

17 July 2023

I have lived in East Seaham for 18 years, as a resident of Italia Road, and I am writing to express my objection to the Stone Ridge Quarry Project SSD – 10432

There are many reasons I oppose this which I will further outline, however, I would also like to express my concern about the process of this proposal as I have only just become aware of it 12 months ago and found that I had to wait for the EIS to be published and then had 28 days to object. The EIS, including its appendixes is well over 1000 pages long. A report that has had paid professionals taking at least 2 years to complete. How am I, a busy resident who is not paid to read it, only have 28 days to read it and respond? This applies not just to myself, but everyone else who has recently been made aware of this proposal. I believe this process needs to be rectified by the government in order to make future proposals easier for people who object to reply.

I am opposed to the proposal firstly because it is located in the Wallaroo State Forest. This forest is not there for quarries to destroy and profit from. It is there to be enjoyed by the public, and as habitat for flora and fauna. Many people use the State Forest for various reasons including, horse riding, orienteering, walking, and mountain biking. To take that away from not only locals, but tourists, is not in keeping with why a State Forest is there to start with.

We moved here 18 years ago, knowing that Boral Quarry was in existence, but that it would be finished by 2035, if not sooner. During that time, we have used the State Forest for walking and also for our family to go out horse riding. It was one of the main reasons we bought the property. To now have 90 hectares of that removed for a quarry, was not what we thought would be in our future enjoyment for our property. We also expected that the Boral Quarry would be finished by 2035 and that it would be rehabilitated for flora and fauna, and that the continuous stream of Quarry trucks that has increased over the years we have been here, would then abate. To find out that we are now going to be subject to another Quarry, straight across the road, is quite distressing. The reason we moved to the country was to have a country atmosphere. Not to be inundated by traffic noise, dust and air pollution from traffic and quarries which is already the case. Stone Ridge Quarry would only exacerbate that. In the EIS it is proposed that trucks will only be using Pacific Highway and not come west of the quarry down Italia Road. This has also been promised by Boral Quarry who is there now, yet we have averaged in the last few months, 25 quarry truck movements past our property on Italia Road which is west of Boral Quarry. There is no barrier or trees from the road. We cannot have a conversation at the front of our property without having to stop every 10 minutes or so for traffic noise. This is not a quiet country life, yet we forgo the amenities of living town such as town water, sewerage, footpaths, NBN and well-maintained roads.

We, and our small community are fatigued by the existing Boral Seaham Quarry and none of us expected, nor should have to put up with, yet another Quarry on our road.

The traffic that this Quarry will add is a major concern. There is an already very dangerous intersection at the end of Italia Road to Pacific Highway, and this new Quarry will only add to the congestion and danger of this road. A local community group called VOWW is addressing their concerns in more detail about the traffic and transport problems and I ratify their submission.

I am also concerned for the flora and fauna that reside in the area of the Quarry. The EIS states:

“ 6.6.6 Matters of National Environmental Significance

The additional assessment requirements provided by DCCEEW consider that there is likely to be a significant impact on the following threatened species and communities:

- koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) (combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory) – Endangered

- grey-headed flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*) – Vulnerable

- Coastal Swamp Sclerophyll Forest of New South Wales and South East Queensland – Endangered.

The DCCEEW also noted that the following species may be significantly impacted by the Project:

- swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*) – Critically Endangered

- spotted-tail quoll (southeastern mainland population) (*Dasyurus maculatus maculatus*) – Endangered

- yellow-bellied glider (south-eastern) (*Petaurus australis australis*) – Vulnerable • New Holland mouse (*Pseudomys novaehollandiae*) – Vulnerable

- south-eastern glossy black cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathami lathami*) – Vulnerable. DCCEEW also noted that the list of species may be incomplete and that it is the responsibility of the proponent to ensure any protected matters under this controlling provision are assessed for the Commonwealth decision-maker's consideration.”

Note, there has also been recent sightings of the Brush Tailed Phascogale which may well be a likely indicator that the area is significantly recovering from the 2016 bushfires. And a number of us, including myself, have had Koalas in our own yards. The fact that our Koala is endangered and this area will be clearing a significant area or Koala habitat, plus there is likely to be a significant impact on the critically endangered swift parrot, should be enough reason to stop the development of this Quarry.

