

Response to Gunlake EIS

Gunlake Continuation Project

I object to the expansion of this project proceeding until such time as a commitment is made for the product to be transported to Sydney by rail rather than by truck.

Reasons:

1) With the closure of the Penrith quarries, Marulan has become the major source of hard rock for the Sydney market. There are currently four companies operating quarries in the area – Gunlake, Boral, Holcim and Multiquip. Boral and Holcim transport most of their product by rail, Multiquip and Gunlake use entirely road transport. There is at least another quarry operator doing a feasibility study on a new quarry. This will not be the last investigation of a new quarry.

The life times of these quarries is around ninety years. Long term view must be taken where by all the quarries transport to Sydney by rail. At present Gunlake are operating around 230 trucks per day and wish to increase the maximum daily movements to 750. After the expansion Gunlake will become the second largest quarry operator in the area. If Boral and Holcim can afford the rail option then surely Gunlake can. The ultimate benefit to the community of Gunlake using a rail would be immeasurable.

The Land and Environment decision in 2017 gave approval for that expansion for the first expansion. A condition of the approval was that Gunlake was to reassess the feasibility of the rail option within 10 years of the judgement (viz 2027). This EIS does not consider transport by rail.

2) There has been some improvements to the haulage route from the quarry to the Hume Highway. However there are still some points that make the route extremely dangerous to local light vehicles.

The surface of the road has a double line that is widely separated, but the separation of the lines closes when the road goes over a culvert or through a cutting, thus limiting the effectiveness of this safety measure.

The EIS quotes Austroads 2017 that the minimum safe site distance at an intersection is 285 metres (Traffic Impact Assessment Section 6.2). There are three intersections on the haulage route that do not meet this criteria. These are Ambrose and Brayton Rd, Ambrose and Red Hills Rd and Ambrose and the Hume Highway. The intersection safety must be considered from the point of view of the local light traffic as well as from the trucks.

The most dangerous intersection on the route is at Red Hills Rd /Ambrose Rd. This intersection occurs at the peak of a hill with sight lines as limited as 100 meters, it is in a cutting with no escape options and is prone to fog. Trucks travelling in a westerly direction often appear on top of a car turning into Ambrose Rd. If these sight lines cannot be remedied, the approval for additional trucks must be denied.

I request that a fully independent road safety consult be appointed to review the haulage route and this time to consult with local users.