



Andrew Barr MLA

Chief Minister

Treasurer

Minister for Climate Action

Minister for Economic Development

Minister for Tourism

Member for Kurrajong

Sally Munk

Planner

NSW Department of Planning and Environment

Submitted via online portal

Dear Ms Munk

I write on behalf of the ACT Government to make a submission on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Woodlawn Advanced Energy Recovery Centre.

The ACT Government structures its waste policies to both protect the local environment and for the benefit of its residents. In recognition of environmental protection and management spanning across borders, the ACT Government also engages regularly and actively with the NSW Government and the local government areas that make up the Canberra Region.

The ACT's 2020-25 Waste-to-Energy Policy bans the use of thermal methods to generate energy from waste in the ACT. The Policy is in response to the community's serious concerns that incinerating waste could create toxic emissions contaminating the local environment or compromising human health, particularly children and those with existing respiratory conditions. It also reflects community support for prioritising waste avoidance and recycling activities ahead of waste-to-energy solutions. The Policy does allow potential energy generation from anaerobic digestion of organic waste.

The ACT Government acknowledges that waste-to-energy incinerators can remove methane and some other pollutants from the environment by burning it and converting it into carbon dioxide. It also notes industry statements on the benefits of using high temperature incineration to help avoid contaminants such as microplastics entering watercourses, compared with landfill.

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The ACT Government understands that including the South Goulburn Mulwaree Precinct as a nominated waste-to-energy precinct in NSW legislation does not mean automatic approval for a specific facility. However, when considering any decision in this precinct and specifically the Veolia application at Tarago, I request that detailed consideration of the potential impact on residential areas in surrounding regions, including in the ACT, be conducted.

Further, the ACT requests that the NSW Government shares this analysis to assist us to consider the impact on our community, and whether an education and awareness program is necessary to better inform Canberra residents.

Community concerns have been raised with the ACT Government in relation to reports of potential wind flow from the proposed facility and impacts to residential areas of Canberra. We have also received representations from stakeholders in the viticulture and broader agricultural industries on the possible impacts a facility of this type may have on the brand of the Canberra region, and on the pristine environmental diversity that is a central economic asset for our local area.

For your awareness, the ACT Government has also recently committed to introducing a human right to a healthy environment. This will require the ACT protects this right when it considers new proposals such as this, and we request that the NSW Government takes this into account.

I also encourage the NSW Government to take a broad consultative approach in its decision-making process for this facility, given the concerns of many surrounding regional communities.

The best contact in the ACT Government in relation to the issues raised in this submission, and to support NSW Government in engaging with the ACT community on this proposal, is Ms Wilhelmina Blount, Executive Group Manager, Policy and Cabinet, in the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate. Ms Blount can be contacted at Wilhelmina.Blount@act.gov.au.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the EIS.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Barr MLA
Chief Minister

13 December 2022