

4. Susan Stannard, Wingecarribee Shire Council

One key objective of the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act is “to promote the orderly and economic use and development of land”. The generally accepted process for doing so is through the assessment of both the strategic and site specific merit of a proposal, a process Council fully supports and consistently applies.

The Plasrefine proposal provides a master class in the crucial significance of assessing both strategic and site specific merit. Zoning is a blunt instrument. Just because a development could occur under a zone, does not necessarily mean that it should.

The Southern Highlands Innovation Park (SHIP) is a regionally significant, long term employment precinct of some 1,000 hectares of industrial zoned land. Through grant funding from the NSW Department of Regional Planning, a Master Plan and detailed Governance Strategy for the precinct were prepared and have been recently exhibited.

The proposed site is located within the south eastern area of the SHIP, an area nominated in the Master Plan as a Research, Training and Advanced Manufacturing precinct and it is already functioning as such.

To locate a proposal such as Plasrefine within this precinct would set a precedent which would significantly undermine the intent and viability of the Master Plan to facilitate the orderly and economic development of the land.

The site adjoins a residential community extending across some 90 hectares, in response to this juxtaposition, design criteria for the precinct emphasise more articulated built forms rather than traditional big box designs.

Due to the inherent nature of its internal operations, the proposed Plasrefine facility cannot reflect any of the design aspirations for this precinct. The only articulation to its bulk would be the proposed 22 metre exhaust stacks referenced in documents but not depicted in any illustrations.

Only the 20 metre Braddon Road corridor separates the site from the northern edge of the adjoining and well established residential community.

Based on an estimated average of one truck movement every 7 minutes, Braddon Road would carry 90 trucks a day as they accelerate up the eastern side of the building and out on to Braddon Road as they leave the site.

Little attention has been given to the estimated 280 additional worker vehicle movements per day. The Operational Traffic Management Plan does not consider these movements, the assumption being they are considered in the Work Travel Plan, a document which is advisory only. Nor will these vehicle movements be restricted to Braddon Road as they can be expected to also impact Beaconsfield Road, the main thoroughfare through the residential community to the south.

The planned precincts of the Master Plan were to also promote the orderly and economic use of the SHIP through enhanced traffic management within and across the entire ship with higher traffic uses being proposed for precincts further west closer to primary access roads. One key benefit of this arrangement would be the better management of the road and rail level crossing interface that traverses the SHIP.

These concerns have been raised consistently by Council from the outset and appear poorly considered or totally ignored.

Council has also consistently raised concerns about the discharge of microplastics and their potential impact on the environment, its residents and visitors and does not consider them adequately identified or quantified.

To date assessment has centred on particulate-matter health criteria only. There is no assessment of where the microplastics dust would settle out and what that cumulative impact would be.

The proposal has the potential to double the volume of microplastics received by the Moss Vale sewage Treatment Plant, resulting in an increase in microplastics making their way into the local waterways, the local water supply and the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment.

Council firmly believes a full assessment of the potential impact of microplastics on human health, on local agriculture including livestock, crops and feed supplies, on food chains, on nearby land uses, on water catchments and water courses, on ecology and the local economy remains outstanding.

The circular economy is not the only economy that matters to the Wingecarribee Shire. The visitor economy is also integral to the Shire's economic wellbeing, an economy which relies on our environment and the quality of our produce.

We have an obligation to our community to ensure that the decisions of today do not adversely impact present and future generations.

Thank you.