managing products and resources according to their highest resource value and least environmental impact. This includes avoiding unnecessary resource use in manufacturing and designing products so that they can be easily and cost-effectively recovered rather than discarded. They identified a preferred sequence of reduce, reuse, repair, refurbish, remanufacture, repurpose and recycle, in that order. [452]

6.24 This approach was also reflected in the evidence on single-use and reusable products. The Boomerang Alliance and Total Environment Centre submitted that mandatory EPR and government policies to phase out problematic plastics would reduce the need for plastic recycling by avoiding or reducing the use of these products in the first place. They pointed to lightweight plastic bag bans and other single-use plastic phase-outs as examples and identified container

448 Evidence, Mr Chappel, 15 December 2025, pp 62-63.

449 Evidence, Mr Angel, 15 December 2025, pp 40-41.

450 Evidence, Ms Sloan, 15 December 2025, pp 2 and 7.

451 Evidence, Ms Sloan, 15 December 2025, p 2.

452 Submission 95, Boomerang Alliance and Total Environment Centre, pp 1, 4-5.

return schemes as providing good-quality recovered material without requiring chemical processing. [453]

6.25 The Sydney Knitting Nannas and Friends also supported legislated EPR, including meaningful, tracked deposits and refunds to ensure that industry takes back and pays for its waste. They argued that this would support industry to design out manufactured obsolescence and redesign and renormalise zero-waste manufacturing. They described New South Wales's requirement for brand owners to take responsibility for the lifecycle of regulated products, beginning with batteries, as a 'commendable first step' and urged the NSW Government to use this approach as a template for extending producer responsibility to other waste streams. [454]

6.26 MRA Consulting identified a number of additional product items that should be covered by a mandatory extended producer responsibility scheme, in addition to batteries: packaging, tyres, motor vehicles, mattresses, mobile phones, coffee pods, paint, industrial plastic pipes, pallets, plant pots, solar panels, clothing, computers and TVs, food, bulka bags, printer cartridges, household chemicals, soft plastic, chemical drums, fluorescent tubes, healthcare products, furniture, polystyrene, PVC, bikes, oil containers, refrigerant gases, child car seats, vapes and e-cigarettes, and pharmaceuticals. [455]

6.27 The Australia Institute similarly supported EPR schemes that extend producers' responsibilities to the post-consumer stage of a product's lifecycle. It noted that a similar scheme operates in the United Kingdom, applying to businesses with an annual turnover of £1 million or more that are responsible for using 25 tonnes or more of plastic packaging. [456]

6.28 While some stakeholders indicated a preference for federal reform to reduce plastic packaging, this reform has recently been abandoned by the federal government. The federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water has indicated it will work with states and territories on opportunities to improve packaging standards. [457]

6.29 The Australia Institute recommended a tax on virgin (non-recycled) plastic packaging, such as the tax in place in the European Union, and cited data indicating that a clear majority of Australians support regulatory and legislative reforms that would reduce plastic waste beyond what currently exists. [458]

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453 Submission 95, Boomerang Alliance and Total Environment Centre, pp 4-5.

454 Submission 233, Sydney Knitting Nannas and Friends, p 3.

455 Answers to supplementary questions, MRA Consulting, 22 July 2026, p 2

456 Submission 227, The Australia Institute, p 3.

457 Shalailah Medhora, 'Labor quietly shelves promise to mandate more recycled material in packaging', *ABC*, 8 September 2026, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-09-08/labor-broken-promise-on-plastic-recycling/107125916.

458 Submission 227, The Australia Institute, p 3.

Food and garden organics (FOGO)

6.30 The diversion of food organics and garden organics (FOGO) was presented to the committee as an important way to prevent organic material from entering landfill and returning resources to productive use. In March 2025, the NSW Parliament passed legislation requiring FOGO waste to be separately collected from certain businesses from July 2026 and from households from July 2030. These mandates are expected to divert up to 950,000 tonnes of household FOGO waste from landfill each year, with the decomposed organic material used as compost.[459]

6.31 Many stakeholders identified FOGO as an important component of the transition to a circular economy. Mr Chappel, NSW EPA, described household-level separation as a 'very significant intervention', noting the potential to avoid landfill and greenhouse emissions by returning organic material to productive use.[460] Boomerang Alliance and Total Environment Centre submitted that 65-70 per cent of material in red bins could potentially be diverted through best-practice collection of organics and recyclables. They argued that this would significantly reduce residual waste and could make WtE facilities uneconomic and unnecessary, with remaining residual waste addressed through further circular economy measures.[461]

6.32 The Canberra Region Joint Organisation similarly described the work of its member councils to advance a more circular economy, through improved material separation and significant investment in diverting organic waste from landfill through FOGO services.[462] Blacktown City Council advised that its recent introduction of a FOGO service has been 'very well received' by the community.[463]

6.33 Local Government NSW (LGNSW) advised that the FOGO mandate is helping to increase diversion rates and support the transition to a circular economy by enabling materials to be retained and reused for longer. LGNSW nevertheless noted that councils continue to face challenges in meeting NSW's waste diversion targets.[464]

6.34 At the same time, stakeholders highlighted the significant costs associated with implementing FOGO services. Ms Joanna Kubota, Executive Director at The Parks, Sydney's Parkland Councils, described FOGO as 'absolutely admirable, absolutely

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459 NSW Environment Protection Authority, *NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan* (September 2025), https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-09/25p4616-nsw-waste-and-circular-infrastructure-plan.pdf, p 9.

460 Evidence, Mr Chappel, 15 December 2025, p 62.

461 Submission 95, Boomerang Alliance and Total Environment Centre, pp 1-2.

462 Submission 459, Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO), p 3.

463 Evidence, Ms Vanessa Parkes, Director City Living, Blacktown City Council, 4 May 2026, p 7.

464 Answers to questions on notice, Mr David Reynolds, Chief Executive, Local Government NSW (LGNSW), 11 February 2026, p 3.

desirable and worthwhile pursuing' but emphasised that its costs had largely fallen, and would continue to fall, on local government. [465]

6.35 Ms Sharon Houlihan, Canberra Region Joint Organisation, similarly advised the committee:

> There isn't enough funding to properly treat FOGO—to set up the infrastructure, to collect it, to educate the community, to separate, to treat it. To get it to a standard where it's able to be used for anything safely, let alone of a commercially viable nature, is expensive. [466]

6.36 Mr Damian Thomas, Director Advocacy at LGNSW, asserted that councils need government support to offset the full cost of FOGO implementation, particularly given existing budget pressures and the need to minimise costs for communities during the cost-of-living crisis. [467]

Other waste treatment and resource recovery technologies

6.37 Separate to FOGO, the committee heard about a range of other waste treatment and resource recovery technologies that could complement existing waste management processes, recover value from particular waste streams and, in some cases, reduce the need to transport waste over long distances.

6.38 Mr Chappel, NSW EPA, noted that WtE encompasses a broader range of approaches than the thermal, combustion-based processes proposed by Veolia and Parkes Energy Recovery, discussed in Chapter 3. He identified other WtE technologies such as anaerobic digestion and pyrolysis that could play a role in the development of future circular and low-carbon economies in New South Wales, including through the production of renewable fuels, processing of agricultural waste and generation of materials such as biochar. [468]

6.39 Similar evidence was provided by local government and regional stakeholders. LGNSW noted that some councils distinguished between what they regarded as 'outdated' mass-burn incineration technologies and 'newer, cleaner alternatives' such as gasification, pyrolysis, and biochar systems. These technologies were considered by some councils to be more modular, adaptable and suitable for local or regional applications, while avoiding some of the perceived risks and community opposition associated with large-scale combustion facilities. [469]

6.40 The Parks, Sydney's Parkland Councils, likewise supported consideration of technologies such as pyrolysis and gasification alongside larger-scale WtE facilities. It noted that these processes can recover carbon from organic

[465] Evidence, Ms Kubota, 15 December 2025, p 15.

[466] Evidence, Ms Houlihan, 15 May 2026, p 14.

[467] Evidence, Mr Thomas, 15 December 2025, p 49.

[468] Evidence, Mr Chappel, 15 December 2025, p 55.

[469] Submission 221, Local Government NSW, p 7.

waste to create products such as biochar, syngas and bio-oil, with potential applications including aviation fuel production. [470]

6.41 NSW Farmers Association similarly expressed support for what it described as 'safer, more sustainable' waste management options, including improved recycling, composting, anaerobic digestion and resource recovery, which it considered lower-risk approaches that support circular economy objectives. [471]

6.42 The NSW Government advised that WtE proposals such as pyrolysis, gasification and anaerobic digestion can help primary producers reduce waste and emissions while creating value from agricultural and forestry by-products. The NSW EPA's *Climate Change Action Plan* identifies waste-to-energy, including bioenergy, as an underutilised emissions-reduction opportunity in the agricultural sector and supports actions to increase its uptake. [472]

6.43 Not all stakeholders supported these technologies. The Sydney Knitting Nannas and Friends raised concerns that gasification and pyrolysis are characterised as chemical or advanced recycling rather than thermal incineration technologies. They considered these processes potentially hazardous to human health and inconsistent with circular economy principles, arguing that they may perpetuate a linear waste model. [473]

Strengthening waste management across New South Wales

6.44 Evidence about alternatives to landfill and WtE was accompanied by broader concerns about whether the current waste management system is capable of planning for and delivering the infrastructure New South Wales will require.

6.45 As discussed in Chapter 4, local government plays a central role in waste management. Ms Kubota emphasised that waste management is a core local government responsibility, noting that councils 'are the only body legislated to handle waste, to take care of the waste'. [474]

6.46 However, inquiry participants described the current policy framework governing waste management as fragmented, siloed and ambiguous. [475] LGNSW argued that fragmentation across ministerial portfolios 'limits the state's ability to deliver an integrated, circular resource recovery system'. [476] Witnesses considered that this

[470] Submission 261, The Parks – Sydney's Parkland Councils, p 3.

[471] Submission 174, NSW Farmers Association, p 4.

[472] Submission 377, NSW Government, p 16.

[473] submission 233, Sydney Knitting Nannas and Friends, pp 1-2.

[474] Evidence, Ms Kubota, 15 December 2025, p 15.

[475] Submission 148, Hornsby Shire Council, pp 1, 3 and 8; Submission 221, Local Government NSW, p 12.

[476] Submission 221, Local Government NSW, p 12.

has increased the responsibility and pressure on local governments to manage waste without sufficient coordination or strategic planning.

6.47 This concern was also reflected in evidence from Ms Kubota, who observed that the shift towards a circular economy and expansion of waste programs had not been matched by corresponding changes to the State Government's governance structures or clarity about responsibility for managing them. [477]

6.48 Mr Chris Horsey, Manager Waste Management, Hornsby Shire Council, argued that inadequate strategic planning over the past 25 years had contributed to the current waste infrastructure challenge:

> Over the past 25 years there's really been inadequate strategic and government-led planning on waste infrastructure, which is now causing a waste infrastructure crisis. There's no responsible agency within government organisations for strategic planning of waste and the delivery of waste infrastructure. Local councils alone or regions of councils under joint procurements will not deliver the required waste infrastructure that a city of five million people requires. [478]

6.49 Mr Mike Ritchie, MRA Consulting, similarly argued that the NSW EPA is constrained in its policymaking role because it is required to perform both regulatory and policy functions. He stated that the NSW EPA had been inadequate in planning for future waste infrastructure over the past 20 years. Mr Ritchie argued that government should take a more active and strategic role in waste infrastructure planning, as it does for other major infrastructure such as hospitals, schools and roads. [479]

6.50 Inquiry participants also reported that councils were facing significant financial and operational pressures. They attributed these difficulties to increased waste generation, diminishing landfill capacity, reduced markets for recycled waste and limited funding availability. [480] In response to these concerns, stakeholders called for the New South Wales Government to appropriately fund local governments to manage waste. [481] This included calls to reallocate more of the waste levy back into local councils for the development of critical waste infrastructure. [482]

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[477] Evidence, Ms Kubota, 15 December 2025, p 17.

[478] Evidence, Mr Chris Horsey, Manager Waste Management, Hornsby Shire Council, 4 May 2026, p 2.

[479] Evidence, Mr Mike Ritchie, Managing Director, MRA Consulting, 1 July 2026, p 8.

[480] Evidence, Ms Kubota, 15 December 2025, p 15; Evidence, Councillor Khal Asfour, Vice President (Metropolitan/Urban), Local Government NSW, 15 December 2025, p 48.

[481] Evidence, Mr Manion, 15 December 2025, p 16; Evidence, Mr Horsey, 4 May 2026, pp 4-5.

[482] Submission 148, Hornsby Shire Council, p 9; Submission 221, Local Government NSW (LGNSW), p 10; Evidence, Ms Parkes, 4 May 2026, p 5; Evidence, Councillor Asfour, 15 December 2025, pp 49-50; Evidence, Mr Steve Fedorow, Director Community and Environment, Hornsby Shire Council, 4 May 2026, p 5; Evidence, Mr Tim Askew, Director

6.51 Some stakeholders also supported establishing a central body with responsibility for coordinating waste infrastructure and strategic planning across New South Wales. While Mr Horsey did not advocate returning to the former Waste Services NSW model, he argued that a new coordinating body could identify infrastructure needs, determine appropriate locations for facilities such as landfills and WtE plants, and drive their delivery:

> I'm not advocating that we return to that particular model. I think it's time to re-evaluate and think what a new model might look like... That agency could do all of the strategic planning for what infrastructure is needed where. Where can we strategically locate that in the right parts of Sydney. Where do we locate landfills or energy from waste facilities? An agency that can be tasked with getting that done is critical because of the time frame we have left. [483]

Committee comment

6.52 The committee acknowledges the broad agreement throughout the inquiry that New South Wales cannot solve its waste challenge through any single waste treatment option alone. While stakeholders expressed differing views about the ultimate role of waste-to-energy, there was widespread recognition that New South Wales needs an integrated waste management system that prioritises waste avoidance, reuse, repair, recycling and resource recovery, while providing appropriate options for unavoidable residual waste.

6.53 The committee strongly supports the transition to a circular economy as the overarching direction for waste management in New South Wales. This requires greater attention to the start of a product's lifecycle, including how it is designed, manufactured and placed on the market, and how responsibility for its impacts is shared between producers and waste generators. Waste-to-energy may have a role in managing unavoidable residual waste but should not displace investment in higher-order waste management measures or become a substitute for preventing waste and improving material recovery in the first place.

Finding 32

Greater focus is needed at the start of a product's lifecycle, rather than solely at the end of the waste stream. Stronger upstream regulation and shared responsibility between producers and waste generators are essential to encourage better product design and improve material recovery.

of Programs, Hunter Joint Organisation, 4 May 2026, p 12; Evidence, Ms Houlihan, 15 May 2026, p 9; Evidence, Councillor Jasmin Jones, Mayor, Yass Valley Council, 15 May 2026, p 20; Evidence, Mr Ritchie, 1 July 2026, p 12.

[483] Evidence, Mr Horsey, 1 July 2026, p 4.

6.54 The committee considers that significantly greater investment is required across the upper tiers of the waste hierarchy, including in waste reduction, source separation and collection systems, advanced recycling infrastructure and product stewardship. While initiatives such as the container deposit scheme and the *Product Lifecycle Responsibility Act 2025* are welcome, further upstream action is needed through extended producer responsibility, right-to-repair requirements, sustainable product design standards and restrictions on hazardous materials. Adequate funding for the food organics and garden organics (FOGO) mandate is also necessary to improve resource recovery without placing an unreasonable burden on councils and communities.

6.55 Given the federal government's abandonment of plastic packaging reform, and public support for additional measures to reduce plastic waste beyond what currently exists, the committee recommends that the NSW Government consider the most effective ways to disincentivise non-recycled plastic packaging.

Recommendation 17

That, in addition to the measures proposed by the Plastic Reduction and Container Recycling Bill 2026, the NSW Government consider the most effective ways to disincentivise non-recycled plastic packaging.

