

Re: Major Project SSD 9099356.
Holcim Sand Operations Salt Ash.

Please accept the following submission on behalf of VOWW (Voice of Wallalong and Woodville and surrounding localities)

We object to this proposal.

The following submission is specific to the haulage routes from Anna Bay /Salt Ash to the Pacific Highway and leading on to the M1 or towards Newcastle.

I would like to point out the increasing quarry haulage truck traffic in the Port Stephens LGA. I am referring to both hard rock quarrying traffic in the west as well as the sand quarrying that is proliferating in the east of the LGA.

Each of the existing and proposed hard rock quarries, such as Boral and Hanson quarries near Seaham and Hunter quarries just north at Karuah, each generate up to 600 truck movements/day on increasingly congested roads. When you add the proposed quarries that are in the proposal or DA stage, total truck traffic numbers equate to 3,500 trucks/day that merge with the sand quarry haulage vehicles at various stages through to Hexham.

This report has not made mention of the cumulative impact of the other sand quarry sites already operational and others in planning stages, let alone the traffic congestion that is bound to occur with proliferation of hard rock quarry trucks. With the extension of the M1 and the widening of the highway between Hexham and Sandgate still years away the implications of the congestion due to cumulative impact and the danger to commuters are enormous and should not be underestimated.

This is contrary to the proponent's report which states in several places:

The Project is not expected to have any negative impacts on other road users, including pedestrians, cyclists and public transport vehicles (buses). While there will be an increase in truck numbers using the transport routes, the truck numbers will be spread over the day.

I agree that they will be spread over the day and merge with the other 3,500 hard rock quarry trucks that are also spread throughout the day.

Much of the modelling, desktop analysis and onsite road studies were done between August 2020 and October 2021. During this time there were several covid restrictions, work was done from home, at times schools were not operational and holiday makers were not frequenting the area. Therefore, the numbers used are not representative of current traffic volumes.

At the intersection of Tomago Road and the Pacific Highway the reality of the traffic is a nightmare. From "lived experience" after about 3.30pm to 5.30pm on any weekday the traffic can bank up to the Hunter Region Botanic Gardens to the north (2.5kms) and to the intersection to Tarro on the Highway to the west. (3kms). The worst delay, according to the modelling, is 50m.

The proponent's traffic analysis has ignored this intersection completely only mentioning that these roads are designed to meet road standards for heavy vehicles. However, that suitability is not the only criteria that should be investigated. The safety of all road users comes into question, the time it adds to their daily commute to and from work or to the transport of students to and from school.

The volume of heavy haulage vehicles on the road system now is akin to the volume of coal transported by truck from the Upper Hunter to the Port of Newcastle which initiated the coal rail corridor that replaced the truck traffic from the road network.

Holiday traffic and even weekend build up can lead to long delays on these sections of the road network. Holiday traffic has not been included in any analysis.

The statement:

*SIDRA traffic modelling undertaken for the traffic assessment at the principal intersections on the transport routes which also included Quarry Access Intersections indicated that all the intersections currently operate at a satisfactory to good level of service (i.e. Level of Service A or B operation) with **low vehicle delays**.*

Desktop analysis does not always translate well to lived experience. The intersection of Tomago Road and the Pacific Highway is a good example of this.

Good evidence that the road network is stretched beyond acceptable levels is that Google maps now leads traffic through alternative roads such as Raymond Terrace Rd which diverts traffic from the M1 through Raymond Terrace and back onto the Pacific Highway or via Tarro or through Raymond Terrace to Masonite Road and then onto Williamtown and Salt Ash etc. I can assure you that even sand haulage trucks use these routes. I often see them at the roundabout intersection of Seaham Road and Raymond Terrace Road. I assume that the proponent is not even aware of the spread of the truck traffic when drivers use the quickest route available to them thereby causing road congestion on roads that are NOT suitable. As a resident of Brandy Hill in the Port Stephens LGA West Ward I encounter this traffic and sand and rock haulage trucks daily on my commute several days a week to Newcastle. It highlights the enormous increase in quarry haulage truck traffic since more and more quarries come online.

The dangers are real and, as mentioned above, not experienced since the days of coal road haulage. The frustration of commuters leads to risks taken and ultimately accidents. Not all of these are, or need to be, reported.

The most problematic intersections are those around the sand quarries themselves and then the cumulative effect at Tomago Rd and the Pacific Highway. In this mix of either work/school/shift or holiday traffic adding another 514 sand haulage trucks into the mix is not insignificant.

