

Department of Planning and Environment

Our ref: OUT22/3083

Nagindar Singh

Planning and Assessment Group
NSW Department of Planning and Environment

Email: Nagindar.Singh@planning.nsw.gov.au

13 April 2022

Subject: Gunlake Quarry Continuation Project (SSD-12469087) RTS

Dear Mr Singh

I refer to your email of 15 March 2022 to the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) Water and the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) about the above matter.

Gunlake Quarries Pty Ltd is seeking an approval for a new development, namely the Continuation Project, to extend the life of an existing hard-rock (ignimbrite) extraction operation by 30 years.

We continue to be concerned that the project has not adequately addressed water security. Please note our detailed advice in Attachment A.

Please also note that the licensing and approval function has now moved from NRAR to DPE Water. Any further referrals to DPE Water can be sent by email to water.assessments@dpie.nsw.gov.au, or to the following coordinating officer within DPE Water:

Simon Francis – Senior Project Officer
E: simon.francis@dpie.nsw.gov.au
M: 0428 926 117

Yours sincerely



Liz Rogers, Manager Assessments
Knowledge Division
Department of Planning and Environment: Water

Attachment A

Detailed advice to DPE Planning & Assessment regarding the Gunlake Quarry Continuation Project (SSD-12469087) RTS

1.0 Water supply

1.1 Recommendation – Prior to Determination

That the proponent address the risk to the project of uncertainty in meeting water demands during a dry period and the need to obtain additional approvals and licences.

1.2 Recommendations – Post approval

That the proponent:

- Update the Soil and Water Management Plan to reflect monitoring, metering and management measures to report on groundwater and surface water take and potential impacts to water sources due to the activity.
- report on water take at the site each year (direct and indirect) in the Annual Review. This is to include water take where a water licence is required and where an exemption applies. Where a water licence is required the water take needs to be reviewed against existing water licences.
- ensure sufficient water entitlement is held in a water access licence/s to account for the maximum predicted take for each water source prior to take occurring.
- ensure that relevant nomination of work dealing applications for Water Access Licences proposed to account for water take by the project have been completed prior to the water take occurring.
- be aware of the rules of the relevant water sharing plans and how they may impact the project and ability to trade water.

1.3 Explanation

The approach of the proponent to submit a registration of interest in the 2021 Controlled Allocation Order is a viable approach to address the additional water take predicted for this project. If this is successful, the proponent will need to ensure the relevant nomination of work dealing application is completed with WaterNSW prior to the water being taken.

Uncertainty remains in the ability to address the predicted water supply shortfall in a dry period. The option of scaling back operations is viable, however the viability of options to continue operations including using chemical dust suppressants, third party suppliers or additional water supply works have not been assessed any further. This remains a risk to the project. The option of a new groundwater bore would not be entitled to an exemption from a water supply work approval under the *Water Management Act 2000* as it is yet to be assessed within the SSD assessment pathway. Sufficient entitlement would also need to be held in a Water Access Licence.

2.0 Groundwater impacts

2.1 Recommendation – Post Approval

That the conditions of approval ensure commitment to each recommendation of the department's EIS submission OUT21/15056 prior to implementing the proposed project:

- reporting water take (direct and indirect) in the Annual Review
 - developing a numerical groundwater flow model
 - submitting an independent review of the groundwater model prior to
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- 'make good' provisions for neighbouring groundwater users
- DPE consultation on updating the Water Management Plan.

2.2 Explanation

The RtS has acknowledged all recommendations of the department's submission OUT21/15056 and satisfactorily addressed them apart from not specifically committing to the following post-approval matters:

- reporting water take (direct and indirect) in the Annual Review
- developing a numerical groundwater flow model
- submitting an independent review of the groundwater model prior to construction
- 'make good' provisions for neighbouring groundwater users
- DPE consultation on updating the Water Management Plan.

End Attachment A
