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1/8/23

Ms Jessie Evans
Director, Energy and Resource Assessments,
NSW Planning, Department of Planning and Environment

**Ref: Stone Ridge Quarry Project, Italia Road, Balickera, NSW 2324
SSD-10432, EPBC ID: 2022/09368, LOT: 1, DP 724372; LOT: 36 and 65, DP: 753200; LOT 540,
DP: 1207159**

I object to the quarry on Wallaroo State Forest on several grounds, primarily that it is not an ecologically sustainable development and endangers several threatened species including koalas and threatened ecological communities.

The Stone ridge quarry is contrary to the principles of the Forestry Corporation objectives sustainability objective.

While there are multiple objectives, the FC is required ... *“where its activities affect the environment, to conduct its operations in compliance with the principles of ecologically sustainable development contained in section 6(2) of the Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991”*ⁱ ... which includes the prime objective *“to protect, restore and enhance the quality of the environment in New South Wales, having regard to the need to maintain ecologically sustainable development.”*ⁱⁱ ... which then interprets through the following principles and programs *“(a) the precautionary principle ... (b) inter-generational equity ... (c) conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity—namely, that conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration, (d) improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms.*

Hard rock extraction is not a sustainable activity. The NSW Government recognises that “up to 40 per cent of the waste generated by Australians is building waste ...”ⁱⁱⁱ and goes to landfill. Destroying the environment for roadbase and construction material is no longer sustainable when we have alternate building waste material that can do the same job.

Despite this high waste, FC NSW, in its latest Sustainability Report, 2020-21^{iv} indicates that 211,253 tonnes of gravel/sand/rock were extracted in 2020-21 from forests statewide. By comparison the Stone Ridge Quarry is requesting approval to quarry 1.5 million tonnes per annum, nearly 8 times the amount that was quarried across the state, potentially bringing huge environmental and community impact at a single point.

The Stone ridge quarry will impact threatened species including koalas and threatened ecological communities

* Koalas

The Australian Resources Development Group (ARDG) proposes to directly clear just over 79 hectares of Koala habitat. ARDG's own assessment of Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) listed under the EPBC Act has identified that the project is likely to have a significant impact on the Koala.

The Parliamentary enquiry into Koala populations Finding 2 states: *“That, given the scale of loss to koala populations across New South Wales as a result of the 2019- 2020 bushfires and without urgent government intervention to protect habitat and address all other threats, the koala will become extinct in New South Wales before 2050.”*^v

Conserving koala habitat, whether prime or marginal habitat, is important in helping ensure koala longevity, reducing fragmentation and stress. The development site includes important connecting corridors between various reserves with richer koala habitat, and therefore is important in facilitating movement and gene flow between sub populations of the koala. Habitat loss and fragmentation, with consequent loss of gene pool, are major threats to koalas, and further fragmentation is irresponsible for this iconic species.

* other threatened species and communities

In addition, the project will adversely affect a Disturbance Area totalling 139 hectares of native vegetation, comprising two threatened ecological communities listed under the Biodiversity Conservation Act and one nationally listed endangered ecological community under the EPBC Act.

This forest was not burnt in these recent fires and has been without bushfire for several years and as such is an important mix in the age diversity of plant communities and their associated wildlife.

In the Environmental Impact Statement, the DCCEEW note 10 Matters of MNES facing “likely significant impacts” including the Grey-headed flying-fox (Vulnerable, EPBC Act), Coastal Swamp Sclerophyll Forest of New South Wales and South East Queensland (Endangered, EPBC Act) and the Swift Parrot (Critically Endangered, EPBC Act), Spotted-tail quoll (Vulnerable, BC Act; Endangered, EPBC Act), Yellow-bellied glider (Vulnerable, BC Act; EPBC Act), New Holland mouse (Vulnerable, EPBC Act) and the South-eastern Glossy Black Cockatoo (Vulnerable, NSW BC Act; EPBC Act) “may be significantly impacted”.

Koalas (Vulnerable, EPBC Act; Endangered, NSW BC Act), Squirrel Gliders (Vulnerable, NSW BC Act) and Brush-tailed Phascogales (Vulnerable, NSW BC Act) as well as threatened species of birds, bats, microbats and orchids have all been identified within the project disturbance area. Surveys for *Corybas dowlingii* and Powerful Owl breeding habitat have not been completed.

Stone Ridge quarry will significantly impact the local community

Additionally, Stone Ridge quarry will have significant social impacts, ranging from dust, noise, vibration and blasting, possible ground water impacts, impacts to a way of life for the local community, in particular the traffic with a possible 300 truck movements per day, the consequent road safety and the impact of trucks trying to enter the M1 Highway.

Additionally, the cumulative impact of this quarry along with local existing and potential quarries, using much the same road network, could create 1,600 truck movements per day! (refer to the Koala Coalition EcoNetwork Port Stephens submission)

In conclusion

*** if extraction of hard rock is an absolute necessity, it should more sensibly be facilitated on degraded land rather than Crown land where the land cost would be at its true cost.**

*** the State Government should be facilitating reuse and recycle of waste building products rather than allowing large scale quarrying on forested Crown land.**

*** most importantly, the potential impacts for wildlife, whether threatened or otherwise, and social impacts for the local community, are of extreme concern.**

Stone Ridge quarry should not be approved.

I have not made any reportable political donations in the last two years. I acknowledge and accept the Departments Disclaimer and Declaration.

Yours sincerely



Sue Olsson

ⁱ Forestry Act 2012 No 96.

Access via <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-2012-096#:~:text=An%20Act%20to%20provide%20for,Forestry%20Act%201916%20and%20the>

ⁱⁱ Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991 No 60

Access via <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1991-060#pt.3>

ⁱⁱⁱ Minimising waste on the Construction Site, Supported by the NSW Government as part of the Energy Efficiency Training Program. Access via

<https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.environment.nsw.gov.au%2Fresources%2Ffeetp%2FWasteLearnGd1.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>

^{iv} 2021-22 Sustainability Report, Forestry Corporation. Access via

<https://www.forestrycorporation.com.au/about/pubs/corporate/sustainability-reports>

^v Koala populations and habitat in New South Wales / Portfolio Committee No. 7 – Planning and Environment [Sydney, N.S.W.] : the Committee, 2020. **New South Wales. Parliament. Legislative Council. Portfolio Committee No. 7 – Planning and Environment.** Access via

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/2536/Koala%20populations%20and%20habitat%20in%20New%20South%20Wales%20-%20Report%203.pdf>