6.56 On the issue of FOGO, diverting organic waste from landfill is a particularly important component of this transition. The expansion of this type of waste collection offers a significant opportunity to recover resources and reduce residual waste. But this transition comes at a cost. Councils are being asked to establish new collection systems, secure treatment capacity and educate their communities, often while already facing significant financial pressures. The committee recognises the financial pressure this places on local government and considers that the costs of implementing these reforms should be appropriately supported by the NSW Government. The committee also considers that targeted funding for initiatives such as Bega Valley's work processing waste in the building and construction industry could help reduce waste and advance circular economy outcomes.

Finding 33

Significantly greater investment is needed across the upper tiers of the waste hierarchy, particularly in waste reduction, improved source separation and collection systems, advanced recycling infrastructure, and product stewardship.

Finding 34

Targeted grants could help councils, businesses and industry establish local waste recovery capabilities, enabling materials to be captured, processed and reused onsite rather than sent to landfill.

Recommendation 18

That the NSW Government strengthen upstream product stewardship measures to help reduce residual waste, including through extended producer responsibility, right-to-repair requirements, sustainable product design standards, restrictions on hazardous materials, and enhanced funding for the food organics and garden organics (FOGO) mandate.

Finding 35

Local governments are facing increasing financial and operational pressures across their waste management responsibilities, with mandated requirements such as FOGO placing additional cost pressures on councils.

6.57 The committee also recognises that there is no single technological answer to every waste stream. Other waste treatment and resource recovery technologies, including anaerobic digestion, pyrolysis and gasification, have a potential role where they are demonstrated to be safe, effective and consistent with the principles of a circular economy, particularly as evidence indicates that some councils view these technologies more favourably than combustion facilities. We support an evidence-based, technology-neutral approach to waste management that considers the characteristics of different waste streams, demonstrated performance, environmental and health safeguards, resource recovery outcomes and the broader objectives of a circular economy.

Finding 36

Diversification of waste treatment technologies, such as anaerobic digestion, pyrolysis, and gasification, has the potential to play an important role in managing specific waste streams.

Finding 37

Some councils favour technologies such as gasification, pyrolysis and biochar over mass-burn incineration, viewing them as more modular and suitable for local or regional applications, with fewer associated risks and community concerns.

6.58 We consider that, if waste-to-energy is to form part of New South Wales' waste management system, its role must be clearly limited to managing genuinely residual waste that cannot reasonably be avoided, reused, recycled or otherwise recovered. However, waste-to-energy appears to be receiving greater emphasis than other, higher-order waste management options. Waste-to-energy facilities should not create demand for recyclable materials or reduce incentives to invest in waste avoidance, source separation and resource recovery. Clear and enforceable requirements governing eligible feedstock are therefore needed to ensure that only genuinely residual waste is processed and that energy recovery complements, rather than displaces, recycling.

6.59 This safeguard is particularly important given the long operational lives of such facilities. Such long-term commitments create an ongoing need for feedstock, which could place pressure on the waste management system to maintain sufficient volumes of waste over the life of the facility. The committee therefore considers that these longer-term effects should be independently reviewed, including whether waste-to-energy technologies support or impede the achievement of recycling targets and the transition to a circular economy.

Finding 38

Despite the objectives of the legislated waste hierarchy, and in the absence of a completed NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan, the NSW Government is prioritising waste-to-energy technology ahead of other waste management alternatives, with regional areas disproportionately affected by this approach.

Finding 39

Waste-to-energy facilities have operational lifespans of 25–30 years, while Parkes Energy Recovery is seeking a 40-year lease. The reliance of these facilities on ongoing waste feedstock has the potential to undermine circular economy goals and initiatives.

Recommendation 19

That, where waste-to-energy facilities are proposed, the NSW Government ensure they process only genuinely residual waste, so that waste-to-energy complements rather than displaces recycling.

Recommendation 20

That the NSW Government undertake an independent review of the long-term impact of waste-to-energy technologies on recycling.

6.60 At the moment, it is clear that significant structural problems stand in the way of this transition. The committee is concerned by evidence that waste management in New South Wales lacks sufficient strategic coordination, long-term planning and resourcing. Local councils play a central role in waste management but cannot reasonably be expected to deliver the infrastructure required to address statewide waste challenges without stronger government coordination and support.

6.61 In the committee's view, NSW Government leadership should address these challenges. This should include clear responsibility for statewide strategic planning, better coordination across government, appropriate funding support for councils and a coordinated approach to identifying, planning and delivering the infrastructure required to manage New South Wales's waste.

Finding 40

Strategic waste management and infrastructure planning in New South Wales remains under-resourced and fragmented, with no single agency responsible for comprehensive oversight and coordinated delivery of waste facilities, infrastructure and services across the state.

Recommendation 21

That the NSW Government establish a dedicated agency with clear responsibility for the strategic planning, coordination and oversight of waste management services and infrastructure across New South Wales and establish an independent community advocate body to represent community interests in waste management decision-making.

6.62 We also consider that further decisions about waste-to-energy should be informed by a complete and publicly available strategic framework for waste and circular infrastructure in New South Wales. The NSW Waste and Circular

Infrastructure Plan should provide clear timelines, funding pathways and decision-making arrangements, together with a credible and measurable pathway for achieving the State's 2030 resource recovery target.

Recommendation 22

That the NSW Government finalise and publish the NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan, setting out clear timelines, funding pathways and decision-making frameworks, before further consideration of waste-to-energy proposals. The Plan should also include a credible, transparent and measurable pathway to achieving the NSW Government's target of an 80 per cent average resource recovery rate by 2030.

6.63 New South Wales needs a long-term waste strategy that looks beyond the next facility, the next landfill deadline or the next immediate crisis. It should set a clear path to reducing waste, increasing resource recovery and ensuring sufficient residual waste capacity. Such a strategy would provide greater certainty for communities, councils and industry and help ensure that decisions made today do not simply shift the burden of waste onto future generations.

Appendix 1 Submissions

No.	Author
1	No Incinerator for Western Sydney (NIWS)
2	Cooks Myalls Pastoral Company
3	Name suppressed
4	Mr Barry Allen
5	Mr Rodney Currey
6	Name suppressed
7	Mr Bill Dobbie
8	Name suppressed
9	Mrs Sharon Woods
10	Name suppressed
11	Name suppressed
12	Mr Alexander Abbey
13	Name suppressed
14	Name suppressed
15	Mr Brandon Woods
16	Mr Jack Woods
17	Mr Les Johnston
18	Name suppressed
19	Mr Peter Carroll
20	Mrs Judy Conroy
21	Miss Tessa Morrissey
22	Name suppressed
23	Mrs Margaret Somers
24	Mr Graeme Somers
25	Mr Ben Stead
26	Name suppressed
27	Mrs Andrea Lovell
28	Name suppressed
29	Name suppressed
30	Name suppressed
31	Mrs May Woods

No.	Author
32	Mr Martin Canteros Paz
33	Donut Waste
34	Mr David O'Malley-Powter
35	Name suppressed
36	Mrs Wendy Anderson
37	Mr Ian Anderson
38	Ms Michelle Ross
39	Mrs Kerrie Plummer
40	Mr Peter Webb
41	Name suppressed
42	Name suppressed
43	Mr Jeffery Powter
44	Name suppressed
45	Name suppressed
46	Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
47	Ms Karley Ward
48	Mr Joshua Vanderstok
49	Name suppressed
50	Name suppressed
51	Name suppressed
52	Name suppressed
53	Confidential
54	Name suppressed
55	Mr Anthony Riordan
56	Mrs Maria Harrison
57	Ms Sharron James
58	Mrs Anna Green
59	Mrs Sally Creamer
60	Mr Peter Green
61	Name suppressed
62	Mrs Ashlee Browning
63	Name suppressed
64	Name suppressed
65	Mrs Lynn Hando
66	Mrs Leanne Hurst

No.	Author
67	Mr Graeme Hando
68	Name suppressed
69	Name suppressed
70	Name suppressed
71	Name suppressed
72	Mrs Lisa Dodgson
73	Mr Mathew Dodgson
74	Mrs Shirilee Jackson
75	Mrs Carly Hando
76	Mr Torin Hando
77	Mr George Wright
78	Mr Jake Green
79	Mr Scott Green
80	Miss Breanna Green
81	Mrs Ann-Louise Stonestreet
82	Mr Anthony Stonestreet
83	Name suppressed
84	Mrs Rhiannon Guess
85	Name suppressed
86	Miss Elise Amery
87	No More Incinerators Inc
88	Mrs Valerie Kelly
89	Name suppressed
90	Shooters Fishers & Farmers Party - Goulburn Branch
91	Gundarimbah Merino and Poll Merino Stud
92	Cooks Myalls Landcare Group Inc
93	MidCoast Council
94	Exergy Technologies
95	Boomerang Alliance and Total Environment Centre
96	The Hills Shire Council
97	Mrs Rachael Magill
98	Ms Lucy Best
99	Mrs Janine Hando
100	Confidential
101	Name suppressed

No.	Author
102	Miss Heather Davis
103	Name suppressed
104	Carolyn Keep
105	Mr David MacGregor
106	Mr Barry Woods
107	Mr Jason Thomson
108	Mrs Rhonda Milgate
109	Mr Tony Milgate
110	Name suppressed
111	Mrs Shirley Michalk
112	Name suppressed
113	Mr Ray Knights
114	Mrs Raelene Knights
115	Miss Jesse Woods
116	Mrs Denise Baxter
117	Mr Alan Cracknell
118	Mr Brad Davies
119	Mrs Yasmin Davies
120	Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia
121	Miss Tiarni Cohen
122	Mrs Sandra Blakemore
123	Waste Circology
124	Name suppressed
125	Ken Walton
126	Name suppressed
126a	Name suppressed
127	Mr Andrew Hurst
128	Mr Jeff Page
129	Name suppressed
130	Name suppressed
131	Mrs Holly Orr
132	Name suppressed
133	Confidential
134	Parkes Shire Council
135	Name suppressed

No.	Author
136	Name suppressed
137	Name suppressed
138	Name suppressed
139	Mr Warwick Littlewood
140	Ms Ellie Littlewood
141	Ms Kim Paul
142	Mrs Karel Littlewood
143	Mr Garry O'Brien
144	Mr Geoffrey Robinson
145	Mrs Ioanna Mavrigiannakis
146	Name suppressed
147	Name suppressed
148	Hornsby Shire Council
149	Anglican Diocese of Newcastle
150	Buckwheat Enterprises Pty Ltd
151	Field Farming Co Pty Ltd
152	Wagga Wagga City Council
153	City of Gold Coast
154	Townsend Ag
155	Member for Eden-Monaro, The Hon Kristy McBain
156	Parkes Wiradjuri Language Group Inc.
157	Ms Michelle Hourigan
158	Mr Jeromie Fitzpatrick
159	Mrs Kathryn Levy
160	Lithgow Environment Group Inc.
161	ALP Goulburn NSW Branch
162	Somerton Pastoral Co
163	Name suppressed
164	Mr Colin & Cheryl Boehm
165	Name suppressed
166	Mrs Janelle Bond
167	Mrs Sharyn Glasheen
168	Name suppressed
169	Mrs Caitlin Webb
170	Mrs Heidi Field

No.	Author
171	Mr Alistair Carwardine
172	Name suppressed
173	Name suppressed
174	NSW Farmers Association
175	ACT Greens
176	Foothills Mechanical & Contracting
177	Parkes Aboriginal Working Party
178	NSW Farmers Association - Goulburn Branch
179	Teddy Goose & Co
180	Mr Garry Paddison
181	Cr Ross Macdonald
182	Peak Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council
183	Winton Park Pastoral
184	Mrs Juanita Coleman
185	Parkes Christian School
186	Mrs Jennifer O'Brien
187	Mr Walter Biles
188	Mrs Bethany Schofield Tomanbil
189	Goulburn Mulwaree Council
190	City of Sydney
191	Mr RJ Sharpe
192	Lachlan Shire Council
193	Yass Valley Council
194	Mrs Bernadette Binnie
195	Confidential
196	Name suppressed
197	NSW Farmers Association - Peak Hill Branch
198	Bathurst Community Climate Action Network (BCCAN)
199	Parkes Country Women's Association
200	Mr Mitchell Townsend
201	Mr Timothy F O'Brien
202	Mr Todd Pearce
203	Mr Ian Corcoran
204	Cr Douglas Pout
205	Patricia Simpson

No.	Author
206	Mrs Carmel Johnston
207	Mrs Julie Campbell
208	Ms Nicole Blinco
209	Mrs Belinda Moxey
210	Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn
211	Confidential
212	Mr Dylan Pearce
213	Mr Dusty Powter
214	Condobolin Local Aboriginal Land Council
215	Mrs Samantha Walton
216	Blacktown City Council
217	Peak Hill Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee
218	Parkes Clean Future Alliance
219	Name suppressed
220	Warren Shire Council
221	Local Government NSW (LGNSW)
222	Mrs Margaret Cameron
223	Environmental Risk Sciences Pty Ltd (enRiskS)
224	Veolia Australia and New Zealand
225	Bioenergy Australia
226	Milpose Pastoral Co
227	The Australia Institute
228	Parkes Energy Recovery
229	The Vintner's Daughter Winery
230	Confidential
231	My Macaron
232	Long Water Agricultural Association
233	Sydney Knitting Nannas and Friends
234	Communities Against the Tarago Incinerator (CATTI) Inc.
235	Confidential
236	Hunter Joint Organisation
237	Leighton Pastoral Co
238	Name suppressed
239	Name suppressed
240	Kerin Farms

No.	Author
241	Residents Against the Richmond Valley Incinerator Inc
242	Windsong Wiltshires
243	SEATA Holdings Pty Ltd
244	Overland Merino & Poll Merino Stud
245	Kanadevia Inova Australia Pty Ltd
246	Name suppressed
246a	Name suppressed
247	Andell Ag.
248	Clarence Valley Conservation Coalition Inc
249	Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC)
250	Reverend Paul Davey
251	Mr Thomas Roydhouse
252	Mr Arthur Wright
253	Ms Charlica Schnitger
254	Mrs Marilyn Roffe
255	Mr Scott Bicket
256	Sheree and Tim Chellas
257	Name suppressed
258	Name suppressed
259	Dr Ali El Hanandeh
260	Mrs Becky Wykes
261	The Parks - Sydney's Parkland Councils
262	Central West Fluid Power Pty Ltd
263	Wright Farming
264	Agri-Farmacy Pty Ltd
265	BlueGas Technologies Pty Ltd
266	Name suppressed
267	Boonah Organisation for a Sustainable Shire
268	Name suppressed
269	Confidential
270	Confidential
271	Toxics Free Australia
271a	Toxics Free Australia
272	Miss Hannah Webb
273	Mrs Laura Masterton

No.	Author
274	Mrs Tanya Wright
275	Mrs Julie Brown
276	Mrs Paige Davis
277	Confidential
278	Miss Narella McKellar
279	Miss Taliah Read
280	Miss Lorraine Dargan
281	Helen Lee
282	Cr Joy Paddison
283	Mr Christopher Kloster
284	Mr Michael O'Malley
285	Mrs Helen Dumbrell
286	Mr Geoff Smith
287	Dr Patricia McVeagh
288	Country Women's Association of NSW (CWA)
289	Mrs Leah Douglas
290	Miss Carmela Limen
291	Warren Matthews
292	Ms Kay Newbigging
293	Ms Sheila Riley
294	Mrs Judith Barter
295	Ms Susanne Schneider
296	Miss Shalee Hoe
297	Mrs Amanda Butler
298	Mrs Dianne Brooke
299	Mrs Catherine Angrave
300	Ms Debra Fay
301	Miss Molly Wright
302	Margaret Sewell
303	John Sanderson
304	Mr Jacob Cass
305	Mrs Wendy Rix
306	Mr Warren Godfrey
307	Ms Lynette Shone
308	Mr Steven Witherow

