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OBJECT

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Rethinking Plastic Recycling Refineries in Moss Vale

Proposing a plastic recycling refinery near residential homes, vital research facilities, and schools isn't just a misguided idea—it's a potential catastrophe waiting to happen. The delicate balance between industrial development and environmental preservation is teetering on the edge in Moss Vale. The proposed refinery presents numerous risks that cannot be ignored, from compromising human health and safety to threatening local wildlife and ecosystems. Let's explore why this project should be halted and what alternatives we have to address our plastic recycling needs effectively.

Proximity to Residential Areas

Locating a plastic recycling refinery within approximately 200 meters of residential areas poses significant risks to human health and safety. In the event of a fire, which is not an uncommon occurrence in such facilities, the proximity would make it nearly impossible to contain the damage and prevent loss of life. The potential for toxic fumes and hazardous chemicals to spread rapidly is a terrifying reality that residents should not have to face.

A community's right to safety in their homes is paramount. When industrial projects encroach on this safety, it is the responsibility of the government to take a stand and protect its citizens from foreseeable harm.

Threat to the Garvan Institute and Educational Facilities

The Garvan Institute's Australian BioResources (ABR) facility, a state-of-the-art centre for breeding mice crucial to vital medical research, sits a mere 50 meters from the proposed site. Disruption from noise, vibrations, and potential fires could irrevocably damage ongoing research into diseases like cancer and mental illness.

Furthermore, situating the refinery close to schools and childcare centres within a 2 km radius endangers the health of young children. Exposure to toxic substances from potential air or water filtration failures is a risk we should never impose on the most vulnerable in our community.

Environmental Impact and Biodiversity Loss

The environmental costs of establishing such a facility in Moss Vale are immense. Increased heavy vehicle traffic will contribute to noise and air pollution, while the removal of natural habitats for endangered species like the microbat and platypus will lead to significant biodiversity loss.

The proximity to riparian zones and the Wingecarribee River poses a grave threat to water quality, with potential runoff containing microplastics and other toxins. Protecting our water sources is crucial, as they feed into the Warragamba Dam, a primary water supply for Sydney and Goulburn.

Fire Risks and Inadequate Emergency Services

The fire risk associated with plastic recycling refineries cannot be overstated. Since 2019, there have been over 19 devastating fires at such facilities in Australia alone. The local fire services in Moss Vale are ill-equipped to handle the extreme demands of a fire that could reach temperatures of ~1000 degrees centigrade, requiring over 80 firefighters and numerous pump and hazmat trucks.



The thick toxic plumes that result from these fires pose severe health risks to nearby residents, potentially leading to long-term illnesses and environmental degradation. The planning of industrial projects should never disregard the safety capabilities of local emergency services.

Economic and Social Consequences

The introduction of a heavy industrial facility in an area known for its viticulture and agritourism will likely deter tourists and impede local economic growth. Moss Vale's charm and appeal lie in its natural beauty and community-focused industries. This project threatens to overshadow these attributes with pollution and industrial blight.

Additionally, the psychological impact on residents, including property devaluation and stress from living near such a facility, cannot be overlooked. It's a fundamental human right to live in a clean, safe, and sustainable environment—a right enshrined in recent legislative amendments.

Exploring Alternative Solutions

Rather than focusing on the short-term gains of a new recycling refinery, we must look towards sustainable solutions that reduce our reliance on plastic in the first place. Encouraging large supermarket chains and corporations to minimise plastic packaging can lead to meaningful change. Government policies should prioritize reducing plastic production at its source and not just managing its aftermath.

Taking a Stand for a Sustainable Future

The proposed plastic recycling refinery in Moss Vale is simply not the right fit for our community. It threatens the health and well-being of residents, compromises essential research, and risks the environment and local wildlife.

We urge the government to take decisive action against this project and explore sustainable alternatives that align with Moss Vale's identity and future aspirations. Let's advocate for a cleaner, safer, and more sustainable community.