I therefore dispute the traffic analysis and modelling, or lack thereof, done for the intersection of Tomago Road and the Pacific Highway. At present there is a build-up of traffic resulting in long delays at peak traffic times. This is no longer contained to change of shift or end of work time but has blown out the hours on either side.

There has been no understanding of the *background traffic growth* in this area nor the increases that will be felt until the extension to the M1 is complete. Until then local commuters and travellers alike will have to endure the conditions that are less than ideal and exacerbated by the imposition of 514 extra trucks/day.

My second concern with this proposal is the imposition of quarry operations on residents, not only those living on the haulage routes, but those who will be impacted by quarry operations 24 hours per day.

Those living along the haulage routes will have to put up with the road noise that is inevitable with large truck movements. Unless trucks are well maintained the squealing of brakes or engine/compression braking can be a stressor to everyday life and lead to sleep disturbance at night.

The following points are relevant to everyday life changes.

- Night noise of either haulage or quarry operations in an otherwise quiet landscape. Sound of machinery is much more pronounced at night without background noise.
- Sleep disturbance. Often leading to anxiety and depression.
- Change to ambience and character of the area.

- Diesel particulate pollution.
- Other social impacts. For example, being able to conduct a conversation when there are several trucks/minute driving past your yard.

Figure 10A shows the intersection of Nelson Bay Road and Oakvale Drive. There are houses on all 4 corners of the roundabout/intersection. Oakvale Farm shares the access road to the quarry site. The residents in these homes and the businesses directly on the haulage road entrance will have their lifestyles changed for the next 30 years. The houses are quite close to the road and residents deserve some respect for the lives they have chosen for themselves. Oakvale Farm will have issues of noise in the execution of their tourism business.

- *Oakvale Drive is a two lane **local** road that provides access to Holcim's Salt Ash Quarry and adjacent land uses including Oakvale Wildlife Park, Macka's Sand Quarry and Australian Angus Beef Operation.*
- ***Oakvale Drive will accommodate 100% of finished sand product trucks, as well as 100% of the trucks importing sand and fill to Salt Ash Quarry***
- *...propose to import up to 200,000 tpa of sand from their Tanilba Bay and Anna Bay operations, as well as other local extractive operations for processing at the site, resulting in a total of up to 750,000 tonnes of sand products processed and dispatched from the site per year.*

The statements above add extra implications for the residents and businesses along and adjacent to Oakvale Road. There will be full trucks arriving and departing from the quarry. Fully laden trucks pose extra engine noise. Certainly, a concern for business and private residents alike. And on a local road and not a purpose-built heavy vehicle haulage route. Unless there is a major upgrade, this kind of truck traffic will degrade the road surface quickly and cause problems for tourists visiting the Oakvale Farm or any other road users.

The report states that the properties along cabbage Tree Road and Tomago Road are rural or rural/residential: *The eastern section of the route generally has rural and semi-rural residential land uses fronting the road.*

The implication is that residents of these properties will not be impacted by 500+ trucks/ day passing their properties. I can assure you that from lived experience, living on the haulage route used by Hanson Brandy Hill quarry, I can hear every truck that passes by my property. I wake up to them at 6am if I have left windows open during the night. I find it annoying to say the least, when I am working in the garden and hear the compression braking of a truck driven by a disrespectful driver.

And I live on a rural residential property with a 50m setback! So, please do not dismiss the implications on the residents who will be living within a few kilometres of the quarry site or those who live along the haulage routes. They will be impacted upon. This proposal could impact them for the next 30 years.

The reports treat this proposal in isolation with no mention of the cumulative effect of other sand quarries present and future. There are 4 sand quarries in a row with direct and assessable impact on the environment. Then there is the indirect and not as easily assessable effect on residents and their quality of life. But it is just as important to understand what the implications are for them.

Should approval be granted for this project the following need to be addressed.

- Haulage routes, both to and from the site, for both full and returning vehicles must be specified.

- A haulage levy must be applied for all loads on council and main roads to ensure proper maintenance.
- There must be a code of conduct for ALL truck drivers to ensure that residents along haulage routes are protected from the worst of truck driver behaviour and to maintain standards of truck maintenance.

I object to SSD 9099356 – Holcim Sand Operation Salt Ash because of the unacceptable impacts of heavy vehicle transport on residents around the site and along the numerous roads used for its sand haulage. I don't believe the cumulative effect of heavy quarry transport throughout the LGA has been adequately addressed and the risks to ordinary road users have not been taken into consideration.

On behalf of VOWW.

Margarete Ritchie.

President.