No.	Author
309	Mr Mark Carter
310	Mrs Alison Dowton
311	Miss Lara Piercy
312	Mr Brayden Quigg
313	Mrs Sarah Hartin
314	Mr Brenton Hartin
315	Ms Melissa Ashcroft
316	Mr Michael Carty
317	Mr Philip Standen
318	Mr Greg Wright
319	Miss Makayla Sloane
320	Miss Jada Read
321	Name suppressed
322	Mr Laurience Ashcroft
323	Mrs Jacquelyn Greenland
324	Karen & Andrew Cruickshank
325	Ms Diane Littlewood
326	Miss Nicole Littlewood
327	Mrs Audrey Littlewood
328	Cathy Littlewood
329	Mr Mathew Skulander
330	Mr Chris Clark
331	Mrs Fiona Sue
332	Mr Mekai Skinner
333	Miss Lyn Kennedy
334	Ms Karen Ross
335	Mr Russell Bicket
336	Mrs Merren Davey
337	Mrs Lisa Bicket
338	Ms Jane Creith
339	Mrs Rajpreet Kaur
340	Mr Michel Kazzi
341	Name suppressed
342	Mrs Wendy Nelson
343	Mr David Rogan

No.	Author
344	Mr Timothy R O'Brien
345	Mrs Emma Baker
346	Ms Robyn Favelle
347	Mr Lloyd Nock
348	Mr Andrew McIntyre
349	Name suppressed
350	Mrs Jody Gorton
351	Mrs Courtney Westcott
352	Mr Warwick Robinson
353	Mr Jonathan Lewis
354	Mr Blake Thompson
355	Ms Vicki Barry
356	Confidential
357	Name suppressed
358	Confidential
359	Name suppressed
360	Name suppressed
361	Name suppressed
362	Waste Contractors and Recyclers Association of NSW (WCRA)
363	Name suppressed
364	Mrs Janet Callaghan
365	Mr Bruce Maynard
366	Mr Chris Francis
367	Name suppressed
368	Name suppressed
369	Mrs Emily Gersbach
370	Name suppressed
371	Mr Greg Turner
372	Name suppressed
373	Name suppressed
374	Name suppressed
375	Mrs Susan Gersbach
376	Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA)
377	NSW Government
378	Mr Blake Tremain Cannon

No.	Author
379	Mrs Patricia Allen
380	Name suppressed
381	Mr David McGirr
382	Sarah Badman
383	Mr Byrne Harris
384	Name suppressed
385	Name suppressed
386	Name suppressed
387	Mr Jamie Ingram
388	Name suppressed
389	Name suppressed
390	Name suppressed
391	Mr Patrick Roohan
392	Confidential
393	Name suppressed
394	Name suppressed
395	Miss Bethany Magill
396	Name suppressed
397	Mrs Jennifer Cotter
398	Mr Greg Neems
399	Mrs Mary Burke
400	Miss Sarah Townsend
401	Mr Andrew Townsend
402	Miss Chloe Pemberton
403	Miss Jodie Hando
404	Mrs Annette Scherer
405	Name suppressed
406	Name suppressed
407	Mrs Alice Orr
408	Mr Nicholas Peacey
409	Miss Alexandra Power
410	Ms Kaye Henderson
411	Name suppressed
412	Mrs Casey Miles
413	Name suppressed

No.	Author
414	Name suppressed
415	Name suppressed
416	Name suppressed
417	Mrs Rachelle Trudgett
418	Mr Seth Pearce
419	Name suppressed
420	Xseed Solutions
421	Dr Peter McCullagh
422	Simon & Felicity Reynolds
423	Mrs Michelle Mulhuish
424	Mr Daniel McGirr
425	Mrs Catherine Hunt
426	Mr Anthony Gardner
427	Member for Goulburn, The Hon Wendy Tuckerman
428	Member for Orange, Mr Philip Donato
429	Mrs Rosalind Bell
430	Mrs Karen Thompson
431	Stephen Lesslie
432	Mrs Helen Clark
433	Mr Adam Hewes
434	Mrs Lisa Fisher
435	Mr Darren Fisher
436	Mrs Stephanie Whitwham
437	Miss Jacinta Robinson
438	Mrs Louise Robinson
439	Danielle Marsden-Ballard
440	Mr Tony Wright
441	Confidential
442	Name suppressed
443	Name suppressed
444	Name suppressed
445	Name suppressed
446	Ms Gemma Trevorrow
447	Name suppressed
448	Mr David Littlewood

No.	Author
449	Name suppressed
450	Name suppressed
451	Name suppressed
452	Name suppressed
453	Mrs Laura Rahmann
454	Mrs Lorraine Everest
455	Confidential
456	Confidential
457	Ms Lenka Uvirova
458	Name suppressed
459	Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO)
460	Mr Ian Wiskin
461	Mrs Pamela Neale
462	Name suppressed
463	Mr Bernard Dwyer
464	Mr Zane Pearce
465	Mrs Nina Dillon
465a	Mrs Nina Dillon
466	Miss Angel Pearce
467	Mr Hayden Carroll
468	Miss Heidi Pearce
469	Mrs Jill Lees
470	Mr Laurence Magill
471	Mrs Michelle Lensson
472	Mr Maurice Davey
473	Mr John Gorton
474	Mrs Yvonne Howarth
475	Mrs Rosemary Leighton
476	Mrs Ashley Peters
477	Name suppressed
478	Mr Geoff George
479	Keelah Lam
480	Sandra Denise Blakemore
481	Ms Lisa Martin
482	Mrs Rae Miller

No.	Author
483	Mr Troy Miller
484	Mr Derek Kelly
485	Mr Andrew Wright
486	Mrs Mary Kelly
487	Mr Darrin Gibson
488	Name suppressed
489	Name suppressed
490	Mr Thomas Corcoran
491	Name suppressed
492	Mr David Scopelitti-Smith
493	Miss Karama Smith
494	Ms Sandra Smith
495	Ms Isabel Goolagong
496	Mr Coriy Scopelitti-Smith
497	Name suppressed
498	Name suppressed
499	Mr Geoffrey Anderson
500	Ms Glenys Moore
501	Ms Leisa Porter
502	Christopher & Neralie Cole
503	Mr Reece Low
504	Cr Jason Shepherd
505	Mrs Catherine McHugh-Douglas
506	Mrs Jenna Field
507	Bradley Field
508	Mr Robert Thompson
509	Ms Natalie Smith
510	Mrs Amber Jordan
511	Name suppressed
512	Confidential
513	Name suppressed
514	Name suppressed
515	Name suppressed
516	Name suppressed
517	Ms Caron Chester

No.	Author
518	Ms Alexander Rogers
519	Confidential
520	Name suppressed
521	Miss Phillipa Allen
522	Confidential
523	Mr Jeffrey Westcott
524	Mr Thomas Sargeant
525	Ms Caroline Marsh
526	Mr David Elward
527	Ms Ronda Sharpe
528	Sally Capell
529	Ms Tania Townsend
530	Mrs Samantha Peters
531	Cr Daniel Strickland
532	Mr Bernard Martin
533	Mr Peter Barber
534	Mr Michael Prevedello
535	Confidential
536	Confidential
537	Name suppressed
538	Name suppressed
539	Name suppressed
540	Ms Rebecca Wilson
541	Amie Nelson
542	Gail Matthews
543	Paul Matthews
544	Annie Mooy
545	Mrs Kelley Westcott
546	Name suppressed
547	Name suppressed
548	Name suppressed
549	Mrs Gail Hando
550	Name suppressed
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No.	Author
553	Name suppressed
554	Confidential
555	Name suppressed
556	Ms Belinda Green
557	Name suppressed
558	Confidential
559	Mrs Debbie Bruce
560	Ms Karryn Schaefer
561	Mr Milenko Seserko
562	Mr Andrew Martin
563	Mrs Denise Gersbach
564	Name suppressed
565	Confidential
566	Mr Robert Cheney
567	Mrs Julie Haynes
568	Katie Leary
569	Aleta & Adam Pay
570	Mrs Joanne Van Unen
571	Mr Rod Thiele
572	Mr Michael Doran
573	O.C.O Technology Australia Pty Ltd
574	Mrs Judi Unger
575	Mr Colin Cartwright
576	Ms Judy Bell
577	Mr Ben Moldrich
578	Mrs Lindy Anderson
579	Mr David Allan
580	Mr Jeff Randell
581	Mrs Helen Campbell
582	Barbara Lewis
583	Mrs Nicole Allen
584	Mr Ian McCormack
585	Mrs Christine Stephens
586	Name suppressed
587	Ms Erica Green

No.	Author
588	Mr Anthony Magill
589	Mrs Alison Magill
590	Mrs Heather Lethbridge
591	Mrs Julie Hetherington
592	Ms Anne Mulligan
593	Ms Karen Jolly
594	Mr Anthony Mrak
595	Mr Mark Davis
596	Mr Christopher Auld
597	Mr James Innes
598	Mrs Melissa Ingram
599	Mr John Taylor
600	Name suppressed
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602	Name suppressed
603	Name suppressed
604	Confidential
605	Miss Tameika Fishlock
606	Confidential
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608	Name suppressed
609	Name suppressed
610	Name suppressed
611	Mrs Karen White
612	Name suppressed
613	Mrs Gail Davies
614	Name suppressed
615	Confidential
616	Name suppressed
617	Name suppressed
618	Name suppressed
619	Confidential
620	EMCrfi Consultancy
621	Mrs Melissa Norman
622	Mr John O'Brien

No.	Author
623	Mr David Richings
624	Ms Kelly McGirr
625	Mr Matthew Ford
626	Mrs Jaclyn Unger
627	Mr Daryl Drew
628	Miss Katie Cheney
629	Mr Nathan Townsend
630	Name suppressed
631	Name suppressed
632	Name suppressed
633	Name suppressed
634	Name suppressed
635	Confidential
636	Name suppressed
637	Name suppressed
638	Confidential
639	Name suppressed
640	Mrs Erin Seserko
641	Mr Matthew Gersbach
642	Mrs Kim Hoe
643	Mr Aaron Kelly
644	Name suppressed
645	Ms Angela Cibiras
646	Ms Cathy Gill
647	Mr Rick Gordon
648	Jean & Gerard Houweling
649	Name suppressed
650	Name suppressed
651	Mr Matthew Scherer
652	Name suppressed
653	Name suppressed
654	Name suppressed
655	Mr Shane Ward
656	Mr Michael Pilbrow
657	Name suppressed

No.	Author
658	Mrs Linda Tanswell
659	Viticultural Society of the Canberra District Inc. (VSCD)
660	Mr Terence Dunn
661	Mr Howard Orr
662	Mrs Josephine Beverley
663	Mrs Leanne Potts
664	Miss Bethany Davey
665	No Waste Incinerators in Lara & Greater Geelong Inc.
666	Colin Carpenter
667	Mr Michael Beverley
668	Mrs Alisa Carpenter
669	Mr Erik Lensson
670	Jesse & Chelsea Magill
671	Mr Luke Magill
672	Mrs Judy Cunningham
673	Mrs Suzanne Powrie
674	Mr Luke Cusack
675	Ms Helen Gray
676	Mr Shane Trudgett
677	William Mayo
678	Name suppressed
679	Name suppressed
680	Name suppressed
681	Name suppressed
682	Mr Brett Hartin
683	Ms Meave Ramsay
684	Name suppressed
685	Raymond & Roslyn Neilsen
686	Mrs Kristine Nock
687	Mrs Sue Townsend
688	Mrs Tasha Allen
689	Miss Brooke Hanstock
690	Mrs Elizabeth Thomas
691	Mr Stanley Townsend
692	Mrs Semeatria Hubbard

No.	Author
693	Miss Karen Sharpe
694	Mrs Tina Morrison Turner
695	Ms Hazel Squires
696	Mrs Stacey Townsend
697	Mrs Karen Baron
698	Miss Amelia Tanswell
699	Graeme & Cathy Ostini
700	Mr Antony Melhuish
701	Ms Julie Jackson
702	Name suppressed
703	Name suppressed
704	Blue Mountains Permaculture Institute
705	Name suppressed
706	Name suppressed
707	Mrs Ronda Hewes
708	Name suppressed
709	Mr David Ward
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713	Name suppressed
714	Mrs Kylie Ellis
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716	Mr Tom Orr
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718	Name suppressed
719	Name suppressed
720	Mr Thomas Martin
721	Mr Craig Tasnwell
722	Name suppressed
723	Mr Charles Attard
724	Name suppressed
725	Mrs Rebecca Cowie
726	Name suppressed
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No.	Author
728	Mr Peter Lees
729	Miss Savannah Ross
730	Name suppressed
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740	Miss Gemma Yeo
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750	Mr Ryan Evans
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752	Name suppressed
753	Mr Graham Lancaster
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783	Confidential
784	Mr Allan Christie
785	Name suppressed
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792	Name suppressed
793	Name suppressed
794	Mrs Katie Collins
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796	Name suppressed
797	Confidential

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798	Name suppressed
799	Name suppressed
800	Name suppressed
801	Mrs Katie Kerin
802	Name suppressed
803	Name suppressed
804	Name suppressed
805	Name suppressed
806	Confidential
807	Mr Frazer Miller
808	Name suppressed
809	Miss Libby Pepper
810	Name suppressed
811	Mr Jacob Unger
812	Mr Shane Geisler
813	Name suppressed
814	Name suppressed
815	Mrs Brooke Thornton
816	Confidential
817	Miss Pam Cole
818	Ms Sally May
819	Rev Roger Lewis
820	Name suppressed
821	Miss Hannah Tanswell
822	Name suppressed
823	Name suppressed
824	Name suppressed
825	Name suppressed
826	Mr Billy Joe Kennaugh
827	Confidential
828	Ms Jessica Klein
829	Miss Rani Ross
830	Name suppressed
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No.	Author
833	Name suppressed
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865	Katherine Bailey
866	Name suppressed
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No.	Author
868	Name suppressed
869	Name suppressed
870	Name suppressed
871	Name suppressed
872	Name suppressed
873	Mr Brandon Tago
874	Name suppressed
875	Mrs Judith Magill
876	Mrs Jenny Yule
877	Name suppressed
878	Confidential
879	Miss Angela Coceancic
880	Miss Bridie Lacey
881	Susan & David Stenson
882	Name suppressed
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887	Name suppressed
888	Mary Fox
889	Mrs Carrie Cusack
890	Name suppressed
891	Mr Ben McGirr
892	Mr Geoff Unger
893	Ms Julie Green
894	Name suppressed
895	Name suppressed
896	Name suppressed
897	Miss Gloria Brown
898	Name suppressed
899	Name suppressed
900	Mrs Mel Kiel
901	Name suppressed
902	Name suppressed

No.	Author
903	Mr John Lyttle
904	Mr Stan Moore
905	Name suppressed
906	Name suppressed
907	Mr Michael McCrae
908	Ms Megan Donnelley
909	Name suppressed
910	Name suppressed
911	Mr David Bland
912	Name suppressed
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920	Name suppressed
921	Martin Bates
922	Mrs Emma Brown
923	Mrs Isabelle Cowle
924	Ms Nicole Thompson
925	Name suppressed
926	Name suppressed
927	Mr Paul Azize
928	Ms Gina Richardson
929	Mr Albert Wykes
930	Name suppressed
931	Mrs Shirley Wright
932	Name suppressed
933	Name suppressed
934	Name suppressed
935	Name suppressed
936	Mr Ian Cowle
937	Name suppressed

