

Objection to Proposed Gravel Quarry Development Application

7 July 2026

Subject: Objection to **Development Application Number: SSD-76210271-**
Proposed Gravel Quarry at Lot 5 Springvale Road, Elderslie, and Blind Creek Road,
Glendon Brook (Singleton LGA)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to formally object to the Development Application (DA) for the proposed gravel quarry at Lot 5 Springvale Road, Elderslie, and Blind Creek Road, Glendon Brook (Singleton LGA). As a property owner for over 20 which is situated only 5.45 km from the proposed site, I will be directly and severely impacted by this development.

While I recognize the need for extractive materials, this specific proposal is not needed in the region which is well serviced by existing hard rock quarries, and it is inappropriate for this location due to the following:

- unacceptable traffic and road safety impacts
- Insufficient independent investigation as to the impact on the natural environment
- Forced change to recreational activities
- Health risk
- Noise, Vibration, and Amenity Impacts

I strongly urge the department to refuse this application based on the following valid planning grounds:

1. Traffic and Road Safety

The proposed haulage routes are entirely unsuitable for continuous heavy vehicle traffic. Springvale Road, Stanhope Road and sections of Elderslie Road are prime agricultural farming land with highly productive river flats bordering the Hunter River. Farming is a mix of irrigated and non-irrigated crop and hay production, vineyard and cellar door, cattle, horse, poultry and sheep production including various studs as well as recently introduced farm stay accommodation due to its idealistic and peaceful natural environment.

Stanhope Road is a generally quiet back road which is currently used by public vehicles, a school bus run, tractors and farm vehicles, cyclists, horse back riders and people walking or running for exercise, with many of these activities being totally incompatible with a heavy truck haulage route.

Significant improvements made by Singleton council in recent years to improve the road surface, mitigate impacts of floods by raising roads, installing barriers, increased barriers and signage. However, the area remains a country hamlet and in recognition of the dangers that these often narrow

roads with blind crests, blind corners, narrow verges with some steep banks and culverts that are very close to the roads edge. During my time living in Stanhope the road speed limit has rightly been decreased from 100km/h to 80km/h with many corners having suggested speeds of less than 55km/h.

It is also worth noting that Stanhope Road which serves as a connecting rural pathway, is targeted by Transport for NSW with the regular mobile speed cameras to deter speeding on what is considered a vulnerable high-risk local route. At least three separate sites are regularly used by the mobile speed cameras including two within a kilometre of the intersection of Stanhope Road and Springvale Road, one in each direction.

Stanhope Road/Elderslie Road has three areas of concern for road users to contend with that the majority of road users are unfamiliar with. These three somewhat unique quirks create a serious risk for commuters unfamiliar with these roads and results in accidents, collisions and endangerment to life and property today, a risk that will be considerably increased with the introduction of a heavy truck haulage route.

1. A one way, single lane, 136 year old historical bridge over the Hunter River (Elderslie Bridge)
2. A T intersection at the junction of Stanhope Road and Elderslie Road that does not confirm with expected right of way rules.
3. More than a dozen farm properties that straddle Elderslie Road and Stanhope Road with regular sometime twice daily or even more stock and farm machinery movements requiring oncoming traffic to slow and or stop and wait.

- **Elderslie Bridge**

Elderslie Bridge is a narrow single lane bridge with a give way at the southern end of the bridge. This means that any vehicle on the bridge or approaching the bridge from the northern side has right of way. The road rules relating to this bridge are very unusual and only relevant to low traffic rural areas across NSW so drivers often make errors, the most typical one being not giving way to vehicles approaching from the north. The hillside, trees and the bridges trusses can obstruct the view of vehicles coming from the south side meaning vehicles approaching from the north who have the right of way in a 80km/h zone are regularly faced with traffic already on the bridge when they make there dogleg turn onto the bridge requiring emergency braking and then one or more vehicles needing to reverse back off the bridge. If the heavy vehicle haulage route is approved my concern is that this current real risk will increase considerably and the consequences are more likely to lead to death or catastrophic bridge failure if a loaded truck attempts to avoid collision.

