



ALEXANDRA SPRINGETT

OBJECT

Submission ID: 210756

Organisation: N/A	Key issues: <i>Social impacts, Visual impacts, design and landscaping, Land use compatibility (surrounding land uses), Traffic, Other issues</i>
Location: New South Wales 2576	
Attachment: N/A	

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The DPHI has identified the key issues re the Plasrefine plastics recycling plant proposed for Moss Vale as being: social, visual, the proximity to the Garvan Institute, and operational traffic impacts.

While these are valid impactful issues, the core one is that a plastics recycling factory is a hazardous industry, releasing toxic microplastics into both air and water.

The Plasrefine building design - with several air stacks, and roller doors operating constantly to allow passage of in and outgoing trucks - would certainly release toxic microplastics into the air. These airborne microplastics are well documented to cross the placenta of an unborn baby, cause cancer in adults, and attach to bees instead of pollen being able to do so, thereby disabling pollination of agricultural crops.

Despite the applicant's assurances, local water will also be contaminated - such as the adjacent Wingecarribee River, which is also part of Sydney's water supply, flowing as it does into the Warragamba Dam. Professor Ian Wright, a water scientist at Western Sydney University, has done intensive research into this waterway and concluded that toxic industry such as a coal mine would severely impact the quality of both local and Sydney drinking water. A plastics recycling factory would also emit toxins, in the form of microplastics, and these would pollute the river as well.

Another potential, in fact probable, hazard is fire - and there have been many at Australian and overseas plastic recycling factories in the last few years. A fire at this Plasrefine factory sited very close to residences, schools, day care centres, and indeed much of Moss Vale, would devastate the township and also send toxic smoke over most of the Southern Highlands with obvious negative impacts. In addition, the extinguishing material used by firefighters is PFAS foam, which is in itself toxic, and would certainly enter our waterways. Of note is the article re PFAS contamination in the Sydney Morning Herald (October 22 2024) - it's entitled 'Enormous Implications: Australia's tap water clean up could cost billions'.

The IPC made a sound decision a few years ago when it ruled against the Hume Coal mine then proposed for the Southern Highlands. The Commission's determination was made on the basis of detriments to water and air, environmental destruction, peril to local agriculture, and the impacts of huge truck movements on both state highways and local roads.

It will be hoped, in recognition of the same impacts surely being caused by Plasrefine, that this good reasoning will prevail to the hazardous industry of this plastics recycling factory being proposed for the Southern Highlands now.