No.	Author
938	Name suppressed
939	Mrs Lizz Hills
940	Confidential
941	Name suppressed
942	Name suppressed
943	Mr Zac Thornton
944	Mr Michael Read
945	Name suppressed
946	Confidential
947	Name suppressed
948	Rowena Davey
949	Mrs Lisa Read
950	Name suppressed
951	Mrs Felicity Lynch
952	Mr Paul Brown
953	Name suppressed
954	Mr Timothy Witherow
955	Name suppressed
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958	Mr Graeme Tanswell
959	Mr Graham Everest
960	Name suppressed
961	Name suppressed
962	Mrs Jacinda Acheson
963	Name suppressed
964	Name suppressed
965	Marion Tyndall
966	Name suppressed
967	Robert Tyndall
968	Name suppressed
969	Susan Gregory
970	Mrs Kathleen Napier
971	Name suppressed
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No.	Author
973	Name suppressed
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975	Name suppressed
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977	Name suppressed
978	Confidential
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987	Name suppressed
988	Mr Karl Turner
989	Name suppressed
990	Name suppressed
991	Name suppressed
992	Mrs Jac Lloyd
993	Confidential
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997	Name suppressed
998	Confidential
999	Name suppressed
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1001	Confidential
1002	Name suppressed
1003	Name suppressed
1004	Confidential
1005	Name suppressed
1006	Name suppressed
1007	Name suppressed

No.	Author
1008	Name suppressed
1009	Name suppressed
1010	Name suppressed
1011	Name suppressed
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1013	Name suppressed
1014	Name suppressed
1015	Name suppressed
1016	Name suppressed
1017	Name suppressed
1018	Name suppressed
1019	Name suppressed
1020	Confidential
1021	Mr Alan Collins
1022	Name suppressed
1023	Name suppressed
1024	Name suppressed
1025	Mr Joshua Frogley
1026	Name suppressed
1027	Mr Harry Fisher
1028	Mr Dennis Hewes
1029	Confidential
1030	Mr Joseph Tanswell
1031	Name suppressed
1032	Name suppressed
1033	Name suppressed
1034	Name suppressed
1035	Name suppressed
1036	Name suppressed
1037	Name suppressed
1038	Name suppressed
1039	Name suppressed
1040	Name suppressed
1041	Name suppressed
1042	Name suppressed

No.	Author
1043	Rev Amanda Wheatley
1044	Name suppressed
1045	Name suppressed
1046	Australian Organic Resources Pty Ltd
1047	Western Sydney Direct Action
1048	Mr Geoffrey Miell
1049	Narromine Shire Council
1050	Confidential
1051	Confidential
1052	Name suppressed
1053	Name suppressed
1054	Name suppressed
1055	Name suppressed

Appendix 2 Witnesses at hearings

Date	Name	Position and Organisation
Monday 15 December 2025 **Macquarie Room** **Parliament House**	Ms Gayle Sloan	Chief Executive Officer, Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia
	Dr Jackie Wright	Principal/Director, Environmental Risk Sciences Pty Ltd (enRiskS)
	Mr Brett Lemin	Executive Director, Waste Contractors & Recyclers Association of NSW
	Mr Stefan Dittrich	National Technical and Major Projects Manager - Remondis Australia
	Ms Veronica Lee	Executive Director City Service, City Services Management, City of Sydney Council
	Ms Joanna Kubota	Executive Director, The Parks, Sydney's Parkland Councils
	Mr Jeremy Manion	Regional Waste Coordinator, The Parks, Sydney's Parkland Councils
	Mr Xavier Martin	President, NSW Farmers Association
	Ms Rhiannon Heath	Environmental Policy Advisor, NSW Farmers Association
	Dr Richard Kirkman	CEO and Managing Director, Veolia Australia New Zealand
	Ms Kathryn Whitfield	Chief Growth Officer, Veolia Australia New Zealand
	Mr Edward Nicholas	Director, Parkes Energy Recovery
	Mr Kevin Souster	Engineering and Delivery Director, Parkes Energy Recovery
	Mr Jeff Angel	Director, Boomerang Alliance and Total Environment Centre
	Mr Jack Thrower	Senior Economist, The Australia Institute
	Councillor Khal Asfour	Vice President (Metropolitan/Urban), Local Government NSW
	Mr Damian Thomas	Director Advocacy, Local Government NSW
	Mr Tony Chappel	Chief Executive Officer, NSW Environment Protection Authority

Date	Name	Position and Organisation
	Mr Stephen Beaman	Executive Director Operations, NSW Environment Protection Authority
Tuesday 14 April 2026 The Robert Wilson Auditorium, Parkes Leagues Club	Witness A	
	Councillor Neil Westcott	Mayor, Parkes Shire Council
	Councillor Joy Paddison	Councillor, Parkes Shire Council
	Mr Patrick Ruettjes	Director Environment and Planning, Lachlan Shire Council
	Mr Jeromie Fitzpatrick	Vice President, Parkes Clean Future Alliance
	Mr Jacob Unger	Member, Parkes Clean Future Alliance
	Mrs Heather Green	President, NSW Farmers Association Peak Hill
	Mr Brenden Westcott	Vice President, NSW Farmers Association Peak Hill
	Mrs Julie Macaulay	President, Parkes Country Women's Association
	Mrs Lisa Bicket	International Officer, Parkes Country Women's Association
	Mr Glen Westcott	Principal, Parkes Christian School
	Mrs Frances Robinson	Chairperson, Peak Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council
	Ms Hmanda Corcoran	Member, Peak Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council
	Ms Karryn Schaefer	Chair, Peak Hill Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee
	Mr Michael James	Chair, Parkes Aboriginal Working Party
Monday 4 May 2026 Macquarie Room Parliament House	Mr Steve Fedorow	Director Community & Environment, Hornsby Shire Council
	Mr Chris Horsey	Manager Waste Management, Hornsby Shire Council
	Ms Vanessa Parkes	Director City Living, Blacktown City Council

Date	Name	Position and Organisation
	Mr Luke Cook	Senior Coordinator Environmental Health, Blacktown City Council
	Mr Tim Askew	Director of Programs, Hunter Joint Organisation
	Mr Chris Dart	Program Lead – Waste and Circular Economy, Hunter Joint Organisation
	Dr Ali El Hanandeh	Associate Professor Griffith University, Engineering and Built Environment
	Mr Amal Jugdeo	Sales Director, Kanadevia Inova Australia Pty Ltd
	Mr Andrew Short	Director Project Development ANZ, O.C.O Technology Australia Pty Ltd
	Professor Hugh Durrant- Whyte	Chief Scientist & Engineer, Premiers Department
	Ms Alexandra Barratt	Emeritus Professor of Public Health, University of Sydney and Member, Sydney Knitting Nannas and Friends
	Ms Keela Lam	Member, Sydney Knitting Nannas and Friends
	Ms Cathy Gill	Member, Sydney Knitting Nannas and Friends
	Mr Chris Ritchie	Executive Director Energy, Resources and Industry Assessments, Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
Friday 15 May 2026 The Auditorium, Goulburn Workers Club	Mrs Wendy Tuckerman MP	Member for Goulburn, NSW Legislative Assembly
	Mr Diljinder Uppal	Manager City Businesses, Wagga Wagga City Council
	Mr Darryl Woods	Executive Manager, Major Projects, Wagga Wagga City Council
	Ms Sharon Houlihan	Executive Officer, Canberra Region Joint Organisation
	Councillor Kenrick Winchester	Mayor, Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
	Councillor Nina Dillon	Mayor, Goulburn Mulwaree Council

Date	Name	Position and Organisation
	Councillor Jason Shepherd	Councillor, Goulburn Mulwaree Council
	Councillor Jasmin Jones	Mayor, Yass Valley Council
	Mr Andrew Wood	President, Shooters Fishers & Farmers Party Goulburn Branch
	Mr Darren Plumb	Secretary, Shooters Fishers & Farmers Party Goulburn Branch
	Mr Michael Pilbrow	President, ALP Goulburn Branch
	Councillor Liz Mckeon	Vice President, ALP Goulburn Branch
	Ms Jo Clay MLA	Member for Ginninderra, ACT Legislative Assembly; Deputy Leader of the ACT Greens
	Mr Stan Moore	Chair, NSW Farmers Association Goulburn Branch
	Mrs Margaret Cameron	Hon Secretary/Treasurer, NSW Farmers Association Goulburn Branch
	Mr James Innes	President, Communities Against the Tarago Incinerator
	Ms Thalia Sadumiano	Treasurer, Communities Against the Tarago Incinerator
	Mrs Jennifer Fischer	Treasurer, Viticultural Society of the Canberra District
	Mr Allan Pankhurst	Vice President, Viticultural Society of the Canberra District
	Mr Thomas Martin	President, Long Water Agricultural Association
	Mrs Josephine Beverley	Member, Long Water Agricultural Association
Wednesday 1 July 2026 Macquarie Room Parliament House	Mr Chris Horsey	Manager Waste Management, Hornsby Shire Council
	Mr Mike Ritchie	Managing Director, MRA Consulting
	Dr Ron Wainberg	Technical Director, MRA Consulting
	Mr Craig Barker	Chief Executive Officer, Veolia Australia and New Zealand

Date	Name	Position and Organisation
	Ms Kathryn Whitfield	Chief Growth Officer, Veolia Australia and New Zealand
	Mr Edward Nicholas	Director, Parkes Energy Recovery
	Mr Kevin Souster	Engineering and Delivery Director, Parkes Energy Recovery
	Mr Victor Carey	Public Health Physician, Western NSW Public Health Unit, NSW Health
	Mr James Bolton	Deputy Secretary, Regional Development and Delivery, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
	Mr Willem Clasie	Executive Director, Regional Growth and Development Corporation, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
	Mr Jason Crean	Group Director, Climate and Natural Resources, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
	Mrs Annette Cowie	Technical Specialist, Climate Policy, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
	Mr Asela Atapattu	Executive Director, Policy, Programs and Finance, NSW Environment Protection Authority
	Mr Stephen Beaman	Executive Director, Regulatory Operations, NSW Environment Protection Authority

Appendix 3 Minutes

Minutes no. 1

Thursday, 28 August 2025
Select Committee on Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities
Room 1254, Parliament House, Sydney at 1.00pm

1. Members present
Mrs Overall, *Chair*
Dr Cohn, *Deputy Chair*
Dr Kaine
Mrs Maclaren-Jones
Mr Primrose *(via videoconference)*
Ms Suvaal

2. Apologies
Mr Roberts

3. Tabling of resolution establishing the committee
The committee noted the following resolution of the House establishing the committee, which reads as follows:

(1) That a select committee be established to inquire into and report on proposed energy from waste facilities, and in particular:

(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 matter.

(2) That, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the standing orders, the committee consist of seven members comprising:

(a) three government members,

(b) two opposition members, one being Mrs Overall, and

(c) two crossbench members, one being Dr Cohn.

(3) That the Chair of the committee be Mrs Overall and the Deputy Chair be Dr Cohn.

(4) That unless the committee decides otherwise:

(a) all inquiries are to be advertised via social media, stakeholder emails and a media release distributed to all media outlets in New South Wales,

(b) submissions to inquiries are to be published, subject to the Committee Clerk checking for confidentiality and adverse mention and, where those issues arise, bringing them to the attention of the committee for consideration,

(c) attachments to submissions are to remain confidential,

(d) the Chair's proposed witness list is to be circulated to provide members with an opportunity to amend the list, with the witness list agreed to by email, unless a member requests the Chair to convene a meeting to resolve any disagreement,

(e) the sequence of questions to be asked at hearings alternate between Opposition, crossbench and Government members, in that order, with equal time allocated to each,

(f) transcripts of evidence taken at public hearings are to be published,

(g) supplementary questions are to be lodged with the Committee Clerk within two business days following the receipt of the hearing transcript, with witnesses requested to return answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions within 21 calendar days of the date on which questions are forwarded to the witness,

(h) answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions are to be published, subject to the Committee Clerk checking for confidentiality and adverse mention and, where those issues arise, bringing them to the attention of the committee for consideration, and

(i) media statements on behalf of the committee are to be made only by the Chair.

4. Conduct of committee proceedings

Media

The committee noted the Broadcast of Proceedings resolution (as amended by the Legislative Council on 19 October 2022), in particular the provisions relating to the filming, broadcasting, rebroadcasting and photography of committee proceedings, including:

(1) That unless resolved otherwise by a committee, this House authorises:

(a) the filming, broadcasting and photography of members and witnesses in committee proceedings:

i. by representatives of media organisations, including from around the committee meeting table,

ii. by any member of the public, from the position of the audience, and

(b) the rebroadcasting of committee proceedings on the Legislative Council and Parliament's social media channels.

5. Conduct of inquiry into proposed energy from waste facilities

5.1 Closing date for submissions

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Suvaal: That the closing date for submissions be Friday 31 October 2025.

5.2 Stakeholder list

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Maclaren-Jones: That
The secretariat circulate to members the Chair's proposed list of stakeholders to be invited to make a submission
Members have two days from when the Chair's proposed list is circulated to make amendments or nominate additional stakeholders
The committee agree to the stakeholder list by email, unless a meeting of the committee is required to resolve any disagreement.

5.3 Approach to submissions

Resolved, on the motion of Dr Kaine: That, to enable significant efficiencies for members and the secretariat while maintaining the integrity of how submissions are treated, in the event that 50 or more individual submissions are received, the committee may adopt the following approach to processing short submissions:
All submissions from individuals 250 words or less in length will:

- have an individual submission number, and be published with the author's name or as name suppressed, or kept confidential, according to the author's request
- be reviewed by the secretariat for adverse mention and sensitive/identifying information, in accordance with practice
- be channelled into one single document to be published on the inquiry website

All other submissions will be processed and published as normal.

5.4 Hearing dates

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Maclaren-Jones: That the timeline for hearings and other committee activities – including any potential regional hearings and site visits – be considered by the committee as submissions are received. Further, that hearing dates be determined by the Chair after consultation with members regarding their availability.

6. Other business

7. Adjournment
The committee adjourned at 1.09 pm, *sine die.*

Janelle Taouk
Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 2

Monday, 15 December 2025
Select Committee on Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities

Macquarie Room, Parliament House, Sydney at 9.16 am

1. Members present

Mrs Overall, *Chair*
Dr Cohn, *Deputy Chair, from 9.49 am*
Dr Kaine (*via videoconference)*
Mrs Maclaren-Jones (*via videoconference from 9.16 am to 11.29am, in person from 11.30am*)
Mr Primrose
Mr Roberts
Ms Suvaal

2. Apologies

Mr Banasiak

3. Previous minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Suvaal: That draft minutes no. 1 be confirmed

4. Correspondence

The committee noted the following items of correspondence:

Received

13 December 2025 – Email from Lily Prat, PHAA Policy and Advocacy Adviser, Public Health Association of Australia, advising that the Public Health Association of Australia declines attending the public hearing on Monday 15 December 2025 for the inquiry into proposed energy from waste facilities

5. Provision of documents to participating member

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Primrose: That Mr Banasiak, who has advised the committee that he intends to participate for the duration of the inquiry into proposed energy from waste facilities, be provided with copes of inquiry related documents.

6. Submissions

6.1 Public submissions

The committee noted that the following submissions were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee: submission nos. 1-2, 4-5, 7, 9, 12, 15-17, 19-21, 23-25, 27, 31, 33-34, 37-40, 43, 46-48, 55, 57-60, 62, 65-67, 74-82, 87-88, 90-99, 102, 104-109, 111, 113-114, 116-119, 120, 121-123, 125, 127-128, 131, 134, 139-145, 148-162, 164, 166-167, 169-171, 174-187, 189-194, 197-210, 212, 215-218, 220-229, 231-234, 236-237, 240-245, 247-256, 259-265, 267, 271-276, 278-306, 308-320, 322, 324-335, 337-340, 342-348, 350-351, 354-355, 362, 364-366, 369, 371, 375-379, 381-383, 391, 395, 397-398, 400-402, 404, 407, 409-410, 412, 417-418, 421-440, 446, 448, 453-454, 457, 459-461, 463-481, 483-486, 490, 492-496, 499-508, 510, 517-518, 521, 523-534.

