

Enquiries

Please ask for Theresa Folpp
Direct 02 6549 3700
Our reference CM 25/64038

19 September 2025

Jarrold Blane
Senior Planning Officer
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

Dear Mr Blane

Dolwende Quarry MOD1 – Muswellbrook Shire Council comments on the Modification Report

Reference is made to the following:

- ‘Dolwende Quarry Haul Road Modification Report’ (Pitt and Sherry, 2025) (Modification Report); and
- Request to provide comment on the Modification Report via the Major Projects Portal.

On 25 November 2016 the then Minister for Planning granted consent to State Significant Development SSD-6519 for the construction and operation of the Dolwende Quarry, which is located 7km east of Sandy Hollow along the Golden Highway at Hollydeen.

Dolwende Quarry is approved to produce up to 250,000 tonnes of product per year, operate a rock crushing and screening plant, office, amenities, car parking, and a 2.5km long haul road to connect the quarry with the Golden Highway just east of the Rosemount Road intersection with a BAR/AUL intersection.

Modification (MOD1) to SSD-6519 seeks to relocate the quarry haul road and entrance and to amend and correct several conditions within the consent. The intersection for the Modified Haul Road is proposed to be located at the former Hollydene Vineyard Access and will be widened to approximately 68m at the junction.

Council has reviewed the Modification Report and has provided comments below.

Planning Agreement

1. Table 9 states that ‘The applicant has not offered to enter into a Voluntary Planning Agreement for the proposed modifications’.

As stated in its correspondence to the Proponent via email in April 2024, ‘Consistent with similar State Significant Development (SSD) in the Shire, Staff request a Planning Agreement that includes a contribution for community projects and contribution toward employment of an Environmental Officer to offset community impacts and the cost to ratepayers for Council to review plans, monitor outcomes and contribute to closure / rehabilitation planning in the future. The large number of SSD applications that Council receives each year, and the approved SSD in the shire, places significant workload on staff. Council employs an officer to manage most day-to-day aspects of responding to new SSD applications and monitoring existing SSD’.

2. Any community contribution would be paid into the Muswellbrook Shire Community Benefit Fund. A copy of the [‘Muswellbrook Shire Community Benefit Fund Policy’ \(MSC052E\)](#) is available on Council’s public website.

Social

3. It is noted that up to 10 employees will be required for construction.

Traffic

4. As shown on Figure 3 of the Modification Report, the proposed Modified Haul Road intersects with the Golden Highway which is a State-owned road. The improved sight distances are noted.
5. Staff note consultation has been undertaken with TfNSW, as outlined in Section 5 of the Modification Report. As a result, we offer no comment on safety/suitability of the intersection with the Highway.
6. Consideration should be given for how the right-hand turn movement into the site will be managed, particularly given the likely large number of heavy vehicle movements during construction of the Muswellbrook By-pass and various renewable energy projects to the east of the Quarry.

Air Quality - Amenity

7. The Modification Report states that *‘The relocated haul road will have the same characteristics as what is approved i.e unsealed except for the first 50m from the Golden Highway that would be sealed to reduce noise, dust and sediment tracking’*.

A concern was held with the visible dust plumes from the Modified Haul Road and associated amenity impacts and public perception. However, the following is noted from Section 5.2.5 of the approved air quality management plan, would manage this issue if implemented:

‘Haul roads will be watered using water carts such that the road surface has sufficient moisture to minimise on-road dust generation but not so much as to cause mud/dirt track out to occur. The key is to aim for frequent, but light watering of the main haul road’.

Biodiversity

Cocuil supports the actions that has seen the:

- Project redesigned to avoid an adjacent Endangered population of Pine Donkey Orchid; and
 - Modified Haul Road completely avoiding impact on the current approved route which traverses a significant stand of PCT 3431 Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland which also falls into the category of the Federal CEEC Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest & Woodland.
8. Council recommends a condition of consent requiring fencing or other visual barrier for the Pine Donkey Orchid to avoid accidental disturbance.

Visual

The Modification Report states:

‘the proposed intersection on the Golden Highway provides the only public viewpoint of the site and is likely where most road users would have views of the haul road. However, a combination of vegetation in the highway road reserve and scattered trees and the elevated ridge upon which the proposed haul road is to be located, make public views intermittent and fleeting’.

9. Any approval for MOD1 should continue to include:

- Condition 34 of SSD 6519 - *the Applicant must implement all reasonable and feasible measures to minimise the visual and off-site lighting impacts of the development; and*
- Condition 31 of SSD 6519 – *the Biodiversity and Rehabilitation Management Plan (developed in consultation with Council) must include procedures to be implemented for establishing vegetation screening to minimise the visual impacts of the site on surrounding receivers.*

Consultation

10. It is noted that no public or community engagement has been undertaken for MOD1. Prior to construction, the community should be notified prior to works occurring to construct the intersection (a likely action in a Traffic/Construction Management Plan) and adjoining property owners should be provided with the amended project approval within 30 days of a decision.

Others

11. Council supports the intention to remove any ambiguity about the definition of ‘commencement of quarry operations’ such that quarry material can be used to construct the haul road and intersection.

Council appreciates the opportunity to comment and would be pleased to provide additional information if requested. Should you need to discuss the above, please contact Theresa Folpp, Environmental Planning Officer on 02 6549 3700 or email council@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au.

Yours faithfully



Sharon Pope
Director Environment and Planning