

Job Status	Project is currently on public exhibition and opportunity for public submissions is available
Assessment Type	SSD
Project Type	Mining, Petroleum & Extraction > Extractive Industries
Application Number	SSD 13_6125
DGRS Issued:	16/10/2013
Exhibition Start	04/12/2015
Exhibition End	15/02/2016

I refer to the above proposal and offer my considered submission. My name is Cain Gorfine, I am the President of Williamstown and Surrounds Residents Action Group, but more importantly first and foremost, I am a home owner, father, husband and sole bread winner for my family, living 20 meters from the proposed mine. My address is 350 Cabbage Tree Road. If you require any clarification on the contents of my submission or would like to visit our home you are more than welcome.

Our group, and those of experts which we have sought opinion will be submitted addressing the more technical aspects of the proposal.

It is my objective to give you a balanced understanding of how the proposal will impact my family's very existence, as opposed to the glowing unbalanced report provided to us by the proponent. Perhaps it has been said before that the golden rule of submission writing is to keep any undue emotional references at bay; I may fall short in this regard due to my connection to our family home, our way of life and those of our neighbours. In no particular order of importance, I urge you to take a measured and detailed analysis of the below points.

It is not possible for my family and a large scale sand mine with an operational life expectancy of 15-20 years to co-exist on any level. As a father and husband, should the mine be approved I reserve all my rights against your department for any future economic, social and or health implications which are likely to arise.

ACTION: I am calling on your department to refuse the proposal.

My family is comprised of myself, my wife and our 3 children, 18 months, 4 years and 9 years. We also enjoy the company of our 4 horses, dog, cat and chickens. Our home is our dream home and lifestyle and we chose it so we could provide our children with the freedom of a small acreage farm, buffered by old growth forest and bushland (the site of the proposed mine), all within a 15-20min drive to local shops, schools and beaches. Our horses are also national champions in the show ring and our relatively small but highly improved property forms at present an ideal training ground for them. Our 3 children also enjoy the benefits of our small farm and regularly ride the horses, walk our dog and ride their bikes across the property. One of our favourite spots as a family is a picnic area we all built together at the back of our property. This area is surrounding by bushland which would be bulldozed if the proposal was approved. How do I explain that to my children?

The proposed sand mine would kill our way of life. Noise from the operations on site, air vortex separator, tub grinders, trucks, and general machinery would disturb the peaceful enjoyment we currently have. The removal of significant landforms and associated vegetation to the west, north west and north of our property would then provide unfettered noise from the RAAF Base to travel right to the heart of our property and further expose our family and animals. The noise would also deeply distress our horses and cause a dangerous situation which could see them spook and run through fences, make them nervous leading to a dangerous situation for both them and our children. The visual beauty of the surrounding bushland we currently enjoy would be destroyed and this cannot be avoided. The mine if approved will be clearly visible from many parts of our property.

ACTION: An appropriate and industry standard buffer between the site boundaries and any neighbouring properties of between **300-500** meters be enforced.

ACTION: Appropriate noise barriers be erected around the perimeter of the site with a height no less than the height of the highest piece of machinery to be used on the site – including the Air Vortex Separator.

The site is comprised of high grade silica sand. Dust from the operations forming a marriage with the predominate west/north west winds would provide an unacceptable level of lung health risk for our entire family, including those of our horses. This is further exacerbated by the fact that 3 family members my wife, our 9 year old son and myself all suffer from asthma and contact dermatitis exacerbated by environmental contaminants. The risk of fugitive sand dust is something that cannot be adequately mitigated against.

ACTION: The precautionary principle must be adopted in this instance and the mine proposal refused.

Extensive discussions with local real estate agents reveal that our property value would be severely affected and is an unavoidable consequence of having a sand-mine thrown into the middle of a semi-rural community. When dealing with property values it often comes down to perceptions; no amount of mitigating measures could insulate our property values from this. The affect of inevitable severe erosion of our property value

would have crippling consequences for our family. I believe it is something which cannot be mitigated against by the proponent. There are dozens of houses and families in very close proximity to the proposed site and the overall negative economic impact alone does not justify any short term financial gain by a few, at the expenses of many.

Indeed, any royalties paid to the Council would see that money go into general funds and there is no guarantee any of this money would be returned at all to the local community. A merger between Newcastle and PSCC is likely to occur before a decision is made on the proposal and this merger would further insulate any possible return to the community as it would be used to pay the substantial debts of the incumbent council. If council was committed to returning funds to the local community it would have proposed operating the mine itself and taken 100% of any return from the site. Indeed it is common opinion and those of several local councillors and politicians, on both side of the political fence, that this is a proposal that would simply benefit a few local developers at the expense of the local community.