6.2 Partially confidential submissions

Name suppressed at the request of the author

The committee noted that the following submissions were partially published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee: submission nos. 3, 6, 8, 10-11, 13-14, 18, 22, 26, 28-30, 35, 41-42, 44-45, 49-50, 51-52, 54, 61, 63-64, 68-71, 83, 85, 89, 101, 103, 110, 112, 124, 126, 129-130, 132, 135-138, 146-147, 163, 165, 168, 172-173, 196, 219, 238-239, 246-246a, 257, 266, 268, 321, 341, 349, 357, 359-361, 363, 367-

368, 370, 372-374, 380, 384 -386, 388-390, 393-394, 396, 405-406, 411, 413-416, 419, 442-445, 447, 449-452, 458, 462, 488-489, 491, 497-498, 511, 513-516, 520, 537.

Partially confidential at the suggestion of the secretariat

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Suvaal: That the committee authorise the publication of submission nos. 32, 36, 56, 72-73, 84, 86, 115, 188, 307, 323, 336, 352-353, 387, 399, 403, 408, 482-483, 487 and 509, with the exception of identifying and/or sensitive information which are to remain confidential, as per the recommendation of the secretariat.

6.3 Confidential submissions

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Roberts: That the committee keep submission nos. 53, 100, 133, 195, 211, 230, 235, 269-270, 277, 356, 358, 392, 441, 455-456, 512, 519, 522 and 535-536 confidential, as per the request of the author, as they contain identifying and/or sensitive information.

6.4 Update to submission 362

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Primrose: That the committee update and publish the Waste Contractors and Recyclers Association of NSW's submission as per their request.

7. Public hearing

Sequence of questions

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Roberts: That the allocation of questions to be asked at the hearing be left in the hands of the Chair.

Witnesses, the public and the media were admitted.

The Chair made an opening statement regarding the broadcasting of the proceedings and other matters.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Ms Gayle Sloan, Chief Executive Officer, Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia.
- Dr Jackie Wright, Principal/Director, Environmental Risk Sciences Pty Ltd (enRiskS).

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Brett Lemin, Executive Director, Waste Contractors & Recyclers Association of NSW (via videoconference).
- National Technical and Major Projects Manager - Remondis Australia (via videoconference).

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Ms Veronica Lee, Executive Director City Service, City Services Management, City of Sydney Council.
- Ms Joanna Kubota, Executive Director, The Parks, Sydney's Parkland Councils.
- Mr Jeremy Manion, Regional Waste Coordinator, The Parks, Sydney's Parkland Councils.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Xavier Martin, President, NSW Farmers Association.

- Ms Rhiannon Heath, Environmental Policy Advisor, NSW Farmers Association.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Dr Richard Kirkman, CEO and Managing Director, Veolia Australia New Zealand.
- Ms Kathryn Whitfield, Chief Growth Officer, Veolia Australia New Zealand.
- Mr Edward Nicholas, Director, Parkes Energy Recovery.
- Mr Kevin Souster, Engineering and Delivery Director, Parkes Energy Recovery.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witness was sworn and examined:

- Mr Jeff Angel, Director, Boomerang Alliance and Total Environment Centre.

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The following witness was sworn and examined:

- Mr Jack Thrower, Senior Economist, The Australia Institute (via videoconference).

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Cr Khal Asfour, Vice President (Metropolitan/Urban), Local Government NSW.
- Mr Damian Thomas, Director Advocacy, Local Government NSW.

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Tony Chappel, Chief Executive Officer, NSW Environment Protection Authority.
- Mr Stephen Beaman, Executive Director Operations, NSW Environment Protection Authority.

The public hearing concluded at 4.41 pm.

The public and the media withdrew.

8. Post-hearing responses

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Primrose: That the Chair determine an appropriate timeframe for supplementary questions from members and post-hearing responses from witnesses, in consideration of the Christmas closure period.

Resolved, on the motion of Dr Cohn: That the NSW Environment Protection Authority be provided a copy of the following document referred to by Mr Roberts during the hearing to assist in answering questions taken on notice:

- NSW Environment Protection Authority, Energy from Waste Regulation, available at: https://yoursay.epa.nsw.gov.au/energy-waste-regulation#:-:text=why%20it%20matters

9. Correspondence

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Suvaal: That the committee accept and publish the correspondence received from Regional Cities NSW supporting Goulburn Mulwaree Council's submission, dated 15 December 2025.

10. Discussion of committee activity for 2026

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Primrose: That the committee hold committee activity in Parkes on the following dates:

- Monday 13 April 2026
- Tuesday 14 April 2026

The committee noted that it had previously resolved via email to hold a public hearing in Sydney on Monday 4 May 2026.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Roberts: That the Committee hold committee activity in Tarago/Goulburn on the following dates:

- Wednesday 13 May 2026
- Thursday 14 May 2026

11. Adjournment
The committee adjourned at 4.46 pm, *sine die.*

Janelle Taouk
Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 3

Tuesday, 14 April 2026
Select Committee on Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities
The Robert Wilson Auditorium, Parkes Leagues Club, Parkes, 8.49 am

1. Members present
Mrs Overall, Chair
Mr Banasiak (participating)
Mr Murphy (via videoconference)
Mr Primrose
Mr Roberts

2. Apologies
Dr Cohn, Dr Kaine, Ms Suvaal and Mrs Maclaren-Jones

3. Previous minutes
Resolved, on the motion of Mr Roberts: That draft minutes no. 2 be confirmed.

4. Correspondence
The committee noted the following items of correspondence:

Received

- 15 January 2026 – Email from Mr Colin J. Bosworth, President/Treasurer of No Incinerator for Western Sydney, to the Chair, expressing concern over the evidence received at the committee's public hearing on 15 December 2025.
- 4 February 2026 – Email from Dr Amanda Cohn MLC to the committee, forwarding an inviting from Mr Damian Trad, Chief Executive Officer, Waste Circology, to Dr Cohn in her capacity as Deputy Chair, inviting her to attend Waste Circology to witness their technologies.
- 5 February 2026 – Email from Dr Christine Cowie, Senior Research Fellow at UNSW and the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research, to the committee, enclosing a research

paper entitled '*The health impacts of waste-to-energy emissions: a systematic review of the literature*'.

- 12 February 2026 – Letter from Dr Richard Kirkman, CEO & Managing Director, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, inviting the committee to visit Woodlawn Eco Precinct to observe site operations and waste management practices.
- 2 March 2026 – Email from Megan Surawski, Head of Government Relations, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, to the secretariat, providing updated corrections to the hearing transcript of 15 December 2026.
- 5 March 2026 – Email from Mr Colin J. Bosworth, President/Treasurer of No Incinerator for Western Sydney, to the secretariat, submitting the Long Water Agricultural Association Incorporated for consideration as a witness for the committee's proposed hearing in Goulburn.
- 11 March 2026 – Email from Ms Mandy Brown, Parkes Aboriginal Community Member, to the committee, regarding the proposed Waste-to-Energy project in Parkes and consultation with the local Indigenous community.
- 11 March 2026 – Email from Kevin Souster, Engineering and Project Delivery Director, Parkes Energy Recovery, to the secretariat, providing updated corrections to the hearing transcript of 15 December 2025.
- 13 March 2026 – Email from Ms Jane Bremmer, Chair, Toxics Free Australia, to the committee, providing additional information to the committee as a supplementary submission.
- 13 March 2026 – Email from Mr Bob Heller, Managing Director, Australian Organic Resources Pty Ltd, enclosing a late submission and correspondence to the committee.
- 26 March 2026 – Email Mr from Damian Poulter, a resident near Tarago, to the Committee enclosing a link to documents obtained through a GIPA request to the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA), concerning interactions between Veolia and the NSW EPA on waste-to-energy policy.
- 31 March 2026 – Email from Ms Melinda Wilson of Western Sydney Direct Action/No Incinerators for Sydney, to the secretariat, raising concerns about perceived conflicts of interest involving Dr Jackie Wright, Director of Environmental Risk Sciences Pty Ltd (enRiskS), who appeared before the Committee at its hearing on 15 December 2025.
- 1 April 2026 – Email from Melinda Wilson of Western Sydney Direct Action, attaching a media release relating to perceived conflicts of interest of Dr Jackie Wright, director of Environmental Risk Sciences.
- 1 April 2026 – Email from Witness A to the secretariat, seeking an opportunity to meet with the committee privately in Parkes.
- 2 April 2026 – Email from Gary Woodman, General Manager, Warren Shire Council, to the secretariat, declining the committee's invitation to appear at the public hearing in Parkes on 14 April 2026.
- 13 April 2026 – Email from Mr Erik Lensson, CSIRO Honorary Research Fellow, to the secretariat, raising concerns about how Parkes Energy Recovery has presented information in a public Q&A document.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Roberts: That the committee write to Mr Colin J. Bosworth, President/Treasurer of No Incinerator for Western Sydney, in response to his correspondence dated 15 January 2026, to acknowledge receipt and advise that the matters raised have been noted by the committee.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Banasiak: That the committee keep the following correspondence confidential, as they contain identifying and/or sensitive information:

- 26 March 2026 – Email Mr from Damian Poulter, a resident near Tarago, to the Committee enclosing a link to documents obtained through a GIPA request to the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA), concerning interactions between Veolia and the NSW EPA on waste-to-energy policy.
- 1 April 2026 – Email from Witness A to the secretariat, seeking an opportunity to meet with the committee privately in Parkes.

5. Submissions

5.1 Public submissions

The committee noted that the following submissions were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee: submission nos. 271a, 420, 540-541, 544-545, 549, 556, 559-563, 567-569, 571, 573, 575-585, 587-589, 591-597, 599, 605, 611, 613, 620-629, 640-643, 645-648, 651, 655-656, 658-669, 672-677, 682-683, 685-695, 697-701, 704, 707, 709, 714, 716, 720-721, 723, 725, 728-729, 740, 750, 753, 784, 801, 807, 809, 812, 815, 817-819, 821, 826, 873, 875-876, 879-881, 888, 889, 891-893, 897, 900, 903-904, 907-908, 911, 921, 923-924, 927-929, 931, 936, 939, 943 944, 948-949, 951, 954, 958-959, 962, 965, 967, 969-970, 988, 992, 1021, 1025, 1027-1028, 1030, 1043 and 1046-1047.

5.2 Partially confidential submissions

Name suppressed at the request of the author

The committee noted that the following submissions were partially published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee: submissions nos. 126a, 538-539, 546-548, 551-553, 555, 557, 564, 586, 600-603, 608-610, 612, 616-618, 630-634, 636-637, 639, 644, 650, 652-654, 657, 678-681, 684, 702-703, 705-706, 708, 710-713, 715, 717-719, 722, 724, 726-727, 730-732, 734-735, 737 738, 741, 745-749, 751-752, 754-768, 771-774, 776-782, 785-793, 795-796, 798-800, 802-805, 808, 810, 813-814, 820, 822-825, 830-835, 838-840, 841-842, 843-849, 851-854, 856-858, 860-864, 866 868, 870-872, 877, 882-887, 890, 894-896, 898-899, 901-902, 905-906, 909-910, 912-920, 925 926, 930, 932-935, 937-938, 941-942, 945, 947, 950, 953, 955-957, 960-961, 963-964, 966, 968, 971-977, 979, 981-987, 989, 990-991, 994-997, 999-1000, 1002-1003, 1005-1009, 1010-1013, 1015-1019, 1022-1024, 1026, 1031-1033, 1035, 1037, 1039-1042, 1044-1045.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Primrose: That the committee keep the following information confidential, as per the request of the author: names and/or identifying and sensitive information in submissions nos. 126a, 538-539, 546-548, 551-553, 555, 557, 564, 586, 600-603, 608-610, 612, 616-618, 630-634, 636-637, 639, 644, 650, 652-654, 657, 678-681, 684, 702-703, 705-706, 708, 710-713, 715, 717-719, 722, 724, 726-727, 730-732, 734-735, 737 738, 741, 745-749, 751-752, 754-768, 771-774, 776-782, 785-793, 795-796, 798-800, 802-805, 808, 810, 813-814, 820, 822-825, 830-835, 838-840, 841-842, 843-849, 851-854, 856-858, 860-864, 866 868, 870-872, 877, 882-887, 890, 894-896, 898-899, 901-902, 905-906, 909-910, 912-920, 925 926, 930, 932-935, 937-938, 941-942, 945, 947, 950, 953, 955-957, 960-961, 963-964, 966, 968, 971-977, 979, 981-987, 989, 990-991, 994-997, 999-1000, 1002-1003, 1005-1009, 1010-1013, 1015-1019, 1022-1024, 1026, 1031-1033, 1035, 1037, 1039-1042, 1044-1045.

Partially confidential at the suggestion of the secretariat

The committee noted that the following submissions should be considered for partial confidentiality: submission nos. 542-543, 550, 566, 570, 572, 574, 590, 598, 614, 649, 670-671, 696, 733, 736, 739, 742, 775, 794, 811, 828-829, 850, 865, 869, 874, 922, 952, 1014, 1034, 1036, 1038.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Primrose:

- That the committee authorise the publication of submission nos. 542-543, 566, 570, 572, 574, 590, 598, 614, 649, 670-671, 696, 733, 736, 742, 775, 794, 828-829, 850, 865, 869, 874, 922, 952, 1014, 1034, 1036, 1038, with the exception of identifying and/or sensitive information which is to remain confidential, as per the recommendation of the secretariat. That the committee authorise the publication of submission nos. 550, 739, 811, with the exception of potential adverse mention which is to remain confidential, as per the recommendation of the secretariat.

5.3 Confidential submissions

The committee noted that the following submissions be considered for confidentiality: submission nos. 554, 558, 565, 604, 606-607, 615, 619, 635, 638, 743-744 & 769-770, 783, 797, 806, 816, 827, 836-837 855, 859, 878, 940, 946, 978, 980, 993, 998, 1001, 1004, 1020, 1029.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Banasiak: That the committee keep submission nos. 554, 558, 565, 604, 606-607, 615, 619, 635, 638, 743-744, 769-770, 783, 797, 806, 816, 827, 836-837 855, 859, 878, 940, 946, 978, 980, 993, 998, 1001, 1004, 1020, 1029 confidential, as per the request of the author, as they contain identifying and/or sensitive information.

6. Post-hearing responses – 15 December 2025

6.1 Answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions

The committee noted that the following answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee:

- answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions from Mr Damien Thomas, Director Advocacy, LGNSW, received on 11 February 2026.
- answers to supplementary questions and transcript corrections from Ms Veronica Lee, Executive Director City Services, City Services Management, City of Sydney Council, received on 12 February 2026.
- answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions from Mr Jeremy Manion, Regional Waste Coordinator, The Parks, Sydney's Parkland Councils, received on 12 February 2026.
- answers to supplementary questions from Mr Stefan Dittrich, National Technical and Major Projects Manager, REMONDIS, received on 12 February 2026.
- answers to supplementary questions from Mr Brett Lemin, Executive Director, Waste Contractors & Recyclers Association of NSW, received on 12 February 2026.
- answers to supplementary questions from Ms Gayle Sloan, Chief Executive Officer, Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association Australia, received on 12 February 2026.
- answers to supplementary questions from Dr Jackie Wright, Director, enRiskS, received on 12 February 2026.
- answers to questions on notice, transcript corrections and supplementary questions from Mr Edward Nicholas, Director, Parkes Energy Recovery, received on 12 February 2026.
- answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions from Dr Richard Kirkman, CEO and Managing Director, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, received on 12 February 2026.
- answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions from Mr Tony Chappel, Chief Executive Officer, NSW Environment Protection Authority, received on 13 February 2026.
- answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions from Mr Jack Thrower, Senior Economist, The Australia Institute, received on 18 February 2026.
- answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions from Mr Xavier Martin, President, NSW Farmers' Association, received on 18 February 2026.

6.2 Clarification of evidence

The committee noted that an additional document was received from Veolia Australia and New Zealand clarifying information provided at the hearing on 15 December 2025.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Roberts: That the committee authorise:

- the publication of the document from Ms Megan Surawski, Head of Government Relations, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, received on 13 February 2026, providing clarifications to evidence given at the public hearing on 15 December 2025, for the inquiry into energy from waste facilities.
- the insertion of footnotes at the relevant points in the transcript of 15 December 2025 noting that correspondence clarifying the evidence had been received and providing a hyperlink to the published correspondence.