When approaching Elderslie Bridge from the south side, the bridge, traffic conditions and the approach road from the north that has right of way is only visible for the final 50-100 metres. This results in many cars having to break had and pull to the left to avoid oncoming traffic. The left barrier rail next to the give

way sign on the north side of the bridge is witness to this, as it is regularly impacted and damaged as it currently is at the time of writing. While trucks are easier to see than cars or bikes coming from the north, Empty trucks returning to the quarry site will struggle to stop in time for smaller commuter vehicles.

My understanding is that Elderslie Bridge given its 136 year age, timber based deck and old truss design is only rated to allow one loaded truck over it at a time. This means that while loaded trucks approaching from the south side of Stanhope Bridge will have right of way, if two or more loaded trucks approach the bridge at the same time, the first truck will proceed across the bridge while the second has to wait for the first to cross, then the second one will have the right of way and will start their crossing. For vehicles waiting at the give way on the south side of the bridge, this will not only add to confusion and likelihood that they will break the road rules and commence crossing with the second truck stopped on the other side, but also add to the risk of serious accident.

Elderslie bridge is usually a quiet bridge, however, it is increasingly being used by workers after shifts to avoid the congestion of the main road network east of Singleton, This means that commuters can be stuck at give way on the south side of Elderslie bridge for 5 minutes or longer which leads to frustration and vehicles failing to give way. The added traffic of hundreds of additional truck movements will make this usually quiet road unusable during operation hours.

- **T Junction at the intersection of Stanhope Road and Elderslie Road**

At almost all T-intersection in NSW, vehicles on the terminating road (the road that ends) must give way to all vehicles on the continuing road (the road that goes through). The intersection on the proposed haulage route where Stanhope Road meets Elderslie Road is different in that the continuing road is a give way going north and south, while the terminating road joining from the west has right of way. This is currently a source of confusion for current traffic with vehicles stopping when they have right of way with hesitation causing frequent accidents or near misses at this site. Vehicles also take the right turn from the terminating road without care with vehicles moving into path of oncoming vehicles heading north on the continuing road (Elderslie Road that changes into Stanhope Road). The added traffic of hundreds of additional truck movements having to give way in both directions on this continuing road will make this usually quiet road a serious accident risk location during operation hours.

- **Properties straddling both sides of Stanhope Road and Elderslie Road**

Along Stanhope Road and Elderslie Road (on the north side of Elderslie Bridge) commuters are confronted with at least a dozen operational farms which straddle both sides of the road. In order to conduct business, these properties need to be able to regularly move farm vehicles and machinery including tractors, bailers, water carts, ATV's, from one side of the road to the other which can slow traffic movements. They also need to be able to move livestock across and along the road which requires erecting temporary signs in both directions and on occasion stopping traffic. These frequent vehicle and sometimes daily stock movements are well understood by locals, but are becoming a real

problem with transient commuters rushing through the area using the back roads to get home or to work. In the past four years the traffic flow has increased and with it commuters who refuse to stop or even slow down when cattle and even small calves are moving on the road and roadside. In the past two years I have had two calves killed, one being hit by a car that failed to stop and a second who was bumped, panicked and hit a fence at speed breaking its neck. I have also had a pregnant cow hit by a car that again failed to stop and I myself have been hit by a 4wd myself by a driver who refused to give way to cattle being moved.

The need to move machinery and cattle will not change should a heavy vehicle route be approved, but, the volume of traffic will increase as will the frustration of commuter delayed because of the additional traffic volume and bottleneck at Elderslie Bridge. My fear is that more domesticated animals and livestock workers lives will be at risk if the heavy vehicle haulage route is approved.

