

Dr Michelle Wills
606 Italia Rd
East Seaham NSW 2324

12th May 2024

I object to the proposal for the Seaham Quarry Project for the following reasons.

1. Effect on wildlife

(a) Reduction of safe areas for wildlife in Port Stephens

I was a volunteer wildlife rescuer and rehabilitator for our area for many years. During this time I have rescued koalas, wallabies, kangaroos, possums and flying foxes from sites immediately around the proposed quarry site on Italia Rd. I have observed many reptiles and birds living in the quarry zone. At breeding times large numbers of echidna can be observed in this area. Port Stephen's Council has allowed to many of the wildlife areas in its jurisdiction to be decimated by mining. We cannot risk the devastating effect of such a vast quarry in the area depleting anymore of our wildlife habitats.

I do not belief there has been adequate investigation into the long-term effects of the mining in this region as far as the future rehabilitation of the site is concerned. Such a long term mining project will simply remove all koala's from the area and other species of wildlife. Once gone they are gone.

(b) Effects of noise

There are major flying fox colonies at Clarence town and Raymond Terrace. At certain times of the year these fly over our area. The noise will affect their ability to adequately navigate the region. This will disrupt their access to food, but can also cause them to get stressed and use domestic pet facilities to seek water and protection. It is in situations like this that the risk of zoonosis occurs.

The noise will also disrupt migratory birds, and frighten wildlife. I will address this further under road issues.

(2) Issues related to the road

(a) Failure of Italia Rd to meet Australian Standards for Usage

Italia Rd is not up to the Australian Standard for current usage. Improvements have been made to some sections, but parts remain dangerously narrow for trucks and there is no pedestrian access. Children are at real risk, especially during school bus pick up and drop off.

(b) Failure of road repairs to make permanent improvements to whole of Italia Rd

I understand every truck does the damage of 10000 cars on a road. The current road improvement on Italia Rd only relates to a very small section of the road. The rest is damaged and dangerous.

(c) Increased animal traffic across Italia Rd

Sadly I remove many wildlife from Italia Rd on a weekly basis. Although some of the fatalities may be prevented by slower driving, it is a known fact most deaths are unpreventable. The quarry will increase movement of these animals across Italia Rd, and also maybe across the Pacific Highway. The animals will move away from the noises, pollution and diminishing habitat.

Many car accidents are caused by people trying to miss animals on the roads. It is my understanding it was the cause of the accident that killed 26 yo Ben Langdon on Italia a couple of years ago. I am terrified there will be more fatalities.

(3) Health Issues

(a) Silicosis and other respiratory illness

Understanding of what are adequate safety precautions to prevent Silicosis and other mining dust respiratory illnesses is still emerging. I don't believe there has been any study on potential dust spread in the area from the mining. This will affect animal and human residents. It is inadequate to say 'we will undertake air quality checking'. Approval to the quarry cannot be given without appropriate INDEPENDENT reviews of air currents in the area, and measurements of the extent of spread of dust. This is particularly important in our area when we are all using tank or ground water.

(b) Mental Health

Something that has been entirely overlooked is the impact on mental health of the residents. As a community we are all genuinely stressed about the increased traffic on Italia Rd. Many have children who catch the local school bus. The trucks are a major problem because of their width, and the speed some take corners resulting in crossing to the wrong side of the road. We cannot even safely walk along our Rd. Many residents cannot even pull out of their driveways without risk of being hit.

I recognise the need for building materials. However I believe the situation in regards to the number of quarries and quarry applications in the Port Stephen's region needs to be considered holistically.

Regards

Michelle Catherine Wills