

Subject: Objection to the proposed Tarago Waste Incinerator

To whom it may concern,

I would like to lodge my objection to the proposed Tarago Waste Incinerator. Please find below the required details.

- 1- Vicki Wotherspoon, 81 Ocean Drive, Evans Head 2473 NSW
- 2- The project name is **Woodlawn ARC: SSD- 21184278**
- 3- **I strongly object to the application.**
- 4- The reasons I object to the application are based on an array of environmental, health, economic and overall ethical reasons. I cannot comprehend how such a proposal can be explored noting the environmental and health impacts, already proven by similar facilities around the world. My children, and beautiful grandchildren live in close proximity to this proposed site and I am devastated that they are faced with this uncertainty. It is obvious, on my recent visit to the region that the community are not supportive of this facility, that they feel greenwashed by local companies, and their very valid concerns are being dismissed. I am against this proposal for the following reasons:
 - a. **Climate action is in contrary to such a proposal** - Veolia's incinerator will emit **toxic air pollution** 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for 25 years, which will spread throughout the region from Canberra to Goulburn, and all surrounding towns. This is surely a backward step in our environmental management of waste. This incinerator will contribute to climate change by emitting 140,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases (CO₂) each year. To approve the project is inconsistent with the NSW government commitment to Net 0 emissions by 2030. Further, such an incinerator provides no incentive for companies to engage in recycling. It is against the 3 R's – reduce, reuse, recycle. How is this progressive?
 - b. **This facility is not needed.** There is no need to divert one-third of waste received by Veolia in Tarago to an incinerator which will pollute the region when there is sufficient capacity already in the existing facility. The current facility captures methane emissions to fuel/power generator that creates and supplies electricity to the grid. This current arrangement is working. Why are we proposing such a backward step?
 - c. This is prime agricultural land. We often visit the many wineries and farms when in the region. The land is fertile and incredible in this region. The **pollution** from the proposed incinerator has been greenwashed – scientific studies show it will include acid gases, toxic heavy metal particulates toxic heavy metal particulates (mercury, lead cadmium) and persistent organic particulates (dioxins, furans, PCBs, PFAS). Particulate pollution can lead to decreased lung function, cardiac disease and death. In addition to polluting the air, dioxins and furans will accumulate in the surrounding environment over time in soil and water and are absorbed by plants, crops and animals. Our grandson was born at 34 weeks and has suffered with chronic lung

disease. As an active 18 month old, my daughter will need to monitor the wind gusts to ensure he is not outside on the days that the incinerator is blowing towards Bungendore. This is a region that recently approved the wind farm initiatives, so suffice to say wind will be an issue. His little life will be significantly impacted and his health jeopardised.

- d. Further, this incinerator will impact the **health of the entire region**, through the accumulation of forever chemicals in the surrounding environment. It is an intergenerational burden, and as an older Australian, I am passionate about my ability to leave a legacy in proper environmental management.
- e. It appears you state the obvious in your own plan – **this is not safe for Sydney** - The NSW Government acknowledges in its own *Energy from Waste Infrastructure Plan* that waste incinerators impact human health stating “Populations can still experience health impacts when emissions are below the national standards, and for some common air pollutants, there is no safe threshold of impact”. This defies belief really as this is acknowledgement that these incinerators are NOT SAFE. They are surely not safe for my beautiful grandchildren in Tarago.
- f. This is **a company with a terrible track record**. My husband and I have witnessed this first hand in recent trips to the region, noticing the large trucks on the roads, often emitting waste or toxic fumes as they travel. It was actually quite shocking for us as visitors to this region. The proposed incinerator will exceed NSW government safety standards for air emissions during start-up, shut-down and many other ‘non-standard’ operating conditions. Veolia’s overseas incinerators often exceed safety standards and Veolia has a track record locally for failing to comply with license conditions at their existing Woodlawn facility. Veolia have spent over 15 years failing to operate their existing facility within license conditions, have received multiple infringements, failed to inform the community of pollution to the environment, and attempted to withhold information from the community under freedom of information processes. They have no track record and the community is well aware of their disregard for local people. We could smell the stench when we recently stopped in Tarago – it was putrid and unsettling.
- g. The NSW Government has banned toxic waste incinerators in Sydney due to the risk to human health. When I started looking into this, I realised that in July 2018, the Eastern Creek waste incinerator in Sydney was rejected by the NSW Independent Planning Commission as not being in the public interest. The reasons included concerns about safety, insufficient evidence that the pollution control technologies would be capable of managing emissions, concern about the relationship between air quality impacts and water quality impacts, the possibility of adverse environmental outcomes, and concern about site suitability and human health impacts. The smart decision is that this project must also be completely banned - If they aren’t safe for Sydney then they aren’t safe for the people of this country region.
- h. **There is no social license** - The NSW Energy from Waste Policy states that incinerator proposals are only valid where “community acceptance to operate such a process has been obtained”. There is no consent from the

people. On a recent visit we spoken to members of the Communities Against the Tarago Waste Incinerator Group (CATTI). They have a huge following – families from the local area who are fighting for their right for clean air. There is no community acceptance for a facility in Tarago or anywhere in the Southern Tablelands. I cannot blame them – it is obvious that Veolia have a track record of breaking the rules, withholding information and polluting their environment. If they do not have the social license, this should not go ahead.

5- I have not made a reportable political donations.

6- I acknowledge and accept the Department's disclaimer and declaration.

Thankyou for considering these points and I trust that the NSW Planning Department will make a smart ethical, environmental decision in relation to this proposal. I have been a liberal Government voter my entire life and would be very disappointed if this goes ahead. Let us not repeat the environmental mistakes of the last 50 years. We must move forward with effective environmental policies and leave a lasting legacy of clean air, organic farms and sustainable waste management.

Vicki Wotherspoon

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