

# **Objecting the Sutton Forrest Sand Quarry Proposal in the Southern Highlands**

The Sutton Forrest Sand Quarry proposal in the Southern Highlands has sparked considerable apprehension within the local community. I am compelled to register my objection to this proposal, citing a multitude of concerns that span the realms of environmental, cultural, and economic considerations.

## **I. Introduction**

The Sutton Forrest Sand Quarry proposal, spearheaded by the mining company "Hi-Quality," demands our attention due to its potential adverse effects on the Southern Highlands. As responsible community members, it is crucial to address and object to the proposal based on several key issues.

## **II. Environmental Destruction**

### **Water Runoff and Aquifer Pollution**

One of the primary concerns is the potential environmental destruction caused by water runoff and aquifer pollution. The quarry's operations could lead to contamination of local water sources, posing a threat to both the environment and public health.

### **Impact on the Sydney Water Catchment**

Moreover, the proximity of the quarry to the Sydney water catchment raises alarming concerns. Any pollution in this critical area could have severe consequences for the quality of drinking water supplied to the region.

## **III. Threats to Biodiversity**

### **Location in the Great Western Wildlife Corridor**

The proposed location of the quarry falls within the Great Western Wildlife Corridor, a fragile ecosystem supporting diverse flora and fauna. What is the point of defining this a corridor if is not protected from extractive industries such as sand mining.

### **Endangerment of the Long Swamp Ecosystem**

Particularly concerning is the potential endangerment of the Long Swamp ecosystem, a unique and valuable natural resource. The quarry's presence poses a direct threat to the biodiversity of this vital area.

### **Impact on Threatened Fauna and Flora Species**

The Sutton Forrest area is home to various threatened fauna and flora species, including crucial koala habitat. The quarry's operations could lead to habitat destruction, further jeopardizing these already vulnerable populations.

## **IV. Health and Environmental Consequences**

### **Air and Water Pollution**

The proposed sand quarry brings with it the risk of air and water pollution. Such pollution not only affects the immediate surroundings but also has far-reaching consequences for public health, agriculture, and the broader environment.

### **Long-term Risks from Dust, Mining, and Processing**

Beyond immediate concerns, the long-term risks associated with dust, mining, and high-grade silica rock processing are considerable. Residents could face persistent health issues, and the ecosystem may struggle to recover from these ongoing impacts.

## **V. Economic Impact**

### **Threats to Tourism**

The Southern Highlands, known for its picturesque landscapes and vibrant tourism industry, could face a significant downturn if the quarry is approved. The proximity of many Airbnbs and wineries within an 8 km radius makes tourism a crucial economic factor to consider.

### **Potential Damage to Airbnb and Wineries**

The visual impact of a massive sand quarry in the region could deter tourists, impacting not only local businesses such as Airbnbs and wineries but also the livelihoods of those dependent on tourism.

## **VI. Sydney Water Catchment Pollution**

### **Pollution of Headwaters and Consequences**

Pollution of the headwaters in the Sydney water catchment could have severe consequences for water quality downstream. This poses a direct threat to the health and well-being of the communities relying on this water source.

## **VII. Cultural Heritage**

### **Disturbance to Indigenous Heritage Rock-Cave Art**

The quarry proposal raises concerns about the potential disturbance to on-site indigenous heritage, including rock-cave art. Preserving and respecting the cultural heritage of the land is of utmost importance and should be prioritized over any development.

## **VIII. Damage to Local Resources**

## **Impact on Bushland, Crops, Gardens, Solar Panels, and Residences**

The quarry's operations could cause significant damage to surrounding bushland, crops, gardens, solar panels, and residences. The long-lasting effects on these local resources should not be underestimated.

## **Removal of Critical Sandstone for Groundwater Hydrology**

The removal of sandstone, critical to the groundwater hydrology of the wider area, could have cascading effects on the region's water systems. The interconnectedness of the ecosystem demands a cautious approach to any activities that alter the landscape.

## **IX. Water Table Effects**

### **Lowering the Water Table and Unpredictable Consequences on Local Supplies**

Lowering the water table as a result of quarry activities could have unpredictable consequences on local water supplies. The potential impacts on agriculture, industry, and residential water sources necessitate a thorough assessment before approving such a project.

## **X. Noise, Vibration, and Light Pollution**

### **24/7 Disturbances Affecting Residents, Wildlife, and Local Heritage**

The continuous operation of the quarry, leading to noise, vibration, and light pollution, is a major concern. These disturbances can significantly impact the well-being of local residents, wildlife, and even cultural landmarks such as The Shine of Our Lady of Mercy.

## **XI. Traffic Safety Concerns**

### **High Number of Trucks and Potential Dangers on Hume Highway**

The proposal involves a substantial number of trucks entering and leaving the Hume Highway daily. This raises legitimate concerns about traffic safety and the potential dangers posed by such a high volume of heavy vehicles.

## **XII. Questionable Track Record of the Mining Company**

### **EPA Penalties and Charges Against "Hi-Quality"**

Adding to our concerns is the troubling track record of the mining company, "Hi-Quality." With 24 EPA penalties in New South Wales and facing 33 new EPA charges in Victoria, there are serious doubts about their capability to adhere to governing regulations. This raises questions about the feasibility and responsibility of entrusting such a company with a project of this magnitude.

In conclusion, the objections to the Sutton Forrest Sand Quarry proposal are rooted in a comprehensive assessment of its potential impacts on the environment, biodiversity, cultural.