



ENERGY-FROM-WASTE FACILITY REFUSED DUE TO 'UNCERTAIN' HEALTH, ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Thursday 19 July 2018

The Independent Planning Commission has rejected plans for an energy-from-waste facility in Sydney's west citing 'uncertainty' over human health and environmental impacts.

The Next Generation (NSW) Pty Ltd sought approval to build and operate the large 24/7 facility at Eastern Creek – combusting 552,500 tonnes of the city's non-recyclable waste every year, generating enough electricity for 100,000 homes.

The state significant development application was referred to the Commission for determination in April after the Department of Planning and Environment received 949 public objections. Blacktown and Penrith City Councils also expressed their opposition.

Chair of the Independent Planning Commission, Professor Mary O'Kane AC, appointed a three-member panel to decide the matter: Ms Robyn Kruk AO (Chair), Mr Peter Duncan AM and Mr Tony Pearson.

The Commissioners met with the applicant and inspected the site and surrounding areas, and spoke with representatives from the Department and both councils.

They also held a public meeting at Rooty Hill to listen to the community's concerns about the project, which centred on:

- potential human health impacts;
- the size and scale of the proposed facility;
- the suitability of the site, particularly its proximity to residential areas, schools and playing fields
- potential environmental impacts; and
- a lack of community consultation.

Having carefully examined all the evidence and taken the community's views into consideration, the Commission has today decided to refuse consent for the development application.

In summary, the Commission's Statement of Reasons for Decision dated 19 July found:

- the applicant's predicted modelling, was based on data that is not representative of the actual waste streams proposed to be treated at the energy from waste facility;
- there is insufficient evidence that the pollution control technologies are capable of appropriately managing emissions from the project and would be agnostic to the composition of the project's waste stream;

- there is uncertainty in relation to the air quality, and the relationship between air quality impacts and water quality impacts in the locality;
- as a result, there is uncertainty in relation to the human health risks and site suitability;
- it is not satisfied that the project is consistent with certain objects of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979; and
- the project is not in the public interest.

“The Commission finds that the key issue in its consideration of the project is the uncertainty around the project’s emissions and the results of the applicant’s predicted modelling. Given this uncertainty, the Commission finds that it is unable to determine the project’s impacts on the locality and has persuaded the Commission to adopt a precautionary approach to the consideration and determination of the project’s impacts on air quality and human health,” the Commission stated in its Statement of Reasons.

“The Commission finds that, while there are benefits to the public from the project, there is sufficient uncertainty around the project's impacts on air quality, water quality and human health that mean that the project is not in the public interest”.

The Commission’s Statement of Reasons for Decision is available here:

<http://ipcn.nsw.gov.au/projects/2018/04/eastern-creek-energy-from-waste-facility-ssd-6236>

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