

Margo Duncan

**192 East Seaham Road
East Seaham**

**8 Killaloe Lane
East Seaham**

14th May, 2024

Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

Seaham Quarry Project

Application Number: SSD-59254474

Location: 139 Italia Road, Balickera, NSW 2324

To Whom it May Concern,

I am making a submission against this proposed project.

This project is proposed for an area within a major water catchment area that supplies water to Newcastle and beyond, and is also adjacent to large agricultural holdings.

I am a long time resident of East Seaham, having been in the area since 1972. I own and operate a large scale beef cattle enterprise at East Seaham, running approximately 800 cows – this is not small scale, it is my livelihood. My business alone employs 8 people from the local community.

Even though there have been some attempts to engage the wider communities of East Seaham, Eagleton and the township of Seaham, information has been very slow in coming back to enquirers, and at times none has been forthcoming. There are many residents and businesses that will be severely impacted by this project.

My Environmental Concerns –

I have major environmental concerns as listed below:

- Displacement and/or destruction of existing flora and fauna. Loss of koala (endangered species) habitat, along with other fauna habitats that cannot be replaced.
- Water quality is a major concern, as this proposed project is very close to Grahamstown Dam – a major water supply to Newcastle and beyond. Seven Mile Creek is a tributary that flows to the dam and I have concerns about the impact the project would have on this water source.
- Dust pollution not only affects water quality, but also has an impact on air quality and on my farm, as well as with domestic water supplies from water tanks.
- Weed control – introduction of weeds through vehicle movements is a major biosecurity concern. As this is a major domestic water catchment area, weed control is a very large problem, as the weeds can spread rapidly via wind, water and feral animals, and indiscriminate or uncontrolled spraying within a catchment area is not acceptable.
- Feral animals – failure to control and/or eradicate feral animals would mean the expansion of this quarry would push them onto private lands, again creating both a biosecurity issue and/or

putting domestic animals and landholders at risk of injury or death. Control is absolutely paramount, and again, this is a major water catchment area.

- Over the past 30 plus years there have been virtually no control measures taken by Boral Resources (NSW) Pty Ltd to either eradicate or at the very least control weeds and feral animals.

Other Concerns –

- I have concerns about ground vibration and overpressure as a result of blasting, as, if the blasts are not properly designed and controlled, then neighbouring properties have the potential of significant damage – this is irreversible. I have buildings (one is a dwelling) within 1km of the proposed expansion area. I already have concerns about these buildings.
- I have major concerns about the impact on the local roads, as well as access to the Pacific Highway, and the increased number of truck movements per day will put a major burden on these roads. How can they guarantee that no trucks will travel west along Italia Road? Italia Road is also a school bus route, and a large volume of trucks will have a very big impact on the safety of school buses travelling this road. I have major concerns that there is the possibility of accidents, not just on Italia Road, but also entering to/from the Pacific Highway. The local roads are certainly not suited to heavy vehicle traffic, and are not well maintained. There is no curb and guttering, and most of the roads are quite narrow and only suitable for local traffic.
- This proposed project will severely impact on the ability of the wider community to have quiet enjoyment of their properties, due to the long hours of operation, noise production and the volume of traffic that has been projected. For Boral Resources to consider that hours of operation be increased to 24 hours a day, 7 days week is okay, then I would suggest that employees live within close proximity to the quarry and experience the disturbance that we now put up with. I have concerns about the affect on the mental wellbeing of those nearby, as the noise would not cease at all, therefore no one is guaranteed to gain any respite from the noise.
- This project will also have a significant impact on property rights and property values. While I do understand there are some economic benefits, there is also the consideration if these benefits will be advantageous to the wider local community, or will the issues that have been raised outweigh these benefits? I firmly believe that our property prices will greatly decrease, putting pressure on the future of our business. We currently pay rather large council rates, these being based on Valuer General values, but are they going to decrease to reflect lower property values? Even though we pay very high council rates, we have no utilities associated with this, other than roadside garbage collection.
- I believe all the issues raised are far greater than the economic benefits, as the local communities will not directly benefit in the long term, particularly as the proposed project will destroy forever a significant area of wildlife habitat, and the residual effect of this project will create long term negative effects, not only on the environment, but also on the community as a whole. Boral Resources will take the resources, then leave the community to fend for itself – I don't believe they have any moral responsibility in this area.
- The significance of 'Sustainable Livelihoods Approach' should be noted here – *"A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the*

natural resource base.” The expansion of this quarry will severely impact the livelihood of every resident in the area. We should also consider the “***natural resource base***” to include the native flora and fauna of the area along with the farming community who are able to work harmoniously alongside the native species.

- I understand there is the need to source natural resources, but consideration must also be given to those other resources that help to feed the country! In many cases, these farms have been successfully operating for many years, and sustainable agriculture is one of our primary means of existence.
- Unfortunately, history shows that these resource companies come into a community, extract what they need, then leave, with the community left to pick up the pieces. In many cases, these communities have been active, viable and sustainable well before the resource companies have wreaked their havoc. Sustainability is of major concern to rural communities, as without a sustainable lifestyle, then the community dies.
- I have major concerns about the risk of fire. If there were to be a fire that started as a result of work in this project, then this would have a major impact on not only residents, but also surrounding areas, as well as the water quality in Grahamstown Dam from ash fallout.
- There needs to be community meetings that include all those parties who have an interest in the relevance of this proposal and the impact on the wider community, but also there needs to be feedback from Boral Resources to the wider community. There seems to be a culture of only giving the information that Boral Resources deems appropriate and/or necessary, they take their time in replying (and often need to be prompted) and I feel we don't get the full story.

Yours sincerely

Margo Duncan