

Formal Objection to the Bluestone Hardrock Quarry Project (SSD-76210271)

I am writing to formally object to the proposed Bluestone Hardrock Quarry Project (SSD-76210271). As a resident of Radford Park, I have serious concerns regarding the safety, environmental impacts, traffic implications, and overall suitability of this project within a rapidly growing residential community. My objections are outlined below.

Elderslie Bridge Capacity and Safety - The proponent asserts that Elderslie Bridge can accommodate daily haulage truck loads; however, no long-term structural assessment has been provided. The bridge already experiences congestion, particularly during peak periods when mine workers commute from Singleton. When incidents occur on the main road, traffic is diverted through Elderslie, worsening delays.

The uphill gradient on the Branxton side forces heavy trucks to slow significantly, creating bottlenecks and increasing collision risks. Without a detailed engineering analysis addressing cumulative load impacts, the community cannot be assured of the bridge's safety or durability.

Traffic Impacts on Elderslie Road - Elderslie Road carries substantial daily traffic, including school buses that must stop on-road to collect and drop off children. Haulage trucks will be forced to queue behind these buses, creating unpredictable delays.

The current 80 km/h speed limit is already hazardous for residents exiting Radford Park due to limited visibility. Increased heavy-vehicle traffic will heighten collision risks. The road surface is deteriorating and requires repair; additional truck movements will accelerate damage, resulting in more frequent roadworks, temporary traffic lights, and major congestion. Recent incidents, such as fallen trees forcing traffic to divert down Rusty Lane, demonstrate the fragility of the current network. Introducing quarry trucks will magnify disruption.

Safety for Cyclists and Pedestrians - Elderslie Road is not wide enough to safely accommodate cyclists and pedestrians, particularly those walking from Radford Park. The proposed increase in large quarry trucks will make narrow sections of the road — especially near the Elderslie Road/Maitland Road junction — significantly more hazardous. The project does not adequately address how vulnerable road users will be protected.

Noise Impacts - The steep and undulating nature of Elderslie Road will require trucks to frequently change gears, generating high noise levels. This will cause daily disturbance for residents, many of whom do not work in mining or daytime industries. The noise profile of heavy haulage traffic is incompatible with a growing residential community.

Dust and Air Quality Concerns - Dust emissions, including silica dust, pose serious health risks. Residents already contend with coal dust accumulation on outdoor furniture despite existing mines' dust-suppression claims. This raises legitimate doubts about whether the quarry can effectively manage dust emissions.

Increased airborne dust may contaminate tank water supplies, which many residents rely on. The Environmental Impact Statement does not adequately address these risks.

Traffic Flow at Key Intersections - The Elderslie Road/Maitland Road intersection in Branxton is already difficult to navigate. Turning toward Branxton or the highway requires long wait times, and the Branxton Pool traffic lights switch to red immediately when a vehicle approaches from the side road, causing further delays.

The turn onto Wine Country Drive — with an 80 km/h speed limit — is particularly dangerous. Long queues behind slow-moving trucks will increase driver frustration and the likelihood of serious or fatal accidents.

Roundabout Safety on the M15 to Branxton - The M15–Branxton roundabout has already been the site of a major accident involving an overturned bus. Quarry trucks operating under tight delivery schedules may take risks to maintain deadlines, increasing the chance of similar or worse incidents.

Impact on Property Values - The cumulative effects of noise, dust, traffic congestion, safety risks, and road degradation will negatively impact property values in Radford Park. This area is a growing **residential** community, not a rural or industrial zone. The quarry proposal is fundamentally incompatible with the planned future of the neighbourhood.

Expanded Haulage Route Concerns (EIS) - The Expanded Haulage Route via the New England Highway will send quarry trucks through Greta and Lochinvar school zones and into the already congested Rutherford corridor. Morning and afternoon peak periods are already heavily impacted by school traffic; adding quarry trucks will worsen delays and increase safety risks for children and families.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, I strongly oppose the Bluestone Hardrock Quarry Project. The proposal presents unacceptable risks to road safety, community wellbeing, environmental quality, and the future development of Branxton's residential areas. I respectfully request that the Department reject this project in its current form.