



KOALA KOALITION
ECONETWORK PORT STEPHENS INC.

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14 May 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

Objection to Seaham Quarry project App No SSD-59254474 EPBC ID No 2023/09575

Koala Koalition EcoNetwork Port Stephens (KKEPS) made a previous objection to this extension of operation for the Seaham Quarry to widen and deepen their hard rock quarry dated 19/9/23. I position remains unchanged.

No extension of quarrying approvals should be given to Boral, until appropriate and thorough strategic planning considering the cumulative and combined effects of quarries in Port Stephens is undertaken by Council, or more appropriately by NSW State Department for Planning and Environment as State Significant Developments (SSD). Please consider the contents of the Lower Hunter Hard Rock Quarries Strategic and Conservation Planning issues document as the basis of our objections. [Lower Hunter Hard Rock Quarry Strategic & Conservation Planning Issue Paper FEB 2024 \(econetworkps.org\)](https://econetworkps.org/2024/02/28/lower-hunter-hard-rock-quarries-strategic-and-conservation-planning-issues-document/).

We are now in a time when Climate Change action should be paramount in planning considerations. KKEPS is opposed to approving or expanding greenfield quarry sites, asking that NSW Planning should:

- Develop a Lower Hunter Quarry Cumulative Impacts Mitigation Action Plan to introduce standardised, scalable cumulative impact assessment and monitoring of social and environmental impacts including traffic, dust, noise, water discharges and vegetation loss with a view to reducing impacts on the community and environment.
- Quantify contemporary data on supply and demand for quarry products to guide ecologically sustainable, efficient and cost-effective provision of materials, and assess alternative sources of recycled housing and infrastructure materials, including gravel and aggregates from recycled coal-ash waste.

These two paragraphs above mention the issues we believe need urgent attention, and encapsulate our objections to the Seaham Quarry project being approved.

Unfortunately, the number and bulk of the documents on exhibition has excluded our small group from having sufficient time to review them all. However, I must say that the Balickera community has suffered from lack of social amenity and the danger of heavy quarry trucks on their local road due to the operation of the Seaham Quarry for many years. There are many more dwellings around the Boral site that are afraid their most valuable asset, their own home, will suffer structural damage due to the blasting and crushing of rock. This includes the historic Balickera house, that was one of the first built in the Port Stephens area that has significant heritage and cultural values as a site of

early impact between Europeans and First Nations people. The owners of that property are sure to detail the damage already occurring to the House through blasting nearby.

The pressure for more housing in Port Stephens is expanding nearby residential areas very near the Seaham quarry, for example Monarchs Rise on Newline Road (DA 16 - 2013 - 599 - 1) on exhibition in January 2024 and currently on exhibition DA 2024/158 for Precinct 7 and DA 2024/174 for Precinct 6, which are all part of the Kings Hill Urban Release Area (KHURA). The Kings Hill Development has had a long list of refusals by the Joint Regional Planning Panel, the NSWLEC and IPC but is now being appealed again. The current DAs seem to indicate that hundreds of houses will at some time be approved at Kings Hill. The Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy and Supply Plans have been on recent exhibition indicating hundreds more houses at Medowie and Karuah are also being planned. Raymond Terrace seeks more housing development too.

The current and future residents of Port Stephens LGA do/will not wish to have their local roads crammed with heavy quarry trucks at all intersections, putting them in danger. Although we are aware of the proposal to upgrade the Italia Road intersection with the Pacific Highway (near Seaham Boral quarry entrance), we do not believe the at-grade proposal is sufficient to alleviate concerns about safety for drivers there. TfNSW have advised KKEPS that there are no plans existing for fly over intersections at Bucketts Way or Medowie Road. For the safety of local road users, no increase in production or the length of operation of hard rock quarries in an increasingly urban regional area should be approved.

The people of Port Stephens value their social amenity, their small communities, their rural way of life and the pristine environment and biodiversity. All of these drawcards for people wanting to move here to enjoy such enviable lifestyles will be compromised by approving more quarries (or extending them). The value of the Natural Capital at Balickera and its Cultural heritage needs to be investigated and celebrated; not put at further risk.

The 1985 approval for the Boral Seaham quarry was made at a time when little consideration was given to the health impacts of quarrying, crushing, and loading surely smaller trucks, on much less busy roads, in a less populous area, when koalas and other flora and fauna were not known to be endangered, or even threatened. Times have changed, and thankfully so have development assessment processes, which should come to the conclusion that the quarry is now in an area that is intended for more housing, not more quarries.

By extending the quarry, the corridor logically reduces in extent and viability to permit breeding and dispersal of young to find their own home territory. Koalas and many other endangered and vulnerable species are known to populate Kings Hill, Balickera, Wallaroo State Forest and beyond into the [Barrington to Hawkesbury Climate Corridors](#), hopefully providing a link to cooler altitudes in future. Wildlife corridors between developments must be maintained and traffic mitigation efforts employed, such as fauna fencing and culverts, to reduce fatal impacts with motor vehicles and without cutting off healthy genetic connections.

KKEPS concludes that the Seaham Quarry project should not be approved.

Yours faithfully,

Carmel Northwood

Convenor