ACTION: There is nothing I am aware of, apart from refusing this proposal, which can insulate our home and our small community from the devastating economic impacts this project would have. We are not totally against sand mining, we have always said that, however the proposed site is totally inappropriate and unacceptable from a social and community perspective. We have millions of tonnes of fugitive sand blowing off the sand dunes just to the East of the proposed site and onto native vegetation which could be easily harvested. There is also another 5 sand mines within a 15km radius of the proposed site.

The proposed site is listed as preferred Koala habitat and is habitat listed in the EIS as 'being critical to the survival of the species'. We have taken bush walks and horse rides through the site and the area is special. We often spot Koalas and other wildlife on our adventures. Without waxing lyrical on the vital importance of maintaining this critical habitat, the proposal on this one point alone must be refused. The council should never have been able to pass a motion to lease the site out (although it was able to due to the voting block the mayor enjoys). Before we purchased our property we conducted extensive investigations into the land proposed for the site, and we were satisfied that this precious parcel of land would never be developed as it was and still is 'preferred koala habitat' under councils own LEP. The proposed site also borders state conservation areas and sits directly above the highly fragile Tomago sand bed aquifer.

ACTION: Your department must step in where the council and the proponents have turned a blind eye and take immediate action to stop the proposal.

Cabbage Tree Road is a 90km/h road and already has a large volume of trucks and cars. It is a poorly maintained road with very little signage, dozens of concealed driveways and no safe way for property owners to enter and exit their properties. We have a major depression in the road surface adjacent our home and when truck and dogs cross it they produce a lot of noise. The increase in truck movements, combined with a left turn in and out lane with a merging lane which will be within meters our driveway will create a road safety nightmare. We already have no exit strategy available to us when turning into our driveway should a car or truck fail to see us. We have had many near misses and large skid-marks along a significant stretch of road at the front of our house is testimony to the dangers we face. Furthermore, when we are waiting to turn right into our driveway we are sitting ducks for any cars travelling in an easterly direction who have the ability to overtake and travel head on towards us. This situation will be greatly exacerbated if an acceleration lane is introduced as that will encourage faster moving cars to overtake those trucks which will put them on a blind corner heading towards our driveway and that of our neighbours.

Our children also catch a bus on that same stretch of road which is dangerous enough already.

We have had discussions with the local police who regularly patrol our road and they are amazed that adding to the already congested road in a 90km/h zone in a built up housing area would even be considered. Dozens of concealed driveways within meters of the proposed site entrance on a poorly maintained and relatively narrow road with steep embankments either side in a 90km/h zone and then adding an extra 140 heavy truck movements is a recipe for disaster and puts our lives at risk.

Heavily laden sand trucks accelerating and decelerating from very early in the morning to late in the afternoon would create unbearable noise to our family home and severely disturb our way of life. Fugitive sand dust from these trucks is also a concern.

ACTION: Decrease the speed limit to 70km/h for 2 km either side of the proposed entry. Widen the road. Create safe turning shoulders for residents to enter and exit their properties. Install speed cameras. Install noise barriers for the length of the acceleration and deceleration lanes on either side of the road to shield nearby homes. Install concealed driveway signs and limit compression braking signs.

ACTION: Provide double glaze windows for nearby properties.

ACTION: Narrow the hours of operation proposed to between 8am and 5pm weekdays and between 10am and 4pm weekends.

Clearing and levelling of the site will create huge water run-off problems during high rain events. This run off would flow directly onto our property and proper ground and surface water studies have not been conducted nor have any measures been put in place to mitigate our property being flooded from the proposed site.

ACTION: Only by conducting a proper hydrological assessment of the site and effects of surface and ground water impacts to neighbouring properties can a decision be made as to adequate measures which will need to be put in place to protect our property.

The property sits within the declared 'red zone' of contamination and this has not been considered at all in the EIS. Indeed, GHD's stage one report clearly states at 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 that any sand mines to the south of the base are potential sources of contamination. The whole community within the red zone has been placed under a precautionary and cautionary directive – the same must apply to the proponents.

Cain Gorfine.

15/2/16

PLEASE NOW SEE BELOW CORRESPONDANCE AND INFORMATION YOU MAY FIND INTERESTING:

"Just wanted to give you an update which may be of interest. I have received a phone call from Craig Baumann - Port Stephens NSW Liberal member. He said to me he has heard about our concerns and that we don't need to worry, just let it run its course it probably wont go ahead. He said we will have a new planning minister after the election. If you can hold off from doing anything it will just go away. I then received the same call from his secretary a day later. We know the liberal candidate locally is best mates with Darren Williams - director of Castle Quarry Products so we cant approach him. I am meeting Jeremy Buckingham at our property on Friday whereby he will hold a press conference."

"From: mayor@portstephens.nsw.gov.au
To: gorfinec@hotmail.com
Subject: RE: Williamtown Sand Mine - URGENT
Date: Tue, 24 Feb 2015 05:45:54 +0000

Good afternoon Cain,

Thank you for your email below dated 18 February 2015 with regards to Williamtown Sand Mine.

