



## NSW COMMUNITIES CLAIM NSW GOVERNMENT FAILING TO PROTECT THEM WITH WASTE INCINERATOR PLANS

### Media Release October 2023

NSW community incineration opposition groups have launched an online petition to the NSW Legislative Assembly calling for an immediate stop to Waste-to-Energy (W2E) incineration in NSW. The petition calls on the NSW Government to remove legislation introduced by the previous NSW Government that allows W2E incinerators in the four regional areas of Goulburn, Lithgow, Parkes and Casino. The legislation was introduced by the previous NSW Government after only minimal consultation with affected residents.

Initiated by regional incineration opposition groups in conjunction with long-standing Sydney incineration opposition groups, the petition represents a joint stand by residents across NSW to oppose the significant threat to human health, environment, agriculture and water that incineration presents.

“The communities are outraged” said Dr Liz Stops a spokesperson for Residents Against the Richmond Valley Incinerator Inc (RARVI). “Based on the advice of the Environment Protection Authority (EPA), the NSW Government has acknowledged waste incinerators are too dangerous for Sydney but is prepared to foist them onto regional communities where much of our food is produced and close to residential areas, meatworks, beef saleyards, schools and hospitals.”

‘We had hoped the Minns Labor Government would listen to our concerns and introduce legislation to prohibit waste-to-energy incineration anywhere in NSW and pursue other safe and scalable ways of dealing with waste,’ she said. “To date, our requests for meetings with Penny Sharpe, the Minister for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Heritage, have been refused. It’s a bad sign,” said Dr Stops.

Regional groups in Richmond Valley, Tarago (Goulburn-Mulwaree) and Lithgow are fighting to protect the drinking water, agriculture, cattle and tourism industries as well as air quality, environment and health. Standing in solidarity with them are the communities of Western Sydney, who won their campaign to stop projects in their neighbourhoods but now face the prospect of contaminated food and drinking water with incinerators proposed in Sydney’s water catchment area and regions of significant food production. There are also concerns for the Parkes community where plans to build a waste incinerator are underway, and more broadly for all residents in NSW since the legislation has numerable exceptions that would allow waste-to-energy incinerators to potentially be approved in many other localities.

After visiting Australia in September, Dr Marcos Orellana, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Toxics and Human Rights, reported that ‘incineration imposes heavy health and other costs on local communities and it is a significant source of greenhouse gases’. He also stated that ‘it’s the end of the line for fossil fuels’ and ‘reflects a linear process that is incompatible with a circular economy.’ (End of Mission Statement, Sept 8, 2023) Waste-to-energy incinerators largely burn plastic waste, thus encouraging further production of plastics, which is made from fossil fuels. As such, it’s ludicrous for the NSW Government to attempt to align waste incineration with a circular economy or make claims about energy production.

“We have a human right to clean drinking water and an environment free of toxic load,” Dr Stops said. “Dr Orellana reminded us that Australia has ratified the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) in 2004. Waste-to-energy incinerators were identified by the Convention as a major source of unintentional POPs pollutants such as dioxins. As a signatory, the Government is required to take measures to address those emissions. Waste-to-energy incinerators are incompatible with that requirement.”

“Waste-to-energy incineration is being promoted by global corporations who build and profit from them for decades. There are minimal jobs in it. Contractual obligations perversely require waste that must be supplied to incinerators for decades and there is no incentive to reduce waste. The NSW Government appears to be supporting this last century technology over communities. Why aren’t they pursuing zero waste solutions proven in other major cities? There is ample evidence that waste incineration is the most expensive, most

climate-unfriendly, least efficient and dirtiest form of energy production, leaving a cumulative legacy of dioxins, furans and toxic ash that cannot be remediated,” said Dr. Stops ‘We are calling on all residents of New South Wales to support the livelihoods of farmers, along with the health of the population and the environment, by signing our online petition to put a stop to the construction of waste-to-energy incinerators in NSW.’

Petition:

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/la/Pages/ePetition-details.aspx?q=rxOVguqv9WYSEVVTphFzag>

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