

DOC17/610402-08 ; EF14/502

Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Attention: Mr Anthony Barnes

By email: anthony.barnes@planning.nsw.gov.au

15 January 2018

Dear Mr Barnes

Proposed Modification to Salt Ash Sand Quarry Project - MP 07_0094 Mod 4 – Comments from the Environment Protection Authority (EPA)

I refer to your email to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) received 7 December 2017 inviting the EPA to submit comments including any advice on recommended conditions of approval in relation to the Salt Ash Sand Quarry Project modification application. The modification is applied for under DA MP07_0094 MOD 4 (Modification 4), and relates to a proposed increase in transportation rate of excavated material from 201,000 to 400,000 tonnes per annum; increased truck movements from 30 to 42 per day. The proposal also seeks an extension of the operational hours of 7:00am to 5:00pm, to 6:00am to 6:00pm (Monday to Friday); and a minor change to the sequence of extraction stages.

The EPA has reviewed the Environmental Assessment (EA) supplied with the modification application, and raises the following issues:

1. Inconsistent information regarding the changes to hours of operation associated with the project.

The EA contains contradictory statements regarding the proposed change in operating hours and clarification from the proponent is required.

- The EA on page 3 states the proposal is seeking to increase hours of operation to from the 6am to 6 pm but not specify the exact days of the week to which these times apply.
- The Air Quality Impact Assessment on page 4 states the facility proposes to have the capacity to operate 12 hours per day (6am -6pm), 7 days per week.
- Under the section of the EA titled Statutory Evaluation on Page 6, point 4 states that "There will be no change to the building footprint of the operation, the mining methods or the operating hours."

2. Inaccurate calculation of truck movements provided for the basis of the justification for the proposed increase in operating hours

The EA proposes that an increase in truck movements off site from (3) to (3.5) per hour averaged over a working day and allowing an additional 2 hours of operation per day will result in annual capacity being doubled. The EA makes no rational explanation as to the method of calculation that this claim is based on other than noting that an increase in operating hours could potentially increase truck movements from 30 to 42 per day average. It is unclear if the predicted truck movements are referring to one way movements, in which case the actual numbers of movements in and out if an increase in operating hours will be increased overall from 60 per hour to 84.

The EA bases predicted truck movement numbers for the project by using the calculation of averages. The EPA views this method as inaccurate as the nature of the operations relies on campaign operation where the maximum numbers of trucks will be moving for the full operating hours.

The EA states that weighbridge data shows that the quarry is only operating at an average 35% of the annual limit. It is unclear if the EA refers to truck movement limits or mining capacity limits.

Justification for the increased operating hours is not demonstrated in the EA, accordingly the EPA does not support the change in operating hours. The EPA may be able to make further comment in relation to this project upon clarification of the above issues.

Noise

The proposed modification will not change the number and/or type of equipment used on site. No additional plant and equipment are proposed, and therefore no increase in noise impacts from onsite operations are expected. Noise impacts can be managed thorough existing licence limits and conditions.

The Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) indicates that the movement of haul trucks on site will not increase noise levels above the Environment Protection Licence (EPL) noise limits for the premises. The NIA does not include an assessment of road traffic noise off-site from the increased truck movements on Janet Parade. However, the modification report states that there is community concern in relation to the increased noise and road safety issues that would arise if an increase in truck movements and operating hours were approved for the project.

Air Quality

The EPA does not typically set ambient air quality limits, criteria or standards for industrial premises. In the EPA's view, ambient air/dust limits are not enforceable, which is why they are not included in Environment Protection Licences. The EPA focuses its regulatory efforts on controlling emissions at the source. For extractive industries, which generate fugitive dust emissions, this is consistent with s128(2) POEO Act, which requires that all practicable means are taken to prevent and minimise air pollution. The EPA reflects this legislative requirement in its standard EPL conditions, requiring that activities occurring at the licenced premises be undertaking in a manner that prevents or minimised dust. An air quality management plan is a tool for the proponent/licensee to use as a framework for ensuring operational management is appropriately implemented. The EPA therefore has no comment on the proposed amendment. Dust emissions generated within the boundary of the premises are managed under Operating Condition O3 of EPL 13406 held by the proponent.

Recommendations

Noise

Justification for the increased operating hours is not demonstrated in the EA and accordingly the EPA does not support the change in operating hours. However, should Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) approval be given to varying operational hours, the EPA recommends that an additional noise limit of 35dBA be apply at any receiver during the morning shoulder period (6am-7am).

Environment Protection Licence Variation

The proponent currently holds Environment Protection Licence 13406 under the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* (POEO ACT) in respect of environmental controls for Extractive Activities. Should the DPE approve the proposal, the proponent will need to apply for and obtain a Licence Variation from the EPA prior to any increase in extractive activities or operational changes at the licensed premises.

If you require any further information regarding this matter please contact Genevieve Lorang on (02) 4908 6809.

Yours sincerely

 15.1.18

BILL GEORGE
A/Head Strategic Programs Unit – Hunter Region
Environment Protection Authority

Contact officer: GENEVIEVE LORANG
(02) 4908 6869
hunter.region@epa.nsw.gov.au