Apart from the Koala and other endangered species, I have stopped just outside that quarry on Italia Road for a number of Echidna's crossing, plus many wallabies and other wildlife. We love our part of the world here, as do our wildlife and their habitat. We should be looking at recyclable forms of building roads and other structures, rather than tearing down the remaining habitat and forestry we have left. There are another 10 quarries also proposed close within our region, this needs to slow down. The technology is there, albeit maybe more expensive, however these forests can not be replaced overnight. It would take 30 years at least to start to rebuild our existing forests.

While the EIS states that the proposal meets the biodiversity credits, this does not save the homes of our local flora and fauna. I have been contacted by groups that will speak more fully about the negative impact for biodiversity, such as KKEPS, and I ratify their submissions.

I also believe that the dust that will be emitted by these quarries post a potential health risk, specifically for those that live close to the quarries on Italia Road. Silicosis is being described as the new asbestosis. It took many years for the ramifications of asbestosis to become clear, with the increasing awareness from doctors and researchers that mining dust is causing silicosis and air pollution why is our government allowing these projects to be developed in areas with nearby residents? I believe this should be more thoroughly investigated by our government before further approval of any mining/quarrying developments near human habitat. The dust and air pollution will also negatively affect the flora and fauna. As will the blasting and traffic noise.

Furthermore, Italia Road is already a dangerous country road, with a fatality last year near the proposed quarry. The cause was unknown as the driver ran off the road, however the investigators believe that they probably swerved to hit a deer. We have many feral deer in this area. The EIS states that the quarry will likely further increase pests and weeds. We do not need any more deer. The blasting and noise associated with quarrying activity also drives wildlife and deer onto the road, which only increases the danger of Italia Road.

The surrounding community to this quarry also relies on tank water. There has already been reports of dust in the local tank water and more dust from another quarry will only worsen this existing problem. There is no recognition of this in the EIS.

Parts 7.2 and 7.4, respectively Justification for the Project on page 185 and Benefits of the Project on page 186 can only be described as a slap in the face to those in the local community. Had ARDG done a comprehensive consultation with the local community they would have known the following comment to be untrue.

Page 185 “with the possible exception of potential Biodiversity, the project will have relatively minor environmental and social impacts”. During the community consultation, appendix 15, states that the First Community Information Sheet went out in February 2020 only went to households within 2 kms of the project. Italia Road, which will all be impacted by this quarry is around 7 km long. Therefore, the next 4 or 5 km’s of residents (which would be also more densely populated) was ignored at this stage. During this first round of engagement in 2020 they received 16 responses. During the second round of engagement, of which I cannot find the date, but my memory believes it would have been around July 2022 as it was delivered to my mail box, they received 4 responses. They also did an information afternoon/evening 2 November 2022 which was attended by around 20 residents. So, an official response of 20 people, and only 1 of those people in the first round stated they had no concern about the quarry development. Of all the other statements included in appendix 15 one could assume that the quarry is in direct opposition as to why the long-term residents (average of 23 years) had moved to the area. The other tables cannot really be read in relation to positive and negatives as they put the two together in each table. They state, from all stages of the process, that the main concern is traffic, and also that there is concern about the native flora and fauna.

Upon receiving the second Information sheet I set up a Facebook page mostly comprised of local residents. This page ended up being named the Italia Road Action Taskforce. (IRATE), because IRATE is applicable to the majority of residents’ reaction upon hearing of another quarry being put on the road. To say a community already quarry fatigued, and looking forward the end of the Seaham Quarry not far on the horizon, IRATE is almost an understatement. In fact, I have heard the words depressed, exhausted, stressed, and deflated are others.