2. Insufficient independent investigation as to the impact on the natural environment

The area of the proposed quarry and the immediate area impacted by the proposed development is known to be highly valued for protecting threatened ecological communities native to the Hunter Valley. I can confirm that it is home to a significant number of rare and endangered animals including wombats, echidnas, platypus, large fruit bats and micro bats, quolls, migratory and indigenous waterbirds including birds of prey and black swans all of which I have witnessed first hand.

In the 20 years I have lived here I have seen wombats at the end of Cranky Corner Road on Stanhope Creek just a couple of kilometres from the proposed mine site on two occasions, however their diggings and easily recognisable cube scat is seen on most occasions I have visited the area. I have had three echidna sightings on my property 5km from the mine site but I would not have ever been aware of these if it was not for the reaction of inquisitive cattle around them. On a property at Glendonbrook that I agisted cattle I had the pleasure to see two platypus swimming in Branch Creek which again is only a few kilometres from the proposed quarry development. I have also confronted a quoll in my hen house a similar experience to one of my neighbours but have not seen them at any other time. I have also had micro bats chasing insects near my house and fruit bats helping themselves to native figs on my property.

These are all examples of sightings of rare or endangered animals that would be extremely unlikely in a clearly insufficient 20 minute search for a limited number of wildlife species or birds that the were conducted by the proponent on the development site.

The proponents second wildlife surveys while extremely limited were also conducted post vegetation removal from the site which would have impacted on the findings.

The NSW Environment and Heritage website, indicates the need for “continuous acoustic monitoring spanning multiple seasons or even up to two years for large-scale projects” given the 30 year lifespan of this project and its impact on the sensitive and protected environment this should be considered a large scale project and monitoring should be appropriately robust.

For general Fauna no spotlighting or camera trapping was undertaken and breeding/mating seasons were not targeted. While no migratory birds were recorded during the 4 days of survey (totalling only 80 minutes) these were conducted during Autumn and Winter which is the most unlikely time of the year to see migratory birds in the Lower Hunter Valley.

Blasting and vibrations also are likely to impact on the local two known local and endangered cave dwelling bats in the area, however, the survey and mitigants are insufficient in this regard. This is also the case for other animals that are known to reside in the area and spend time underground in burrows including wombats, quolls and platypus. Australian regulators such as the NSW Department of Planning and the WA Environmental Protection Authority utilize detailed guidelines to enforce **buffer zones** (often 350m to 500m) and control blast hole sizes near known habitats.

3. Forced change to Recreational activities

- **Tangory Nature Reserve 503.64ha**

This is a resource for all Australians. Closest Nature Reserve to the new Huntlee Development comprising of 5,600 homes and 22,000 residences once complete. This reserve protects Lower Hunter spotted gum ironbark forest, Lower Hunter Valley dry rainforest, and Scrub turpentine shrub and is suitable for nature walks, bird watching and photography and the proximity of the proposed mine, blasting, crushing and truck movement noise and dust puts this at risk.

There is also nothing in the mine proposal documents that explains how they intend to ensure the safety of visitors to this Nature Reserve from regular blasting events given the mine is going to be only 30 metres from the Reserve.

The Tangory Nature Reserve land that only came into effect in October 2022 during the Covid Crisis and has the potential to be an extremely valuable asset for the new nearby town development of Huntlee. This opportunity is likely to be lost if this quarry development is approved given the Nature Reserve is adjacent to the mine site.

Online reports also conclude that the reserve abounds with a variety of bird life, including glossy black-cockatoos, grey-crowned babblers, little lorikeets,

powerful owls and speckled warblers. The varied sittella, little bent-wing bat and eastern bent-wing bats.

- **Pastimes and social activities**

Stanhope Road and Elderslie Road are also used for horse riding, cycling and walking/running. These activities are obviously incompatible with regular heavy industrial vehicle movements and as such the proposed development will permanently change the welcoming rural nature and activities conducted in the area.

4. Health Risk

All properties within the area of the proposed mine site are reliant on tank water that runs off house and shed roofs. We have no alternative to shower, drink and cook using this water. Being one of the narrowest points along the Hunter Valley the wind is a feature of the immediate area with high wind speeds from the east or west along the river being a feature of the district. Confirmation of this could come from using records from Elderslie Observation Station. Historical figures do not appear to be available to the public or included in the quarry submission.

