

**Summary statement:**

I strongly object to Veolia's proposed incinerator being built in Tarago (Woodlawn ARC: SSD-21184278) due to its health, economic and environment impacts.

**Reasons why I object:****1) Health impacts**

I am reliant on rain water for drinking, as well as having large amounts of food production areas (eg: orchard). I'm very concerned about the impacts on air pollution and fall-out from the proposed incinerator on my health, as these pollutants infiltrate my drinking water, soil and food. In particular:

- Plume modelling (Tarago Plume Plot, [www.plumeplotter.com/tarago/](http://www.plumeplotter.com/tarago/)) shows air pollution will affect my suburb, as well as other areas reliant on rain water and food production (eg: Braidwood, Bungendore, Murrumbateman, Gunning, Marulan, Yass)
- The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) indicates that the incinerator will exceed the NSW Government safety standards for air emissions. In particular, there will be Other than Normal Operating times (Eg: start-ups) where the emissions will exceed safety limits.
- Veolia has a history of exceeding safety standards (evidenced through previous EPA fines for waste offences and offence odour breaches). Given this, I am very concerned that Veolia will not be able to meet its safety commitments.
- Results from large US cohort studies suggest that long-term exposure to low concentrations of airborne pollutants is associated with chronic health effects. A consensus has then been emerging among public health experts that airborne pollutants, even at the lower current ambient levels, aggravate morbidity, especially respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, and lead to premature mortality. While the argument can be made that modern incinerators have lower health effects, a recent (2020) review identified a range of adverse health effects, including significant associations with some neoplasia, congenital anomalies, infant deaths and miscarriages. See 'The health impacts of waste incineration: a systematic review' available here: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1753-6405.12939> Overall, they identified 61 (66%) papers that demonstrated a significant adverse outcome in relation to waste incineration. Of these, 34 (37%) showed exposure to elevated levels of known pollutants, nine (10%) identified an increased risk of developing some neoplasia, nine (10%) found a correlation with adverse reproductive outcomes, and nine (10%) found a link to other diseases such as hypertension or reduced lung function. The potential health impacts of this incinerator cannot be disregarded.

## **2) Local community and economy impacts**

House prices and the local economy will be negatively impacted due to the proximity of the incinerator. The area surrounding Tarago is renowned for its wine and truffle production. Even if no adverse effects are identified, the incinerator's proximity is enough to negatively impact sales, export and tourism to the area.

Although the incinerator will produce some jobs, this is only estimated to be 40 full-time positions, with some of these for overseas experts (not the local community/economy). This does not compensate for the damage the incinerator will cause to the region (and its reputation), through the loss of food/wine production/sales and tourism.

Veolia has already been fined for breaching odour controls and other waste management requirements in Tarago. It is likely they will continue this pattern with the incinerator, further harming the community and the liveability of the area.

## **3) Environmental impacts**

Some species of plants and animals are incredibly sensitive to even low levels of toxins. For example, frogs may undergo mutation. There are also concerns that orchids that were once present in bush beside busy roads and highways have failed to re-emerge after a few years due to the increase in toxins from highway traffic.

Both these indicator groups are present in the Tarago area and are already under pressure from land clearing. There are a large number of orchids listed nationally and at the state level as rare or endangered. The ACT and NSW area near the incinerator contains many populations of these orchids.

## **4) Greenhouse and PFAS contamination**

The incinerator will also contribute to climate change through the production of greenhouse gases. New data suggests that commercial incineration of polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) doesn't break down the chemicals. Instead, it spreads them to other surrounding areas.

A professor at Bennington College (David Bond) says "It's the very definition of foolhardy to try to keep burning these things. By design, they resist thermal degradation."

Most governments and community areas have accepted the need to move to more sustainable ways of living, through recycling and renewable energy. Burning garbage does not fit in with this new model of sustainable living.

## **Declarations**

- I haven't made any political donations in the last two years.
- I acknowledge and accept the Department's disclaimer and declaration.

Thanks for your assistance.

Cheers,