

2 March 2023

Department of Planning & Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

APPLICATION NO: SSD-9099356 (Our Ref. 25-2023-3-1)
PROPOSAL: Holcim Salt Ash Sand Operations
PROPERTY: 8 Oakvale Drive, SALT ASH (LOT 4 DP 774726)

Attention: James McDonough

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your correspondence dated 3 February 2023 requesting Council's comments for the above development. Council has given consideration to the SSD application and makes the following comments.

Ecology

The following ecological concerns from Council are noted:

1. From review of the information provided, Council is of the opinion that the sand dredging component of the proposal may have a serious and irreversible impact on the endangered orchid species *Diuris arenaria*. The Groundwater Impact Assessment prepared by Hydrominex Geoscience details that "any open areas that expose the water table will result in enhanced open pond evaporation, with potential consequences for the water table elevation locally." The assessment concludes that "the groundwater drawdown predicted by modelling for the project during dredging activities and following site closure, when an expanded window of groundwater is left open, is predicted to extend ~2 km from site". There are also likely to be soil chemistry impacts.

Diuris arenaria is a species that has an obligate relationship with mycorrhizal fungi. The presence of fungi is known to be closely correlated with microclimatic conditions such as soil moisture content. Council is concerned that groundwater impacts will affect soil moisture content and microclimatic conditions that are required for this species. Where the extent of impacts is unknown it is considered pertinent to apply the precautionary principle. Given the potential for the project to impact on groundwater and soil chemistry over a widespread area (~2 km), impacts could be considered potentially serious and irreversible.

2. The viability of filling the dredge pond upon completion has not been demonstrated sufficiently.

3. The BDAR only includes credit calculations for the areas of impacted remnant vegetation. However, areas that have been rehabilitated as per the conditions of previous consents should be included in credit calculations.

Sewer Servicing

The EIS refers to a 2500L septic tank for onsite wastewater disposal. There are two OSSM systems registered and issued an Approval to Operate by Port Stephens Council (ref. 45 2000 4690 1 and 45 1999 1855 1). An increase in staff will prompt the requirement for a Section 68 Application under the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Local Infrastructure Contributions

In accordance with Port Stephens Council's Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan, a haulage levy applies to extractive industries/mining. It is recommended that the haulage levy be applied to any future consent for the proposal to satisfy the demand from the development.

It is requested that Council be consulted prior to the imposition (or exclusion of) any contributions conditions that impact local infrastructure.

Air Quality

There is a current Environment Protection Licence (EPL), EPL 11685, for the site. As the project is considered a scheduled activity under Schedule 1 of the *Protection of the Environment Operations (POEO) Act 1997*, the site will require an amended licence from the NSW EPA as the appropriate regulatory authority.

Council will rely on the comments provided by the NSW EPA regarding the likely air quality impacts from the proposed development.

Acoustics

Council will rely on the comments provided by the NSW EPA regarding the likely noise impacts from the proposed development.

Contamination

The site is listed on Council's Contaminated Land Register for sand mining (ref. 26 2010 924 1). DPE should consider appropriate contaminated land investigations for the activities proposed onsite in accordance with Chapter 4 of State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards)

Acid Sulfate Soils

As the site is mapped as Category 4 Acid Sulfate Soils (ASS), an ASS Management Plan will be required/conditioned. Additionally, the EIS refers to soil sampling which confirms a high-risk for ASS.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Holcim Salt Ash Sand Operation SSD applications. If you wish to discuss the matters raised above or have any questions, please contact me on the number below and I will be happy to help.

Yours Faithfully



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