

Alexander Went

Owner, 16 Maybon Close, Branxton NSW 2335

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OBJECTION

RE: Bluestone Hardrock Quarry, 253 Stanhope Road, Elderslie (SSD) - Environmental Impact Statement

1. Who I Am and Why This Proposal Affects Me

I object to this proposal. I am the owner of 16 Maybon Close, Branxton - a two-acre residential block directly adjacent to Elderslie Rd and the proposed haulage corridor. I purchased this land for the specific purpose of building a family home for myself and my two children.

I made that investment decision based on the established and planned character of this corridor - a semi-rural residential growth area, so recognised by the planning system itself through the approved expansion of the adjacent Radford Park Estate and the identification of Branxton-Greta-North Rothbury as the highest dwelling-growth area in the Cessnock LGA. I am, in a direct and personal sense, exactly the corridor growth that this proposal's assessment fails to account for - one of hundreds of households that have committed capital to living on or near this road on the strength of its residential planning.

Professionally, I work in cyber security risk assessment and compliance for local government. I spend my working life evaluating whether claimed controls actually mitigate identified risks and whether assessments demonstrate what they assert. I have read the Environmental Impact Statement with that discipline and I do not consider it demonstrates that the impacts of this proposal on my property, my family or this corridor can be mitigated to an acceptable standard.

2. The Proposal Transforms the Corridor I Am Building In

The EIS proposes an average of 220 heavy vehicle movements per day (110 laden out, 110 unladen return), around 1,100 movements per week, dispatching from 6am, for an operational life of at least 30 years - with the proponent's earlier documentation contemplating up to 50 years. At peak dispatch rates this equates to a heavy vehicle passing approximately every two minutes through operating hours.

That is not an incremental increase in traffic. It is a permanent reclassification of the corridor's function - from a rural-residential road network serving homes, farms, wineries and school buses, to a sustained industrial freight route. Every element of the amenity on which my building plans depend would be degraded for the entire period in which I intend to raise my family here:

- **Noise:** engine braking on grades, unladen tray impact noise, and full-power laden climbs, recurring every few minutes for 12 hours a day - with early-morning dispatch coinciding with the temperature inversions common in this part of the Hunter Valley, which trap and amplify sound across a wide area. The EIS does not model corridor noise at receptors under inversion conditions.
- **Dust and air quality:** fugitive dust from laden trucks and diesel particulate deposited along the corridor for decades. The World Health Organization classifies diesel exhaust as a Group 1 carcinogen. The EIS confines its air quality analysis substantially to the quarry site rather than the haul corridor where people actually live.

- **Safety:** my children will live on, walk on, cycle on and catch school buses from this road network. The corridor has very limited footpaths, cycleways, narrow shoulders and school bus services operating within the proposed haulage hours.

3. The Assessment Ignores the Corridor's Approved Residential Future

State Significant Development assessment requires cumulative impact analysis. The EIS assesses quarry traffic against the corridor as it stands today. But the corridor's future is already approved and funded:

- **Radford Park Estate:** 169 existing large-lot residential lots directly on Elderslie Road, plus an approved 162-lot expansion (Planning Proposal PP-2022-3868, approved May 2024) with access via Elderslie Road and a new roundabout planned at Rusty Lane — 331+ lots in total on the haul route itself.
- **Huntlee:** approximately 1,200 homes already occupied, with plans lodged for a total of 7,300 dwellings and some 20,000 residents whose daily movements depend on the Branxton road network the haul route runs through.
- **Individual landholders like me:** building homes on residential blocks throughout the corridor in reliance on its planned character.

A 30-to-50-year industrial haulage approval assessed against today's traffic, on a corridor the planning system is simultaneously filling with families, is not a cumulative assessment. It is an assessment of a corridor that will not exist for most of the project's life. Singleton Council's formal objection makes the same point: the level of community consultation is not adequate, and the proposal impacts local roads that are not designed for heavy vehicle movements.

4. Economic Harm Falls on Residents, Not the Proponent

The proposal offers 15 on-site jobs. Against that: the adjacent pet motel employing 14 people faces closure, established tourism businesses on the route, including a winery whose operations are directly exposed to noise, dust and access conflict, face sustained trade damage, and hundreds of residential property owners along the corridor - including me - face a foreseeable devaluation of our principal assets. Even a modest percentage reduction across 331+ Radford Park lots, the Maybon Close blocks and other Elderslie Road properties represents a loss of private capital that dwarfs the project's claimed local benefit. My block's value, and the value of the home I intend to build on it, rest on precisely the amenity this proposal would remove: quiet, air quality, safe roads and semi-rural character. The EIS asserts regional economic benefit but does not quantify corridor-level economic harm. A Net Public Benefit analysis that counts the jobs and ignores the losses is not an analysis.

Individually, each of these might be procedural noise. Together, they describe an application that has not earned the community's confidence or demonstrated the rigour a multi-decade approval demands.

5. What I Ask

1. That the application be refused, consistent with the Commission's reasoning in Martins Creek.
2. If refusal is not the outcome, that no approval be granted unless and until: (a) an independent structural fatigue life assessment and heritage impact assessment of Elderslie Bridge are completed, published and any required works funded by the proponent before operations commence; (b) the traffic assessment is redone with full cumulative modelling incorporating the Radford Park expansion (PP-2022-3868), Huntlee growth and regional forecasts, and independently peer reviewed; (c) haulage is prohibited during school bus operating windows; (d) enforceable dispatch caps, GPS

route compliance, engine-brake restrictions and public monthly compliance reporting are imposed; and (e) binding, indexed, audited road maintenance funding is secured for the life of the approval, with operations ceasing if volumes exceed forecast.

3. That I be registered as an objector and afforded the opportunity to address the Independent Planning Commission at its public hearing.

I bought this land to build a home and raise my children in a growing residential community. The planning system approved that community's growth. It should not now approve, for the following three to five decades, an industrial freight operation through the middle of it.

Yours faithfully,

Alexander Went

Owner, 16 Maybon Close, Branxton