7. Committee activity – Parkes

The committee noted that it previously agreed via email to the following committee activity:

Site visit

- 16 March 2026 - The committee agreed to conduct a site visit to the Parkes Special Activation Precinct.

Public forum and suggestion box

- 31 March 2026 – The committee resolved to hold a public forum on 13 April 2026, subject to the following arrangements:
    - The forum run from 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm, with flexibility to extend if required.
    - Speakers to pre-register to participate.
    - The Secretariat to maintain a running list of speakers, with confirmations prior to the event.
    - Provision for up to 60 registered speakers, with capacity for an additional 10 if time permits.
    - A two-minute speaking limit per participant, with a bell to signal time.
    - Speakers will not be sworn in.
    - Each person will be permitted to speak once only.
    - No questions directed to the Committee.
    - Proceedings to be transcribed by Hansard.
- 31 March 2026 – The committee further resolved that a suggestion box be made available at the public forum:
    - The suggestion box will be equipped with pens and paper.
    - Submissions will be accepted for the Committee's information only.
    - Submissions will remain confidential and will not be published.

Hearing

- 16 March 2026 – The committee agreed to hold a public hearing in Parkes on 14 April 2026.

Draft hearing schedule

- 16 March 2026 – The committee approved the draft hearing schedule.

Travel arrangements

- 20 March 2026 – The committee agreed to return to Sydney by coach on 14 April 2026.
- 31 March 2026 – The committee further resolved to:

- Hold the public forum on Monday 13 April 2026, immediately following the site visit; and
- Depart Parkes at approximately 2:30 pm on 14 April 2026, arriving at Parliament House at approximately 7:30 pm.

Social media

- 31 March 2026 – The Committee approved digital promotional materials, including flyers and a social media post, and agreed that:
  - Materials be provided to the office of the local Member (Member for Orange);
  - The public forum and hearing be promoted via the Legislative Council's social media channels; and
  - A standard media release be issued closer to the event.

8. Committee activity – Goulburn/Tarago

The committee noted that it agreed via email on 2 February 2026 that the site visit to Goulburn/Tarago be scheduled for Thursday 14 and Friday 15 May 2026.

9. In camera evidence from Witness A

The committee noted that it agreed via email on 2 April 2026 to invite Witness A to appear before the committee and give evidence *in camera* on Tuesday 14 April 2026.

10. Public hearing

Sequence of questions

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Primrose: That the allocation of questions to be asked at the hearing be left in the hands of the Chair.

The committee proceeded to take *in camera* evidence.

Persons present other than the committee: committee secretariat, audio-visual broadcast operators and Hansard reporters.

The Chair made an opening statement regarding proceedings and other matters.

The following witness was sworn and examined:

- Witness A

Witness A tendered the following document and requested that it be kept confidential:

- A document enclosing social media screenshots of adverse comments made about Witness A.

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The *in camera* hearing concluded at 9.30 am.

Witnesses, the public and the media were admitted.

The Chair made an opening statement regarding the broadcasting of the proceedings and other matters.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Cr Neil Westcott, Mayor, Parkes Shire Council
- Cr Joy Paddison, Councillor, Parkes Shire Council
- Mr Patrick Ruettjes, Director Environment and Planning, Lachlan Shire Council

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Jeromie Fitzpatrick, Vice President, Parkes Clean Future Alliance
- Mr Jacob Unger, Member, Parkes Clean Future Alliance

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mrs Heather Green, President, NSW Farmers Association Peak Hill
- Mr Brenden Westcott, Vice President, NSW Farmers Association Peak Hill
- Mrs Julie Macaulay, President, Parkes Country Women's Association
- Mrs Lisa Bicket, International Officer, Parkes Country Women's Association
- Mr Glen Westcott, Principal, Parkes Christian School

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mrs Frances Robinson, Chairperson, Peak Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Ms Hmanda Corcoran, Member, Peak Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council

Mrs Robinson tendered the following document:

- A photograph of family members of Mrs Robinson.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Ms Karryn Schaefer, Chair, Peak Hill Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee
- Mr Michael James, Chair, Parkes Aboriginal Working Party

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The public and the media withdrew.

The public hearing concluded at 1.30 pm.

11. Public forum

The committee proceeded to hear from local stakeholders, as per the resolution via email on 31 March 2026.

Stakeholders, the public and the media were admitted.

The Chair made an opening statement regarding the broadcasting of the proceedings and other matters.

The committee heard from the following stakeholders:

- Ms Christine Ten Cate
- Mr John Kennedy
- Ms Pamela Nankivell
- Mr Keith Woodlands
- Ms Sharon Woods
- Mr Erik Lensson
- Ms Rachelle Trudgett

- Ms Isabel Goolagong
- Ms Beverly Rachel Rowe
- Mr Ian Leonard Rowe
- Mr Graeme Somers
- Mr Edgar Orr
- Ms Barbara Orr
- Ms Elizabeth Tanswell
- Ms Kristen Neems
- Mr Bruce Maynard
- Mr Brad Field
- Ms Karen Skinner

The public and the media withdrew.

The public forum concluded at 3.00pm

12. Tendered documents

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Banasiak:

- That the committee accept the social media documents tendered by Witness A during the *in camera* session of the hearing and keep them confidential.
- That the committee accept the photograph tendered by Mrs Frances Robinson during the public hearing and keep it confidential.

13. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 3.08 pm, *sine die*.

Janelle Taouk
Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 4

Monday, 4 May 2026
Select Committee on Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities
Macquarie Room, Parliament House, Sydney at 8:46 am

1. Members present

Mrs Overall, *Chair*
Dr Cohn, *Deputy Chair*
Dr Kaine
Mrs Maclaren-Jones
Mr Primrose
Mr Roberts
Ms Suvaal
Mr Banasiak (participating)

2. Previous minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Roberts: That draft minutes no. 3 be confirmed.

3. Correspondence

The committee noted the following items of correspondence:

Received

- 6 March 2026 – Letter from Cr Russell Fitzpatrick, Chairperson, Canberra Region Joint Organisation to the Chair, requesting an invitation to appear at the committee's public hearing in Goulburn on 15 May 2026.
- 14 April 2026 – Email from Ms Melinda Wilson, President, Western Sydney Direct Action/No Incinerators for Sydney, to the secretariat, seeking a written response from the committee about concerns of perceived conflicts of interest involving Dr Jackie Wright, Director of Environmental Risk Sciences Pty Ltd (enRiskS).
- 14 April 2026 – Letter from Cr Neil Westcott, Mayor, Parkes Shire Council, to the committee, thanking the committee for holding a public hearing in Parkes and reiterating the Parkes community's opposition to the proposed energy from waste facility.
- 22 April 2026 – Email from Andrew Field, Field Farming Co Pty Ltd, to the Chair, relating to the impacts of the proposed waste-to-energy facility on agricultural market access in Parkes.
- 24 April 2026 – Email from Mr Cameron McKenzie, Group Manager, the Hills Shire Council, to the secretariat, declining an invitation to appear at the committee's hearing on 4 May 2026.
- 28 April 2026 – Email from Dr Meg Montgomery, Executive Director, Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils, to the Chair, declining an invitation to appear at the committee's hearing on 4 May 2026.
- 1 May 2026 – Email from Mr Matthew Ford, to the secretariat, enclosing correspondence to the committee regarding proposed energy from waste facilities.

Sent:

- 29 April 2026 – Letter from Chair to Mr Colin J. Bosworth, President/Treasurer of No Incinerator for Western Sydney, in response to his correspondence dated 15 January 2026, advising that the matters raised have been noted by the committee.
- 29 April 2026 – Letter from Chair to Ms Melinda Wilson, President, Western Sydney Direct Action/No Incinerators for Sydney, advising that the committee has received her correspondence and noted its contents.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Banasiak: That the committee authorise the publication of correspondence from:

- Cr Russell Fitzpatrick, Chairperson, Canberra Region Joint Organisation to the Chair, requesting an invitation to appear at the committee's public hearing in Goulburn on 15 May 2026, dated 6 March 2026.
- Cr Neil Westcott, Mayor, Parkes Shire Council, to the committee, thanking the committee for holding a public hearing in Parkes and reiterating the Parkes community's opposition to the proposed energy from waste facility, dated 14 April 2026.

4. Public submissions

The committee noted that the following submissions were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee: submission nos. 1048-1049.

5. Committee activity – Goulburn/Tarago

The committee noted that it previously agreed via email to the following committee activity:

Site visit

- The committee agreed to conduct a site visit to Veolia Australia and New Zealand's Woodlawn Eco Precinct in Tarago on 14 May 2026.

Public forum and suggestion box

- The committee resolved to hold a public forum on 14 May 2026, subject to the following arrangements:
    - Forum to run from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm, with flexibility to extend if required
    - Speakers to pre-register
    - The Secretariat to maintain and confirm a running list of speakers prior to the event
    - Up to 60 registered speakers, with capacity for an additional 10 if time permits
    - Two-minute speaking limit per participant, with a bell to signal time
    - No questions directed to the Committee
    - Proceedings to be transcribed by Hansard and broadcast via the Parliament's website
- The committee further resolved that a suggestion box be made available at the public forum:
    - The suggestion box will be equipped with pens and paper.
    - Submissions will be accepted for the Committee's information only.
    - Submissions will remain confidential and will not be published.

Hearing

- The committee agreed to hold a public hearing in Goulburn on 15 May 2026.

Draft hearing schedule

- The committee approved the draft hearing schedule.

Travel arrangements

- The committee agreed to travel by coach from Parliament House to Tarago, Tarago to Goulburn on 14 May 2026, and back to Parliament House on15 May 2026.

Social media

- The Committee approved digital promotional materials, including flyers and a social media post, and agreed that:
- Materials be provided to the office of the local Member (Member for Goulburn);
- The public forum and hearing be promoted via the Legislative Council's social media channels; and
- A standard media release be issued closer to the event.

6. Public hearing

Sequence of questions

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Roberts: That the allocation of questions to be asked at the hearing be left in the hands of the Chair.

Witnesses, the public and the media were admitted.

The Chair made an opening statement regarding the broadcasting of the proceedings and other matters.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Steve Fedorow, Director Community & Environment, Hornsby Shire Council
- Mr Chris Horsey, Manager Waste Management, Hornsby Shire Council
- Ms Vanessa Parkes, Director City Living, Blacktown City Council
- Mr Luke Cook, Senior Coordinator Environmental Health, Blacktown City Council

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Tim Askew, Director of Programs, Hunter Joint Organisation
- Mr Chris Dart, Program Lead Waste & Circular Economy, Hunter Joint Organisation

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witness was sworn and examined:

- Dr Ali El Hanandeh, Associate Professor Engineering & Built Environment, Griffith University *(via videoconference)*

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Amal Jugdeo, Sales Director, Kanadevia Inova Australia Pty Ltd
- Mr Andrew Short, Director Project Development ANZ, O.C.O Technology Australia Pty Ltd *(via videoconference)*

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witness was sworn and examined:

- Professor Hugh Durrant-Whyte, NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, Premiers Department

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Ms Alexandra Barratt, Emeritus Professor of Public Health, University of Sydney and Member, Sydney Knitting Nannas and Friends
- Ms Keelah Lam, Member, Sydney Knitting Nannas and Friends
- Ms Cathy Gill, Member, Sydney Knitting Nannas and Friends

Ms Alexandra Barratt tendered the follow documents:

- Document entitled 'Zero Waste in 10 years, An Integrated And Comprehensive Waste Elimination Strategy'.
- Document entitled 'Summary of health risks posed by incinerators'.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Chris Ritchie, Executive Director Energy, Resources and Industry Assessments, Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The public and the media withdrew.

The public hearing concluded at 3.14 pm.

7. Tendered documents

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Banasiak:

- That the committee accept and publish the document entitled "Zero Waste in 10 years, An Integrated And Comprehensive Waste Elimination Strategy" tendered by Ms Alexandra Barratt during the public hearing.
- That the committee accept and keep confidential the document entitled 'Summary of health risks posed by incinerator' tendered by Ms Alexandra Barratt during the public hearing.

8. Other business

9. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 3.15 pm.

Janelle Taouk
Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 5

Thursday, 14 May 2026
Select Committee on Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities
The Auditorium, Goulburn Workers Club, Goulburn at 4.25 pm

1. Members present

Mrs Overall, *Chair*
Dr Cohn, Deputy Chair
Mrs Maclaren-Jones
Mr Primrose
Ms Suvaal
Mr Banasiak (participating)

2. Apologies

Dr Kaine and Mr Roberts.

3. Previous minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Banasiak: That draft minutes no. 4 be confirmed.

4. Correspondence

The committee noted the following items of correspondence:

Received

5 May 2026 – Email from Mr Damian Trad, Chief Executive Officer, Waste Circology, to the Deputy Chair/secretariat, inviting the committee to a site visit.

5. Public forum

The committee proceeded to hear from local stakeholders, as per the resolution via email on 23 April 2026.

Stakeholders, the public and the media were admitted.

The Chair made an opening statement regarding the broadcasting of the proceedings and other matters.

The committee heard from the following stakeholders:

- Colin J. Bosworth
- Bob Philipson
- Damian Poulter
- Matthew Ford
- James Innes
- Anthony Hill
- Paige Davis
- Christopher O'Mahony
- Vicki Happ
- Kenneth Halliday
- Ian Anderson
- Keith Smith
- Wendy Anderson
- Charlotte Payne
- Cate Thomas
- Warren Matthews
- Kevin Woods
- Paul Beileiter
- Fiona Jeffery
- Darrell Weekes
- Peter McCullagh
- Paul Davey
- David Stenson
- Belinda Maher
- Ian McCormack
- Howard Kneebone
- John Mendl
- Christopher Kloster
- Anne Mitchell
- Dennis Mitchell
- John Lyttle
- Jane Smolinski

The public and the media withdrew.

6. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 5.41 pm.

Janelle Taouk
Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 6

Friday, 15 May 2026
Select Committee on Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities
The Auditorium, Goulburn Workers Club, Goulburn at 8.49 am

1. Members present

Mrs Overall, Chair
Dr Cohn, Deputy Chair
Mrs Maclaren-Jones
Mr Primrose
Ms Suvaal
Mr Banasiak (participating)
Dr Kaine, via videoconference

2. Apologies

Mr Roberts

3. Public hearing

Sequence of questions

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Suvaal: That the sequence of questions to be asked at the hearing is to alternate between opposition, crossbench and government members, in that order, with equal time allocated to each, for the first and fourth session only. That the allocation of questions to be asked for the remainder of sessions is to be left in the hands of the Chair.

Witnesses, the public and the media were admitted.

The Chair made an opening statement regarding the broadcasting of the proceedings and other matters.

The following witness was sworn and examined:

- Mrs Wendy Tuckerman MP, Member for Goulburn, NSW Legislative Assembly

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Diljinder Uppal, Manager City Businesses, Wagga Wagga City Council *(via videoconference)*
- Mr Darryl Woods, Executive Manager, Major Projects, Wagga Wagga City Council *(via videoconference)*
- Ms Sharon Houlihan, Executive Officer, Canberra Region Joint Organisation

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Cr Kenrick Winchester, Mayor, Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
- Cr Nina Dillon, Mayor, Goulburn Mulwaree Council
- Cr Jason Shepherd, Councillor, Goulburn Mulwaree Council
- Cr Jasmin Jones, Mayor, Yass Valley Council

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Andrew Wood, President, Shooters Fishers & Farmers Party Goulburn Branch
- Mr Darren Plumb, Secretary, Shooters Fishers & Farmers Party Goulburn Branch
- Mr Michael Pilbrow, President, ALP Goulburn Branch
- Cr Liz Mckeon, Vice President, ALP Goulburn Branch
- Ms Jo Clay MLA, Member for Ginninderra, ACT Legislative Assembly; Deputy Leader of the ACT Greens *(via videoconference)*

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Stan Moore, Chair, NSW Farmers Association Goulburn Branch
- Mrs Margaret Cameron, Hon Secretary/Treasurer, NSW Farmers Association Goulburn Branch
- Mr James Innes, President, Communities Against the Tarago Incinerator
- Ms Thalia Sadumiano, Treasurer, Communities Against the Tarago Incinerator

Mrs Margaret Cameron tendered the following document:

- Nine news article entitled 'Aussie researchers developing renewable energy from most unlikely source: plastic rubbish', published 29 April 2026.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mrs Jennifer Fischer, Member, Viticultural Society of the Canberra District
- Mr Allan Pankhurst, Vice President, Viticultural Society of the Canberra District *(via videoconference)*
- Mr Thomas Martin, President, Long Water Agricultural Association
- Mrs Josephine Beverley, Member, Long Water Agricultural Association

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The public and the media withdrew.

