

Neighbour says landfill site a recipe for disaster

By PETER BARRETT

RON Piddington is afraid Armidale's new landfill operation could be 'an environmental and financial disaster on a huge scale'.

Mr Piddington is fighting to prevent the landfill being established on the proposed site, which includes land from 'Edington' and 'Sherraloy' properties, just off Waterfall Way, 12km from Armidale.

His property, 'Gara Station', is adjacent to the landfill site.

"As we are the 'first neighbours' downstream on the Gara River from the intended landfill, we believe we are most at risk and with the most to lose, both financially and in lifestyle, if there is any effect from water contamination," he said.

"We are seeking intervention by the Australian Government to prevent the construction of this landfill."

In his submission to the Federal Department of the Environment and Water Resources, Mr Piddington declares



ROAD TO RUBBISH: The new landfill operation towards the top of this ridge will hardly be a welcoming sight greeting motorists coming into Armidale on Waterfall Way, according to Ron Piddington, a strong opponent of the project

that his is 'is not the proverbial NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) statement,' but a genuine appeal to safeguard 'an absolutely incredible World Heritage area'.

"Have a look at our frontyard first, the proposed landfill site, and then look at our backyard - our property and the Oxley Wild Rivers National Park - and see what we stand to lose both personally and as custodians of our rural lands and heritage areas," he said.

Mr Piddington said the Macleay River catchment was a vast area and any form of contamination would be a disaster both envi-

ronmentally and financially on a huge scale.

"The landfill is not only within the catchment area of the northern portions of our property and the Gara River, but more importantly in the expansive Oxley Wild Rivers National Park," he said.

"This is part of the Central Eastern Rainforests Reserves of Australia World Heritage Property and, just as importantly, the Kempsey and district water supply, which they are hoping to increase because of population increase on our eastern seaboard."

Mr Piddington, whose family has lived in

Armidale for five generations, also sees a negative impact for tourism.

"They are going to put a landfill in plain sight from the Gara Bridge, on Waterfall Way, voted the third best drive in Australia," he said.

"It's third to the Great Ocean Road and the Daintree Road to Cooktown - I bet you won't find anything like this tainting those drives."

Mr Piddington claims that the project has 'too many ifs and buts' and that the selection criteria was flawed.

"EA Systems' own document shoots holes in everything about the intended site, yet coun-

cil say they can overcome all and sundry," he said.

He was also critical of being given virtually no time to present a submission - a move he said 'cannot be seen as anything other than a deliberate ploy to avoid publicity and multiple submissions'.

"International evidence indicates that no landfill can be assumed not to leak sometime within its lifespan: how can council assure us that they can get it right?" Mr Piddington asked.

"What a backyard we have, please protect it."

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