

PLANT TRADE NURSERY

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Date: 31st January 2019

The Director,
Resource Assessments,
Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Madame/Sir:

We wish to express our opposition to the proposed Sand Mine at Bobs Farm. We own a small local business in Bobs Farm, running a plant nursery and landscaping business. This development has the potential to destroy the beautiful small community we work within and our business should it go ahead.

We strongly believe the proposal has been designed to maximize profit and had little if no regard for the community in which it will be placed within.

Our main concerns are the potential impacts on the ground water resulting from the excavation and dredging of ancient sand dunes, which hold water as it percolates to aquifers below. Pre-mining ecological conditions cannot be restored and the loss of or disturbance of such an important asset to the local and wider community is far too great to allow the development to be permitted.

Our business relies solely on the groundwater to water all our stock in the nursery. We use a significant amount of water each day and any impacts on the groundwater supply whether that is a decrease in the groundwater level and or increased salinity levels would result in the loss of our business. It is clear that such a major operation as the proposed sand mine will have some impacts on ground water, particularly considering that they will be excavating and dredging 1m below AHD. We know many businesses in the area rely on the groundwater for their livelihoods that will also be impacted by this development if it is allowed to go ahead.

The proposed sand mine is located on the northern boundary of the North Stockton Catchment. This area is defined under Hunter Water Regulation 2015 as a "special area". Protection of this catchment is essential for the wider community; it is an important asset and should not be compromised. No other sand mine in the Port Stephens Council LGA is allowed to go within 1metre of the ground water, to protect groundwater sources from pollution, loss of valuable water assets from drainage and evaporation. This proposal is likely to cause irreversible damage to the aquifer that supports many ecological sensitive communities as well as supplying water to a lot of people under basic landholder rights and commercial interests including agriculture, aquaculture, permaculture, horticulture and tourism.

The ground water assessment does not satisfy our concerns that the water table will not be contaminated. The proposed site has not been tested adequately for PFO contamination and as such there is doubt as to whether the PFOs issue could spread to our area from its current boundary, which is approximately 3kms from the proposed mine site. The community wants some assurance that we will not have another ground water contamination issue in Port Stephens, such as that seen in the Williamstown and Surrounds?

We would also like to know that if there are impacts on ground water that the developer will compensate us? Therefore, we seek government assistance to ensure that an independent commission undertakes proper groundwater impact analysis or government agency to ensure that the communities water resource will not be adversely impacted upon.

Whilst our major concern is the ground water we are also concerned about the following:

- Health of local residents and our staff who will face potentially devastating impacts from air and noise pollution
- The future of Bobs Farm Public School where the students and staff will be constantly disturbed by laden trucks passing in close proximity for the next 15 years, exposed to unnecessary air pollution and disease associated with silicosis. If the development is permitted it is our understanding that many parents will no longer send their children to the school, resulting in the loss of a community asset and essential educational facility for its rural residents.
- Traffic safety on Marsh Road and Nelson Bay Road will be compromised. There are already heavy traffic flows along Nelson Bay Road. The cumulative impact of the proposed 200 truck movements a day along with the other 10 sand mines truck movements (totaling approximately 1200 truck movements a day) using Nelson Bay Road will place enormous pressure on the road and infrastructure, create unsafe driving environment for motorist and increase road cost upkeep for both local and state governments.
- That extraction below the water table has not been allowed in other developments including sand mining, in this area.
- That the development of a lake with evaporation of 90 million litres of fresh water per year is not ecologically sustainable.
- The potential negative impacts on Tourism in Port Stephens with a Sand Mine located at the gateway.
- The site has considerable environmental values and the ongoing development in the area is considered to be creating an detrimental cumulative impact on native vegetation. In particular the site is classed as supplementary koala habitat under the Port Stephens Council Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management (CKPoM), requiring its protection to assist the long-term conservation of the Koalas of Port Stephens. This habitat should be maintained for the benefit of our community and future generations.

Working closely amongst and with the local community of Port Stephens it is well known that this development is not in the public interest and has generated widespread condemnation in Bobs Farm and the wider Port Stephens community. We hope that the Independent Planning Commission will deny the development application; given that the proposal is not an ecological sustainable development and could potentially cause disastrous outcomes for the natural environment, businesses, schools and families in the area.

Sincerely,
 Amy and Steve Cuneo
 FC Hortcare Pty Ltd Plant Trade Nursery'