
Objection to Sutton Forest SSD 6334 Sand Mine

I am a full-time resident of the southern highlands and object to the mine proposal on the grounds that it runs counter to the E3 environmental management zoning requirements in which the mine activity is to be located:

Habitat loss

Despite the applicant's proposal to reduce the area of the mine, it will still destroy 34 hectares of pristine native vegetation of the Great Western Wildlife Corridor. More than half of the forests and woodland in NSW that existed before European invasion have now gone and more than a third of what's left is degraded¹. This project will add to that loss and therefore does not meet the E3 objective: 'to protect, manage and restore areas with special ecological, scientific, cultural or aesthetic values'. The few references to rehabilitation in the proposal are both cursory and vague.

Water

This mine intends to 'source water from aquifers within the Hawkesbury Sandstone during periods when reliance cannot be placed on the use of surface water'. Given the mine is likely (over a 30-year period) to be operating during years of drought and a lack of surface water, there is enormous risk of an overdraw on the aquifers, affecting not only the Lower Swamp but also Sydney water catchment. This proposal therefore fails the E3 objective: 'to protect significant agricultural resources (soil, water, and vegetation)'. Consequently, the risks for 'Wingecarribee Shire's longer term economic sustainability' are extremely high.

Social values

Given the proximity of this new mine to the Monastery of our Lady of Mercy, the noise, dust and pollution from truck movements is hardly conducive to the peace, health and solitude of those visiting or living at the Monastery. Thus, this mine fails on the E3 objective: 'to encourage the retention of the remaining evidence of significant historical and social values expressed in existing landscape and land use patterns'.

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¹ The impacts of contemporary logging after 250 years of deforestation and degradation on forest-dependent threatened species

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