The public hearing concluded at 1.32 pm.

4. Tendered documents

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Banasiak: That the committee accept the document tendered by Mrs Margaret Cameron during the public hearing and keep it confidential.

5. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 1.33 pm.

Janelle Taouk
Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 7

Wednesday, 1 July 2026
Select Committee on Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities

Macquarie Room, Parliament House, Sydney at 8.54 am

1. Members present

Mrs Overall, *Chair*
Dr Cohn, *Deputy Chair* (via videoconference)
Mr Banasiak
Mrs Maclaren-Jones
Mr Primrose
Mr Roberts
Ms Suvaal (via videoconference)
Dr Kaine (via videoconference)

2. Previous minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Roberts: That draft minutes nos. 5 and 6 be confirmed.

3. Public hearing

Sequence of questions

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Roberts: That the allocation of questions to be asked at the hearing be left in the hands of the Chair.

Witnesses, the public and the media were admitted.

The Chair made an opening statement regarding the broadcasting of the proceedings and other matters.

The following witness was sworn and examined:

- Mr Chris Horsey, Manager Waste Management, Hornsby Shire Council (*via videoconference*)

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Mike Ritchie, Managing Director, MRA Consulting
- Dr Ron Wainbery, Technical Director, MRA Consulting

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Craig Barker, Chief Executive Officer, Veolia Australia and New Zealand
- Ms Kathryn Whitfield, Chief Growth Officer, Veolia Australia and New Zealand

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Edward Nicholas, Director, Parkes Energy Recovery
- Mr Kevin Souster, Engineering and Delivery Director, Parkes Energy Recovery (*via videoconference*)

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Dr Victor Carey, Public Health Physician, Western NSW Public Health Unit, NSW Health (*via videoconference*)
- Mr James Bolton, Deputy Secretary, Regional Development and Delivery, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
- Mr Willem Clasie, Executive Director, Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

- Dr Jason Crean, Group Director, Climate and Natural Resources, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
- Professor Annette Cowie, Technical Specialist, Climate Policy, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Asela Atapattu, Executive Director, Policy, Programs and Finance, NSW Environment Protection Authority
- Mr Stephen Beaman PSM, Executive Director, Regulatory Operations, NSW Environment Protection Authority

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The public and the media withdrew.

The public hearing concluded at 2.16 pm.

4. Correspondence

The committee noted the following items of correspondence:

Received

- 15 May 2026 – Email from Mrs Wendy Tuckerman MP Member for Goulburn, NSW Legislative Assembly, to the committee, enclosing correspondence from Veolia Australia and New Zealand to the NSW Environment Protection Authority, dated 13 March 2025.
- 18 May 2026 – Email from Mr Damian Trad, CEO of Waste Circology, to the secretariat, extending an invitation to the committee to visit their Organic Carbonisation System (OCS) facility at South Strathfield.
- 26 May 2026 – Email from Ms Jennie Fischer, Viticultural Society of the Canberra District Inc., to the secretariat, providing additional information on the ACTT Visitor Economy and the wine industry.

Sent

- 1 June 2026 – Email from the secretariat, to Mr Damian Trad, CEO of Waste Circology, advising that, due to members' availability and existing commitments, the Committee is unable to take up the invitation to visit the Organic Carbonisation System (OCS) facility at this time.

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Maclaren-Jones: That the committee authorise the publication of correspondence from Mrs Wendy Tuckerman MP Member for Goulburn, NSW Legislative Assembly, regarding correspondence from Veolia Australia and New Zealand to the NSW Environment Protection Authority, dated 13 March 2025.

5. Submissions – 1047 onwards

5.1 Public submissions

The committee noted that following submissions were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee: submission nos. 465a, 1048 –1049 and 1056 – 1218.

5.2 Partially confidential submissions

Name suppressed at the request of the author

The committee noted that the following submissions were partially published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee: submissions nos. 1052 – 1055 and 1219 – 1421.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Primrose: That the committee keep the following information confidential, as per the request of the author: names and/or identifying and sensitive information in submission nos. 1052 – 1055 and 1219 – 1421.

5.3 Confidential submissions

The following submissions should be considered for confidentiality: nos. 1050 – 1051 and 1422 – 1464.

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Maclaren-Jones: That the committee keep submission nos. 1050 – 1051 and 1422 – 1464 confidential, as per the request of the author, as they contain identifying and/or sensitive information.

6. Answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions

6.1 14 April 2026

The committee noted that the following answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee:

- Answers to supplementary questions from Mrs Heather Green, President, NSW Farmers Association Peak Hill, received on 7 May 2026.
- Answers to supplementary questions from Mrs Julie Macaulay, President, Parkes Country Women's Association, received on 11 May 2026.
- Answers to supplementary questions and relevant attachments from Councillor Neil Westcott, Mayor, Parkes Shire Council, received on 15 May 2026.
- Answers to supplementary questions and transcript corrections from Mr Patrick Ruettjes, Director Environment and Planning, Lachlan Shire Council, received on 14 May 2026.
- Answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions from Mr Jeromie Fitzpatrick, Vice President, Parkes Clean Future Alliance, received on 15 May 2026 (*previously circulated*).
- Answers to questions on notice from Mr Glen Westcott, Principal, Parkes Christian School, received on 22 May 2026.
- Answers to supplementary questions from Ms Karryn Schaefer, Chair, Peak Hill Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee, received on 22 May 2026.

6.2 4 May 2026

The committee noted that the following answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee:

- Answers to questions on notice from Ms Cathy Gill, Member and Ms Alexandra Barratt, Emeritus Professor of Public Health, University of Sydney and Member, Sydney Knitting Nannas and Friends on 11-12 May 2026.
- Answers to supplementary questions and questions on notice from Mr Andrew Short, Director Project Development ANZ, O.C.O Technology Australia Pty Ltd on 20 May 2026.
- Transcript correction and additional information from Dr Ali El Hanandeh, Associate Professor, Griffith University, Engineering and Built Environment on 1 June 2026.
- Answers to supplementary questions from Mr Chris Ritchie, Executive Director Energy, Resources and Industry Assessments, Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure on 3 June 2026.
- Answers to supplementary questions, questions on notice and transcript corrections from Mr Amal Jugdeo, Sales Director, Kanadevia Inova Australia Pty Ltd on 4 June 2026.
- Answers to questions on notice and additional information from Mr Chris Dart, Program Lead – Waste and Circular Economy, Hunter Joint Organisation on 4 June 2026.
- Answers to questions on notice and transcript corrections from Professor Hugh Durrant- Whyte, Chief Scientist & Engineer, Premiers Department on 11 June 2026.

6.3 14 May 2026

The committee noted that the following answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee:

- Transcript corrections from Councillor Jasmine Jones, Mayor, Yass Valley Council on 27 May 2026.
- Confidential answers to supplementary question from Mr Darryl Woods, Executive Manager – Major Projects, Wagga Wagga City Council on 10 June 2026.
- Answers to supplementary questions and additional information from Mrs Margaret Cameron, Hon Secretary/Treasurer, NSW Farmers Association Goulburn Branch on 15 June 2026.
- Answers to supplementary questions and transcript corrections from Mrs Jennifer Fischer, Member, and Mr Allan Pankhurst, Vice President, Viticultural Society of the Canberra District on 16 June 2026.
- Answers to supplementary questions from Marina Hollands, Acting General Manager, Goulburn Mulwaree Council on 16 June 2026.
- Anwers to questions on notice and supplementary questions from Mr James Innes, President, Communities Against the Tarago Incinerator on 16 June 2026.
- Answers to supplementary questions and transcript corrections from Cr Liz Mckeon, Vice President, and Mr Michael Pilbrow, President, ALP Goulburn Branch on 19 June 2026 and 22 June 2026.
- Answers to questions on notice from Mr Thomas Martin, President, Long Water Agricultural Association on 19 June 2026.
- Answers to questions on notice from Mrs Wendy Tuckerman MP, Member for Goulburn, NSW Legislative Assembly on 19 June 2026.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Primrose: That the answers to supplementary question from Mr Darryl Woods, Executive Manager – Major Projects, Wagga Wagga City Council received on 10 June 2026 remain confidential at their request due to commercial-in-confidence considerations.

The committee noted that post-hearing responses from the public hearing on 14 May 2026 are still to be received from the following witnesses:

- Canberra Region Joint Organisation (extension granted until 29 June 2026)
- Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
- Ms Jo Clay MLA, Member for Ginninderra, ACT Legislative Assembly

6.4 Post-hearing responses - Ms Jo Clay MLA, Member for Ginninderra and Deputy Leader of the ACT Greens

The committee noted correspondence received from Ms Jo Clay MLA, Member for Ginninderra and Deputy Leader of the ACT Greens, regarding supplementary questions arising from her appearance at the Goulburn hearing on 15 May 2026.

Ms Clay advised that the ACT Government is best placed to respond and has referred the questions to the relevant Ministers. As those Ministers are not witnesses to this inquiry, it is not the committee's usual practice to issue supplementary questions to them.

Ms Clay also advised that she intends to place the questions on notice in the ACT Legislative Assembly. However, as Ministers have up to 30 working days to respond, answers will not be available before the post-hearing response deadline. She will provide any responses received when available.

Resolved, on the motion of Ms McLaren-Jones: That the committee write to Ms Clay thanking her for placing the questions on notice in the ACT Legislative Assembly and seeking a response from the relevant Ministers, and to confirm that the committee is seeking the interpretation of the ACT Greens in the aforementioned post-hearing responses.

7. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 2.28 pm.

Janelle Taouk
Committee Clerk

Draft Minutes no. 8

Monday 12 October 2026
Select Committee on Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities
Room 1043, Parliament House, 1.04 pm

1. Members present

Mrs Overall
Dr Cohn
Mr Banasiak *(participating)*
Dr Kaine (via videoconference)
Mr Barrett (*substituting for Mrs Maclaren-Jones*) (via videoconference)
Mr Primrose
Mr Roberts
Ms Suvaal

2. Previous minutes

Ms Suvaal moved: That draft minutes no. 7 be confirmed.

3. Correspondence

The committee noted the following items of correspondence:

Received

- 26 June 2026 – Email from Mr Damian Poulter, resident near Tarago, to the Chair, requesting questions be asked to representatives of Veolia Australia and New Zealand at the public hearing on 1 July 2026.
- 1 August 2026 – Email from Mr Colin Bosworth, President/Treasurer, No Incinerator for Western Sydney, to the Deputy Chair, enclosing additional information for the committee's consideration.
- 13 September 2026 – Email from Individual A, to secretariat, regarding the acceptance of further evidence or correspondence to the inquiry.
- 26 September 2026 – Email from Jeromie Fitzpatrick, Vice President, Parkes Clean Future Alliance to Chair, regarding the assessment of the proposed Parkes Energy Recovery Facility.

Sent

- 10 July 2026 – Letter from Chair, to Ms Jo Clay MLA, Member for Ginninderra and Leader of the ACT Greens, regarding post-hearing responses.

Mr Roberts moved: That the committee keep the correspondence from Individual A, regarding the acceptance of further evidence or correspondence to the inquiry, dated 13 September 2026, confidential, as per the request of the author.

4. Answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions – 1 July 2026

The committee noted that the following answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee:

- Answers to questions on notice, supplementary questions and transcript corrections from Mr Mike Ritchie, Managing Director, and Dr Ron Wainberg, Technical Director, MRA Consulting received on 22 July 2026.
- Answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions from Mr Edward Nicholas, Director, Parkes Energy Recovery received on 29 July 2026.
- Answers to questions on notice, supplementary questions and transcript corrections from Mr James Bolton, Deputy Secretary, Regional Development and Delivery, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development received on 5 August 2026, providing revisions to 29 July 2026 responses.
- Answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions from Dr Victor Carey, Public Health Physician, Western NSW Public Health Unit, NSW Health received on 30 July 2026.
- Answers to questions on notice, supplementary questions and transcript corrections from Mr Craig Barker, CEO & Managing Director, Veolia Australia and New Zealand received on 30 July 2026.
- Answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions from Mr Asela Atapattu Executive, Director, Policy, Programs and Finance, and Mr Stephen Beaman PSM, Executive Director, Regulatory Operations, NSW Environment Protection Authority received on 30 July 2026.

The committee noted that responses received by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development received on 5 August 2026 replace those received on 29 July 2026.

5. Clarification on evidence

The committee noted an additional document received from Mr Craig Barker, CEO & Managing Director, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, clarifying information provided at the hearing on 1 July 2026 and responding to a claim made by Mr Ian Anderson during the public forum held in Goulburn on 14 May 2026.

The committee noted that it resolved via email on 5 August 2026 to:

- Publish the correspondence from Mr Craig Barker, CEO & Managing Director, Veolia Australia and New Zealand, received on 30 July 2026, providing clarifications to evidence given at the public hearing on 1 July 2026, for the inquiry into energy from waste facilities.
- Insert a footnote at the relevant point in the transcript of 1 July 2026 noting that correspondence clarifying the evidence has been received and providing a hyperlink to the published correspondence.

6. Consideration of the Chair's draft report

The Chair submitted her draft report entitled *Proposed energy from waste facilities*, which, having been previously circulated, was taken as being read.

Chapter 1

No amendments.

Chapter 2

Dr Cohn moved: That paragraph 2.3 be amended by:

a) omitting 'It' after 'residual waste.' and inserting instead 'that'.

b) inserting 'The claim that incineration reduces carbon emissions was disputed by a number of stakeholders.' after 'materials in landfill.' [FOOTNOTE: Submission 241, Residents Against the Richmond Valley Incinerators Inc, p 2; Submission 95, Boomerang Alliance and Total Environment Centres, p4.]

Question put and passed.

Dr Cohn moved: That the report be amended by omitting all instances of 'energy from waste' and inserting instead 'waste-to-energy'.

Question put and passed.

Chapter 3

No amendments.

Chapter 4

Dr Cohn moved: That the following new paragraph be inserted after paragraph 4.21:

> 'However, the Public Health Association of Australia stated that "Most of the evidence for harm comes from research on older types of incinerators. Industry claims newer incinerators are better designed and safer. However, most have not been in operation long enough for evidence for or against their safety to emerge. Therefore, a precautionary approach is warranted. Existing research is of varying quality and subject to multiple confounders making comparison of incinerators and effects incomplete.'" [FOOTNOTE: Submission 376, Public Health Association of Australia, p 3.]

Question put and passed.

Mr Roberts moved: That the following new finding be inserted after paragraph 4.95 and that further footnotes be inserted at the appropriate point at paragraph 4.63:

'**Finding 9**

The proposed facility at Woodlawn is located within the Sydney drink water catchment.'

Question put and passed.

Dr Cohn moved: That Finding 10 be amended by omitting 'Australia has limited long-term experience with these facilities. As a result, assessments of potential long-term health impacts necessarily draw on international evidence, which is not uniformly reassuring.' and inserting instead 'There is not yet long-term assessment of their impact.'.

Question put and passed.

Ms Suvaal moved: That Recommendation 1 be amended by omitting 'where energy from waste facilities are supported by councils and communities,' and inserting instead 'for any waste-to-energy projects'.