These winds will send dust significant distances in all directions, and while the mine submission claims they will make allowances to reduce dust pollution based on weather no commitments to stop blasting, crushing, to water roads etc has been made if winds are above any particular level.

The extraction, crushing, and processing of gravel will generate significant amounts of airborne dust and particulate matter.

This constant dust pollution poses a severe health risk to nearby residents, particularly those with respiratory conditions. It will also coat rainwater tanks and settle on residential properties.

5. Noise, Vibration, and Amenity Impacts

Blasting operations near horse and cattle pose risks primarily through sudden, loud noises (airblast overpressure) and ground vibrations. These can trigger dangerous startle or flight responses in sensitive livestock, lead to chronic stress and digestive issues, risk injury from panicked stampeding and cause potential reproductive or milk yield disruptions. We are currently impacted by blasts at Singleton Military Base and blasts from Mines near Singleton depending on weather conditions which allows blast noise to travel considerable distances and vibrations strong enough to rattle windows.

In the past we have had a couple of embryo transfer and artificial insemination program failures where our Vet at the time indicated that the blasts and the stress response they caused were the likely cause of the failures.

It is well known that mine blasting can disrupt embryo transfer (ET) programs in cattle by causing acute noise (airblast overpressure) and ground vibration.

Sudden loud sounds (exceeding 80-100 dB) and tremors induce a stress response, releasing cortisol and adrenaline, which can alter uterine blood flow and cause early embryonic loss, particularly during the critical 7-day post-transfer window.

The proponent's submission also includes no commitment to monitor noise, vibration, dust, or water quality either on site or across the properties of local residents that are likely to be affected. Ongoing constant monitoring at the cost of the proponent should be a condition of approval so the impact on the lives of others can be monitored and changes made/fines issued where regulations are breached or damage to landowners houses or property occurs.

6. Resources not required locally

The development of Huntlee is the first new town in the Hunter Valley for over 50 years. 7,500 houses for 22,000 residents, a commercial precinct, a new primary and secondary school. Being constructed since 2014 with all quarry needs being met by existing sites within the Hunter Valley.

Gravel and hard rock aggregates for the Huntlee master-planned community in the Hunter Valley are sourced from existing local regional hard rock and aggregate suppliers, predominantly drawing from established operations in the lower and upper Hunter regions.

If additional gravel is not required for the Huntlee development or for local councils of Singleton, Cessnock or Maitland, then this is a clearly a development is not required that will only harm the environment and lives of those living in the vicinity of the development and haulage route.

Consideration's if the development is to proceed

The current Elderslie Bridge is clearly incompatible with a heavy vehicle haulage route. A new bridge should be constructed if this project is to proceed to ensure public safety and reduce the impact on residents.

Due to the incompatibility of heavy truck movements with farming on properties in the district, under road access should be constructed at the cost of the developer for all properties along Stanhope Road and Elderslie Road to allow for safe movement of farm vehicles and livestock. Alternatively, Singleton Council should be made to amend subdivision laws to allow owners of these properties to divide these properties along the road boundary irrespective of the area of new land created to eliminate the need for what will become seriously dangerous farming activities.

The duration of this development is excessive. It should be shortened with review and renewal periods of less than 5 years to ensure safety concerns, benefits to community are achieved and maintained with appropriate air, sound, and water monitoring and objectively measured.

Inbound routes need to be confirmed with Stanhope Road to the east of Springvale Road excluded from any heavy vehicle traffic related to this proposal. Also confirm with road maintenance and repairs, Elderslie Bridge repairs and maintenance or floods that may stop traffic on the proposed route, that no alternative route will be used impacting on residences not subject to this current submission.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, the proposed gravel quarry is incompatible with the existing land use and poses unacceptable risks to the health and wellbeing of our community. I request that the determining authority reject this application.