I appreciate you taking the time to bring your concerns to my attention; I acknowledge your email and have noted your comments.

Unfortunately as Bruce MacKenzie I have a conflict of interest in this matter so cannot comment.

Please note that this application would not be reviewed by Port Stephens Council but would be reviewed and approved or rejected by the NSW Government in Sydney and I am sure there would be avenue for you to appeal detailing your objections.

Yours faithfully,

Bruce MacKenzie
MAYOR OF PORT STEPHENS

Please Quote File No:
PSC2011-00484

Faye Johnstone
Executive Assistant - Councillor Support

Port Stephens Council
Phone: 4980 0245 Fax: 4983 1918
Email: faye.johnstone@portstephens.nsw.gov.au
Web: www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au

Please note I am in the office weekly on **Monday, Tuesday & Wednesdays**. Should you require assistance outside those days please contact the Mayors Office on 4980 0245 or send your email to councillor@portstephens.nsw.gov.au. Alternatively I shall deal with your email on my return to the office.

From: Cain [mailto:gorfinec@hotmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, 18 February 2015 7:47 AM
Subject: Williamtown Sand Mine - URGENT

Hi Bruce,

I've met you before, My Name is Cain Gorfine; I live on Cabbage Tree Road.

You will no doubt be aware of this, and given your personal business interests in this area; I am not sure if this forms a conflict of interest for you or if you are still obligated to provide objective assessment and advice as Mayor of Port Stephens? Let me know. I've copied correspondence below for you which I have sent to a number of organisations this morning.

"We have a story – it will no doubt be of great interest to you. I will be contacting local politicians, community members, media outlets etc over the coming days as we plan on fighting this to the end. Could you please forward onto anyone else who may be able to help or have an interest.

Our family live on Cabbage Tree Road, surrounded by other families and properties. Yesterday, we were visited by 2 representatives from CQP (Castle Quarry Products); a company I have subsequently discovered is owned by Nathan Tinkler. We also understand it's Fullerton Cove quarry branch has gone into receivership. The two representatives gave us a document explaining that they plan to build a sand mine just 20 meters from our property, extracting some 600,000 tonnes per year for a minimum of 15 years. They plan to use what they described as a dry method of filtering/extraction which involves using high pressure vortex type machines.

With this comes major problems for our small community and our families - our preliminary investigations have immediately identified these as:

1. The real and serious health risk of silica dust leading to silicosis - an irreversible form of lung cancer which can be brought on by only minimal exposure. This includes a serious risk to our families, our children and our animals.
2. Serious noise implications
3. Serious traffic flow and road safety issues - an estimated increase of 136 truck movements per day in an area with dozens of rural properties all with concealed driveways.
4. Serious impacts on the local environment - the destruction of some 700,000 square meters of natural bushland - this land contains koalas, goannas, snakes, birds and a host of native fauna. The local Worrimi Land Council have been notified and provided details of the proposed mine, and they will be following closely and investigating. They are happy to discuss but did not seem happy when I discussed it with them yesterday.
5. Potential impacts on property values.
6. Real negative implications for our local businesses, hobby farms, and horse industry.

Please contact me on 0407 947 071.

Kind regards,

Cain Gorfine."

MEDIA RELEASE – 3rd February 2015

COMMUNITY OUTRAGED BY SAND MINE PLANS FOR TOMAGO SANDBEDS

Over one hundred concerned local residents packed out the Williamtown Hall last night at a public meeting about the Castle Quarry Products sand mine proposed for the controversial council owned site located on the Tomago Sandbed aquifers.

The meeting hosted by the Williamtown and Surrounds Resident's Action Group (WSRAG) was attended by Port Stephens Councillors Geoff Dingle and Peter Kafer, Port Stephens Labor candidate Kate Washington and NSW Greens Conservation Officer Councillor James Ryan. Port Stephens Liberal Candidate - Councillor Ken Jordan and Castle Quarry Products declined the invitation to attend the meeting.

Local community members heard from Councillor Geoff Dingle about the suspect issuing of the lease for the sand mine to Castle Quarry Products against the recommendations of Council staff, as well as the \$250,000 bank guarantee that was paid in cash from an unnamed bank account.

Cain Gorfine local resident and member of WSRAG said "The overwhelming attendance at the meeting last night clearly demonstrated that Castle Quarry Products do not have a social licence to operate in the region."

"The community were concerned about a number of issues regarding the impacts of the sand mining on the regions water supply, impacts to the already threatened Port Stephens Koala population and potential health risks to the families that will live just metres away from the mine through silicosis."

"The proposed sandmine is located on the Tomago Sandbeds that supply 25% of Newcastle's drinking water, an area that is already declared a 'special area' under the Hunter Water Act. The State government needs to put an end to this high risk project now"

"The community also wants answers - who paid the \$250,000 bank guarantee for the project that turned up at Council from an unnamed bank account."

For interviews contact:
Cain Gorfine on 0413 613 802