Question put and passed.

Ms Suvaal moved: That Recommendation 2 be amended by inserting 'and can support the incorporation of citizen science' after 'independently verified'.

Question put and passed.

Dr Cohn moved: That Finding 13 be amended by omitting at the end 'in the absence of assurances that this will not occur'.

Question put and passed.

Ms Suvaal moved: That Recommendation 3 be omitted: 'That the NSW Government commission an independent review of the Woodlawn Eco-Precinct examining its compliance history, regulatory breaches and rectification measures'.

Question put and negatived.

Dr Cohn moved:

a) That Finding 19 be omitted: 'The Waste Contractors & Recyclers Association of NSW estimates that restricting energy from waste facilities to four regional precincts could result in up to $25 million a year in additional transport costs'

b) That Finding 21 be amended to insert: 'with some industry sources estimating that this cost could be as high as $25 million'. after 'emissions.'

Question put and passed.

Ms Suvaal moved: That Recommendation 4 be amended by omitting 'commit' and inserting instead 'as part of the waste levy review, consider'.

Question put and negatived.

Ms Suvaal moved: That Recommendation 4 be amended by omitting 'the government to report annually to Parliament on levy revenue, how it is applied and to quantified outcomes'.

Question put and passed.

Dr Cohn moved: That Finding 22 be omitted: 'Local Government NSW is of the view that, to secure long-term council contracts, energy from waste facilities would need to remain cost-competitive with landfill, including the full life-cycle costs of transport, processing and residual waste management'.

Mr Roberts moved: That the motion of Dr Cohn be amended by omitting 'Local Government NSW is' and inserting instead 'Local government representatives are'.

Amendment of Mr Roberts put and passed.

Original question of Dr Cohn, as amended, put and passed.

Ms Suvaal moved: That Recommendation 6 be amended by omitting 'immediately' after 'That the NSW Government'.

Question put and negatived.

Ms Suvaal moved: That Recommendation 6 be amended by inserting 'including environmental impacts and emissions impacts', before 'in New South Wales'.

Question put and passed.

Chapter 5

Dr Cohn moved: That Finding 27 be omitted: 'The existing policy framework excludes councils' ability to develop waste processing infrastructure outside identified precincts and is impacting proposals that are perceived to incorporate energy from waste elements'.

Question put and negatived.

Mr Roberts moved: That Finding 27 be amended by omitting 'council's ability to develop' and inserting instead 'the development of'.

Question put and passed.

Ms Suvaal moved: That Recommendation 7 be omitted: 'That the NSW Government impose a moratorium on all current energy from waste proposals and commission an independent, transparent review of all designated precincts, including the site-selection criteria and processes, the restriction to regional areas, and the inconsistencies of the current restricted regional precinct model, with the full findings and analysis publicly released'.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Dr Kaine, Mr Primrose, Ms Suvaal.

Noes: Mrs Overall, Mr Barrett, Dr Cohn, Mr Roberts.

Question resolved in the negative.

Dr Cohn moved:

a) That Recommendation 8 be omitted: 'That the NSW Government review the existing precinct model and give consideration to an alternative model for potential various forms of energy from waste facilities, focusing on:

- The need to evaluate proposals on their merits, including environmental performance, proximity to waste generation, infrastructure availability, cumulative impacts and community support
- The opportunity for potential sites to be nominated and considered against strict criteria, including community acceptance and
- The publication of results to ensure robust, consistent and comprehensive assessment.'

b) And that the following new recommendation be inserted instead:

'Recommendation X

That the NSW Government extend the existing prohibition on waste-to-energy incineration in Greater Sydney to apply across all of New South Wales.'

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Dr Cohn.

Noes: Mrs Overall, Mr Barrett, Dr Kaine, Mr Primrose, Mr Roberts, Ms Suvaal.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr Roberts moved: That the following new recommendation be inserted before Recommendation 12:

'Recommendation X

That, given the proposed facility at Woodlawn is located within the Sydney drinking water catchment, the NSW Environment Protection Authority, in consultation with WaterNSW, establish a regime of regular and independent site monitoring to ensure ongoing compliance with the facility's environmental protection licence and with the requirement that the development have a neutral of beneficial effect on water quality.

Question put and passed.

Ms Suvaal moved: That Recommendation 12 be omitted: 'That the NSW Government establish a government-led consultation framework for large-scale infrastructure projects, ensuring engagement is not solely proponent-led, requires minimum thresholds for community engagement, consultation and acceptance, and provides host communities with funded access to independent technical, environmental and health information' and the following new recommendation be inserted instead:

'Recommendation X

That the NSW Government establish clear minimum requirements for consultation on large-scale infrastructure projects, ensuring engagement is not solely proponent-led, requires minimum thresholds for community engagement, consultation and provides host communities with access to independent technical, environmental and health information.'

Question put and passed.

Dr Cohn moved: That Finding 31 be omitted.

Question put and passed.

Dr Cohn moved: That Finding 32 be omitted.

Question put and negatived.

Mr Roberts moved: That Finding 32 amended by omitting 'the renewables rollout' and instead inserting 'State Significant Developments' before 'on regional communities.'

Question put and passed.

Ms Suvaal moved: That Recommendation 15 be amended by omitting 'establish' and inserting instead 'consider' after 'That the NSW Government'

Question put and negatived.

Chapter 6

Dr Cohn moved: That the following new paragraph be inserted after paragraph 6.5:

> "NSW has not achieved its target of 80 per cent diversion from landfill via recycling in line with the agreed National Waste Policy targets, with recovery currently at only 64 per cent.' [FOOTNOTE: Answers to supplementary questions, Mr Mike Ritchie and Dr Ron Wainberg, MRA Consulting, 22 July 2026, p 4].

Question put and passed.

Dr Cohn moved: That the following new paragraph be inserted after paragraph 6.24:

> 'MRA Consulting identified a number of additional product items that should be covered by a mandatory extended producer responsibility scheme, in addition to batteries: packaging, tyres, motor vehicles, mattresses, mobile phones, coffee pods, paint, industrial plastic pipes, pallets, plant pots, solar panels, clothing, computers and TVs, food, bulka bags, printer cartridges, household chemicals, soft plastic, chemical drums, fluorescent tubes, healthcare products, furniture, polystyrene, PVC, bikes, oil containers, refrigerant gases, child car seats, vapes and e-cigarettes, and pharmaceuticals.' [FOOTNOTE: Answers to supplementary questions, Mr Mike Ritchie and Dr Ron Wainberg, MRA Consulting, 22 July 2026, p 2].

Question put and passed.

Dr Cohn moved: That the following new paragraphs be inserted after paragraph 6.25:

> 'While some stakeholders indicated a preference for federal reform to reduce plastic packaging, this reform has recently been abandoned by the federal government. The federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water has indicated it will work with states and territories on opportunities to improve packaging standards.' [FOOTNOTE: Shalailah Medhora, 'Labor quietly shelves promise to mandate more recycled material in packaging', *ABC*, 8

September 2026, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-09-08/labor-broken-promise-on-plastic-recycling/107125916].

'The Australia Institute recommended a tax on virgin (non-recycled) plastic packaging, such as the tax in place in the European Union, and cited data indicating that a clear majority of Australians support regulatory and legislative reforms that would reduce plastic waste beyond what current exists.' [FOOTNOTE: Submission 227, The Australia Institute, p 3].

Question put and passed.

Dr Cohn moved: the following new paragraph and recommendation be inserted after paragraph 6.50:

'Given the federal government's abandonment of plastic packaging reform, and public support for additional measures to reduce plastic waste beyond what currently exists, the committee recommends that the NSW government restrict, tax or disincentivise non-recycled plastic packaging, such as the tax in place in the European Union.'

'Recommendation X

That, in addition to the measures proposed by the Plastic Reduction and Container Recycling Bill 2026, the NSW government restrict, tax or disincentivise non-recycled plastic packaging.'

Question put and negatived.

Ms Suvaal moved: That the motion of Dr Cohn be amended by omitting 'restrict, tax or' after 'NSW government' and inserting instead 'consider the most effective ways to'.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mrs Overall, Mr Barrett, Dr Kaine, Mr Primrose, Mr Roberts, Ms Suvaal.

Noes: Dr Cohn.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Original question of Dr Cohn, as amended, put and passed.

Dr Cohn moved: That Finding 35 be amended by omitting 'like Bega Valley' after 'councils'.

Question put and passed.

Dr Cohn moved: That Finding 37 be amended by omitting 'such as anaerobic digestion, pyrolysis and gasification' after 'technologies'.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Dr Cohn

Noes: Mrs Overall, Mr Barrett, Dr Kaine, Mr Primrose, Mr Roberts, Ms Suvaal.

Question resolved in the negative.

Dr Cohn moved: That Finding 40 be amended by omitting: 'Accordingly, securing a reliable and ongoing supply of waste feedstock will be critical to supporting these long-term operations' and inserting instead 'The reliance of these facilities on ongoing waste feedstock threatens to undermine circular economy goals and initiatives'.

Mr Roberts moved: That the motion of Dr Cohn be amended by omitting 'threatens' and inserting instead 'has the potential'.

Amendment of Mr Roberts put and passed.

Original question of Dr Cohn, as amended, put and passed.

Dr Cohn moved: That Recommendation 18 be amended by omitting 'targets' after 'recycling'.

Question put and passed.

Ms Suvaal moved: That Recommendation 17 be amended by omitting 'where energy from waste facilities are supported by councils and communities' after 'That,'.

Mr Roberts moved: That the motion of Ms Suvaal be amended by omitting 'are supported by councils and communities' and inserting instead 'are proposed'.

Amendment of Mr Roberts put and passed.

Original question of Ms Suvaal, as amended, put and passed.

Ms Suvaal moved: That Recommendation 19 be omitted: ' That the NSW Government establish a dedicated agency with clear responsibility for the strategic planning, coordination and oversight of waste management services and infrastructure across New South Wales and establish an independent community advocate body to represent community interests in waste management decision-making.'

Question put and negatived.

Mr Roberts moved: That:

The draft report as amended be the report of the committee and that the committee present the report to the House;
The transcripts of evidence, submissions, tabled documents, answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions, and correspondence relating to the inquiry be tabled in the House with the report;
Upon tabling, all unpublished attachments to submissions be kept confidential by the committee;
Upon tabling, all unpublished transcripts of evidence, submissions, tabled documents, answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions, and correspondence relating to the inquiry, be published by the committee, except for those documents kept confidential by resolution of the committee;
The committee secretariat correct any typographical, grammatical and formatting errors prior to tabling;
The committee secretariat be authorised to update any committee comments where necessary to reflect changes to recommendations or new recommendations resolved by the committee;
Dissenting statements be provided to the secretariat within 24 hours after receipt of the draft minutes of the meeting;
The secretariat is tabling the report on Tuesday, 20 October 2026;
The Chair to advise the secretariat and members if they intend to hold a press conference, and if so, the date and time.

7. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 2.10 pm, *sine die*.

Janelle Taouk
Committee Clerk

Appendix 4 Dissenting Statements

Dr Amanda Cohn MLC, The Greens

The committee heard a myriad of reasons why incineration of general residual waste should not proceed in NSW.

It is clear that these proposals are on the table as a means to deal with Sydney's residual waste, not primarily as a means of producing energy, since general waste incineration is an inefficient means of producing energy.

Communities' valid concerns about the risks these incinerators pose to clean air, water, and soil and to human health, have not been adequately addressed. While newer incinerators are touted as less polluting and less harmful than older technology, there is not yet long-term data on health outcomes to support these claims, as the Public Health Association of Australia pointed out.

New and expanded landfill is not without environmental or health risk, either. But incinerators require constant feedstock of residual waste to be viable, and undermine long-term efforts to reduce waste.

While this report contains a number of valuable recommendations, it falls short by not clearly recommending that the NSW government extend the existing prohibition on waste-to-energy incineration in Greater Sydney to apply across all of New South Wales. The Greens have a consistent track record of fighting for a clear prohibition. In 2020 my colleague Cate Faehrmann introduced the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Prohibition of Waste to Energy Incinerators) Bill 2020 which was voted down by Labor, Liberal, National, and Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party MPs.

Without a clear prohibition in place, the four regional communities around precincts at Parkes, Tarago, Lithgow and Tomago, where incineration is permitted by the current framework, will be left with uncertainty for years to come. The Greens recognise how tough this is, especially for the hundreds of individuals, volunteers and community-based organisations who have spent so much time and energy asking questions, organising campaigns, and contributing to this inquiry on behalf of their local communities.

It is extraordinary that the government continues to promote incineration as a necessary part of the solution to waste management in NSW, when not all steps have been taken to reduce waste at its source. NSW has not achieved its target of 80% diversion from landfill via recycling in line with the agreed National Waste Policy targets, with recovery currently at only 64%. Now that the federal government has abandoned its commitment to regulate plastic packaging, NSW should lead in this space by restricting, taxing or disincentivising non-recycled plastic packaging. It is disappointing that this recommendation was watered down by committee members.

Steps like the food organics and garden organics (FOGO) mandate are an important step in the right direction, but some councils aren't getting the financial support they need to be able to implement it.

In this term of the Parliament, the government, with the support of the Greens, passed strong legislation enabling mandated extended producer responsibility and product stewardship. To date the government has only applied this legislation to regulate lithium-ion batteries, and are considering its application to solar panels. It's clear that there is a very long list of products that should be covered by a mandatory extended producer responsibility scheme. This is the kind of government intervention that is needed for the producers of waste to be held responsible for cleaning up their own mess. That responsibility should not fall on individuals, local communities or councils.

The work that needs to be done to fix waste management in NSW didn't start with this inquiry, nor does it end with it. The Greens will continue to work across all 3 levels of government, and in the community, to make producers responsible for the waste they produce and to build a system that makes minimising their environmental impact easy for people.

Hon Emily Suvaal MLC, Australian Labor Party

The Committee have produced a detailed, clear and accurate report, which is faithful to the evidence given. The Findings are largely consistent with this report.

However, some of the recommendations contained in the report do not properly reflect this work and undermines the report's own conclusion that the technology can be safe when managed with strong guidelines and standards – as it is in NSW and globally.

In addition, it is not viable to suggest a moratorium on Energy from Waste without providing clear alternatives to manage NSW's residual waste needs.

NSW has a waste management crisis. There are clear projections showing that Greater Sydney is poised to run out of landfill for residual (red-bin) waste by 2030. Regional councils are also struggling, with many already trucking waste interstate to landfills.

A moratorium on Energy from Waste is not possible without viable alternatives in place. Some energy from waste facilities will be required in NSW. The state may also require additional landfills and must increase recycling capacity.

Further work on the circular economy is also critical, and the NSW Government has taken strong and decisive steps in this regard. This includes through passing the FOGO mandates, expanding the Return and Earn program, and single-use plastics phase-outs. Furthermore, NSW is the only state to implement broad ranging legislation for the circular economy *The Product Lifecycle Responsibility Act*. Some of this work started under the previous Coalition Government, who it appears have now decided to change their opinions and policies.

Strong safeguards and guidelines are needed for Energy from Waste, and this was canvassed in the report in the section "Best practice and international standards". Strong guidelines and standards are essential, just like for any infrastructure project, including landfill. Strong environmental protections are also necessary – and currently exist in the framework. Indeed, the Chief Scientist and other independent scientists who gave evidence spoke to NSW's strong regulatory framework.

While some stakeholders stated it is impossible to know the impacts of Energy from Waste, others disputed this with examples of the international evidence that exists. The report also shows clear examples of facilities being used in highly populated areas in clean cities around the world. In addition, the NSW EPA has adopted standards that are in line with global best practice and the report echoes this.

It is acknowledged that communities may be reluctant to host waste infrastructure, even where the proposed developments are recycling facilities. Strong community consultation and participation, benefit-sharing, and partnership with Councils, is important to any successful infrastructure project.

Finally, the evidence confirmed it was the previous liberal-national government that announced and legislated energy from waste precincts in NSW.