



20 March 2022

SUBMISSION, MOSS VALE PLASTICS RECYCLING FACILITY (PLASREFINE)  
APPLICATION NO. SSD-9409987  
74 – 76 Beaconsfield Road Moss Vale NSW 2577

Dear Sir or Madam,

We wish to lodge our objection to the application for the Moss Vale Plastics Recycling Facility Application #SSD-9409987

Notwithstanding the need for the safe recycling of plastic products this proposed development cannot proceed in the close proximity to a residential growth area.

Our specific objections are as follows:

**Inappropriate Location**

It appears the proposal was based on a view of the Moss Vale and the Greater Southern Highlands from 25 years ago.

The proposed site for the plastics refinery is very close to residential development, Schools, sporting fields and the township of Moss Vale and there are local concerns for the health and safety for the larger community of Moss Vale and the other Villages in the Southern Highlands.

The proposed site does not reflect the present residential growth of the area and is **inconsistent** with other developments in the area to promote living in the Sydney to Canberra corridor – which have also been considered to be of State Significant Development.

Nor does the proposed development recognise or realise the ‘move to the regions’ caused by the COVID 19 Pandemic – which has led to further residential expansion in Moss Vale and the adjoining villages – Berrima, New Berrima, Sutton Forest, Exeter, Bundanoon, Bowral, Welby and Mittagong.

In Moss Vale alone, recently approved residential developments both East and West of the Illawarra Highway/main road exceed 2000 – 3000 home sites, from which can be inferred approximately up to 10000 new residents and (conservatively) about 5000 additional vehicles.

Many of these new residents are young families.

## **Health Issues**

It is recognised that plastics refineries such as proposed emit pollutants which have adverse effects on local populations.

The Environmental Impact Statement indicates that this will not occur at the proposed facility, which conflicts with evidence from other facilities and populations. This appears to be 'magical thinking' by the proponents.

The prevailing winds that occur in the Southern Highlands could blow emissions, odour and dust composed of micro plastics over Moss Vale Township as well as nearby townships.

The risk to waterways cannot be underestimated as local waterways feed into the Greater Sydney catchment and if the waterways are contaminated the health risks would be spread further than the local area.

Health conditions have been reported such as respiratory diseases, skin and eye disorders caused by plastic resin compounds and micro plastics released into the air and waterways by plastic refineries. Conditions imposed by governments cannot be stringent enough in a changing climate – be it meteorological, political or social.

## **Water Security**

As stated under 'Health -Issues' – Water usage in NSW is a vexed issue, having just come out of the 2016 – 2020 drought. Maintaining the integrity of our water supply must be a priority at a Local, State and National level.

The proposed facility intends to use 46,300 litres of water per day to wash plastic waste. The proposal is that this water would come from rainwater storage and potable town water.

There is not likely to be sufficient rainwater, so the majority of the water being used will come from the Town Water. In times of drought, which we have recently experienced, residents were placed on water restrictions.

New Residential developments must have 'water saving' technologies and tanks installed to reflect the effects of climate change because water is a scarce resource and needs to be conserved. The proposed plastics refinery will seriously challenge our water supplies for homes and local agriculture.

Contaminated water after the washing process would be pumped into the already strained Moss Vale Sewerage System.

## **Lack of Appropriate Community Consultation**

Although there have been two ‘community consultations’ by the proponent, these have been poorly advertised and conducted. There have been allegations by attendees of intimidatory conduct by security personnel, and limited opportunity to raise questions.

The community consultation conducted in March took place in Exeter (a 12 km distance from Moss Vale) when the Southern Highlands was in the middle of an extreme weather event, with flooded roads and homes, and with townships and residents being isolated and unable to attend.

### **Insufficient and Inappropriate Roads and Traffic Issues**

Our roads are already congested and not fit for the number of residents and businesses within the Southern Highlands.

Beaconsfield Road, itself, is a residential road, as are the roads feeding into Beaconsfield Road.

None of these roads are suitable for heavy trucks operating 24/7.

As we understand it, alternate access routes are over privately owned land and the proponent has not secured any right or title to this land.

### **Fire Risk**

Following the 2016 – 2020 drought, the Southern Highlands were impacted by the Black Summer fires, roads were closed, and the M31 (the main access route) was closed denying access to and from the area.

Lives were lost and property destroyed. Air quality in the area was severely compromised.

Although the proposed site is not considered to be in a fire risk area, a fire within the plastics refining facility would be beyond the scope of fire fighting within the Highlands.

### **Damage to the natural Environment**

The emissions, traffic and noise caused by the Plastics refinery would also have significant effects upon the natural environment.

The EIS proposes to ‘realign’ an existing natural watercourse and manage the vegetation – again, inappropriate within a conservation area.

The Southern Highlands are home to kangaroos, Koalas and Wombats, as well as birds and insects that play an important role in our local ecology.

The Southern Highlands is also an important agricultural area which would suffer detriment from the existence and emissions of the Plastics refinery.

Thanks to the scenery and seasonality of the Southern Highlands and it's proximity to major cities, the main business in the area is Tourism, with visitors to the historic township of Berrima, a thriving wine scene, weddings and weekend visitors being a valuable adjunct to the local economy.

### **Social Impact**

There has been no Social Impact Statement prepared.

The social impact of the Plastics Refinery on Moss Vale and the areas surrounding will be adverse for all the reasons already outlined above.

### **Employment**

The employment prospects are overstated by the proponents. There may be some additional employment during the construction phase, but it is unlikely that local workers will be employed in any significant roles.

Once constructed the Plastics refinery will be largely mechanised and run by robots, due to the Health and Safety risk to any workers on the site.

**The proposed Moss Vale Plastics Recycling Facility is not an appropriate development within the Town Boundaries of Moss Vale.**

**It should not be approved.**

**Yours Sincerely,**