I then joined the Stone Ridge Quarry Community Consultation Committee, of which the first meeting was held on 23rd February 2023. By this stage some of the locals had become quite concerned however I think many of them were unsure about what was being proposed, or had not felt they could have a voice about it. Due to personal reasons, I was unable to do my own letter box drop to inform more people. I took notes from the Community Consultation Committee and shared them with my small group of around 25 people at the time. I told them, as I was told, that they would be able to submit their thoughts to the government about the proposal when the EIS was released which was estimated, at that time, to be a month. The EIS was put up on the portal 26 days ago. In that time, I have managed to network with more people and get assistance in getting the word out to the community. There was another Stone Ridge Community Consultation Committee last Friday, 19th July, and it was tabled they would answer questions regarding the EIS. During the time I had been

networking I had realised more and more of the local community was horrified at the thought of another enormous quarry in the area, particularly the other residents of Italia Road that I hadn't met and were not on my Facebook Group. In light of this, I conducted an online questionnaire that I distributed on my Facebook group and in other areas. Within 48 hours (which was the time of the Stone Ridge Community Consultation Committee meeting, I had received 40 replies to the questionnaire/survey. This was twice the amount of people that had replied to ARDG's community engagement over two years. As of today, not even a week since I sent out the questionnaire, I have received 50 replies. Of these replies, 28 people live on Italia Road which is the entrance road to the quarry proposal, and 40 of these people are from the local area. All other responses, bar 1, are within a day's driving distance of the Wallaroo State Forest. I think this in itself shows that the consultation with the community was limited, and/or inefficient.

- Of the 40 people from the local area, 38 of those people said they oppose the development with all believing there would be negative affects for the residents, the local community, the environment and the flora and fauna. In response to the question "On a scale from 1 – 5, with 1 being no concern and 5 being highly concerned about the negative impacts of the quarries in the Balickera, East Seaham and Eagleton areas, 38 people rated their concern as highly concerned. Even those that had previously said they didn't believe there would be any negative effects, scored a 2 and a 3 in this question citing a reduction in real estate value and traffic problems. The other concerns were health, noise pollution, air pollution, wildlife driven onto road, impacts of blasting on building structures, livestock and pets, dust in water tanks plus numerous other concerns. Every single person was worried about a reduction of the value of their real estate.
- There was a numerous comment on the survey that were very telling of locals' concerns but perhaps the standout was "with the negative effects of Boral (Seaham Quarry) as our neighbour, nasal congestion, coughing, and itchy eyes is unfortunately a constant"

While 40 people may not seem a large number, it is a very significant number for a country road, small community and a very limited means of distributing the survey and within 6 days, and much more detailed than those conducted by a large company, with extensive resources, over 2 years. To say in the EIS that "the project will have relatively minor.... Social impacts", I then have to question social impacts to who, because as you can see it is definitely not minor to the local community. Furthermore, the impact that the quarry has on local residents does not appear to be of concern to the developers. When I raised that I had results from a survey of locals at the Community Consultation Committee I was shut down by the Chair upon raising it, and nobody asked about it further.

The project also states its benefits to be \$270 million to the state government, yet how much of this will need to be spent on building and maintaining the infrastructure needed for all the quarry trucks, considering that a fully loaded quarry truck does an incredible amount of damage to a road. The EIS also states there will be some regional and economic benefits from the quarry development. This would be marginal for those that actually live within the immediate vicinity of the quarry, especially considering the quarry itself will only generate 10 full time jobs, and 2 part time jobs, of which most will more than likely be specialised.

Therefore, on the whole, I believe that our beautiful community and state forest are being sacrificed for profits for the state government and businesses and the proposed Stone Ridge Quarry should not be allowed to go ahead. The people who live in the surrounds, who have already endured the Boral Seaham Quarry for the last 22 years, are now being expected to be endure another quarry across

from it, within a state forest that they use, as do tourists, for another 30 years. It risks our physical and mental health, road safety, our property values, and our way of life which we would be hoping would be bettered when the Boral Seaham Quarry shut down in a possible 5 years' time. To add insult to injury, the Boral Seaham Quarry has just applied to increase their production to 2 million tonne each year for another 30 years, and the Eagleton Quarry soon to be going ahead and using Italia Road as well to enter the Pacific Highway, and be extracting 600,000 tonne a year.

The cumulative impact on our community of 2 Quarries extracting 2.5 million tonne per year, let alone 3 possible Quarries extracting 4 million tonne of rock per year, within an area of 10 km, and as close as 1 km, is too much to bear. What is the net positive for the economy with the associated health risks, possibly involving large pay outs, truck damage, livestock damage, and environmental damage?

The very high negative impact on the local community should not be considered or approved.

Please note I have not made any political donation in the last two years and acknowledge and accept the Department's Disclaimer and Declaration.

Could you please acknowledge receipt of this submission to me: