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Working globally for a toxic free future

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NSW incinerator plan is smoke and mirrors – more pollution inevitable

Today the NSW government released their long awaited [Energy from Waste Infrastructure Plan](#) which limits incinerators to industrial areas but cynically allows waste burning across many other industries.

“Many communities in NSW who have been facing the very real prospect of this industrial pollution threat in their neighbourhoods will today breathe a sigh of relief. However, Sydney’s long historical ban on waste incinerators has finally come to a sad end.

While the NSW government’s decision to protect the *airshed of the Sydney Basin* from deadly incinerator pollution is a step in the right direction for environmental health and justice, others in NSW will have to bear the burden. Waste incineration will be confined to just four industrial precincts, yet those front-line communities living in the shadow of these industrial precincts will now face increased pollution posing an environmental health and justice threat.

While the waste to energy incineration industry has been earmarked specifically for containment in four industrial precincts in recognition of [public health impacts](#), there are no such planning restrictions applied to any other industry that will burn waste for energy.

This means that any existing combustion-based industries such as cement, paper mills, pyrolysis, biofuels and brickworks, will be able to burn plastic and other waste as an alternative fuel source. With the NSW and federal government heavily investing in the production and use of Refuse Derived Fuel, Process Engineered Fuel and other Waste Derived Fuels (e.g. the [Wetherill PEF plant](#) – the largest in Australia) waste incineration by any other name, is set to increase.

Burning waste whether as Refuse Derived Fuel or directly in an incinerator is a major threat to our climate, health and environment and will further undermine Australia’s obligation to meet COP 26 commitments for net zero emissions by 2050. Burning this waste supercharges carbon emissions toxic emissions and pumps out thousands of tonnes of toxic ash that will be dumped in vulnerable communities.

While the EU decommissions and defunds the waste incineration sector, [classifying this industry along with coal and nuclear as a major climate threat](#), Australia’s decision to provide clean and renewable energy subsidies and funds to an industry that is neither clean nor green, is an international embarrassment.”, states Jane Bremmer, Zero Waste Australia Coordinator for the National Toxics Network.

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