



Thank you for permitting me to speak today.

It's not the right site

I am a local resident of Moss Vale. I have lived in the Southern Highlands for most of life. I feel privileged to raise a family in the area. I am speaking today on behalf of my friends and family to express our alarming concerns and disbelief regarding the decision to recommend PlasRefine plastic recycling facility on the current proposed site in Moss Vale.

We get it. Recycling is an incredibly important part of our future. But not when it can potentially create more problems than you seek to rectify.

Outside of the blatantly obvious and very serious concerns of:

- *Road safety, congestion and degradation. A truck every 7 minutes. Inevitably this can't be coordinated and will lead to truck banking.*
- *People's homes and a daycare facility within a few hundred meters of the site and many more just beyond with immense smells, sounds and vibrations inevitable, not to mention the rodent issues that is well known to impact the industry via contaminated wastes.*
- *The 'what if a Fire occurs' dangers. How do you evacuate a childcare centre, aged care facilities and large schools at the rate that would be required?*

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The people of the Southern Highlands are connected to their place. They live here for its beauty, cleanliness and ^{quality of} lifestyle. The health concerns to residents of the Wingecaribee Shire and beyond are astronomical. As we have heard, the site sits on two riparian zones and connected waterways. Riparian zones work as safeguards for the environment. These zones are inevitably going to be overloaded with microplastic and chemicals from the facility which will be transported into the Wingecaribee River. The same river that my daughter and her school friends swim in every Friday afternoon throughout summer, where friends and families walk along the river connected to its natural awe and where we can sit and watch the platypus. It's the same river system that feeds into Warragamba Dam, the water system that provides for Sydney. It is the foundation of many ecosystems.

Let's not forget that rivers, ponds, wetlands, and aquifers are all linked underground. What you do to one, will impact the others.

I question how Plasrefine intends to keep microplastics and chemicals out of our waterways and ensure that our spiritual places are not destroyed.

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Research clearly highlights that existing plastic recycling facilities omit toxic pollutants into the air. These pollutants are linked to serious health concerns. Those working within the facility, our community, are at even greater risk of a rapid health deterioration. In addition, the distribution of odour and microplastics through our wind patterns across all surrounding towns is highly likely. We live on agricultural land, a resource that is diminishing worldwide. There is evidence that microplastics found in soils are accumulating in vegetables, fruits and crops. Research has shown that microplastics enter plants through their root systems from contaminated water and air. This allows them to be absorbed into edible parts of the crops, which are then ingested by consumers. This will impact the home grower as largely as the commercial. The implications for health include potential disruptions in the digestive systems and exposure to toxic chemicals that microplastics often carry, like PFAS.

What filtration systems does Plasrefine intend to use that will ensure that odour, microplastics and chemicals do not end up in our waterways, air and environment, which have the potential to cause catastrophic health problems and irreversible pollution?

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What consideration has been given to the potential, and highly likely, dismantling of the Southern Highlands Innovation Precinct, the SHIP, if Plasrefine was built? The SHIP is aimed at fostering economic growth and innovation in the Wingecarribee Shire and surrounding regions. It clearly aims to support community strengths and regional needs in agriculture, innovative industries and research. One consideration of the SHIPS planning framework strategic goals is "to ensure that future development is compatible with the character of the area and results in a high-quality built environment." How would Plasrefine's multi storey, nearly 8-acre factories intend to maintain the character and integrity of the area and support the high-quality requirements? Or does it intend to vandalise our vertical landscape aswell? Furthermore, The SHIP provides a strong platform in giving youth something to aspire towards and it will keep the community together and strong, rather than fragmenting it through people wanting out of a toxic environment. Don't sink the SHIP.

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Research highlights that recycling plastic remains highly inefficient, global recycling success rates are extremely low for collected mixed plastics. The diversity of plastic types, significant contamination issues, and degradation of plastic quality after each cycle challenge the process immensely. As a result, a large quantity of collected plastics end up unusable and in landfills, perpetuating

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environmental pollution. Plasrefine currently state they will be recycling up to 120,000 tonnes of plastic. I ask what systems and procedures are in place, with potential of thousands of tonnes of unusable plastic waste generated? And where will it go?

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Lastly, I would also like to know what Plasrefine, and the state government, are doing to help reduce the plastic we consume, the core of this issue? Or is it viewed as another commodity to be mined like all the rest?

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