

To The Hon. Paul Scully MP - NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces

Objection to Proposed Monaro Rock Quarry at Royalla NSW.

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Dear Minister Scully

I wish register my objection to the proposed new Monaro Rock Quarry at Royalla NSW.

Firstly let me introduce myself, I became a resident of Royalla in 2004. Purchasing a block of land that had yet to be surveyed, then slowly building a home as an owner builder. We've planted over 2000 native trees, established a garden and orchard to live a simple sustainable life. We raised two daughters, doing pony club and becoming entwined in the small rural community of Royalla. Yes, we are the lucky ones to live such a wonderful life, living one with nature in a peaceful environment with clean water and pure air. We have had this luxury for 20 years.

I became aware of the impending quarry application in 2021 attending a community consultation. To be honest I never thought the application would proceed due to the enormous impact on the environment, Indigenous artefacts, increased traffic, health implications, excessive noise, all associated with adding an additional quarry close to a rural residential area. In addition it's so the close to the southern suburbs of the ACT which will impact so many people. If the experts are wrong and the mitigation strategies are insufficient or just don't work the outcome will be catastrophic. Obviously without my knowledge the application has been simmering away silently only to erupt like a volcano. As part of my submission I would to share my personal concerns on the Quarry and how it directly affects me and my concern for others.

I've read the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Monaro Quarry, it's 500 pages long. There are also multiple complicated documents that need to be read alongside the Impact Statement. The Developers have had 4 years to write the documents, yet we only had four weeks to read, understand, research and prepare a submission to respond to the 500 page document plus attachments. I like most Royalla residents wasn't aware it was opened for comments for the first 2 weeks, leaving me limited time to respond. I'm travelling through remote QLD without a computer and very limited internet I find this extremely challenging juggling between documents on a tiny tablet. It's also unfair on all residents working, doing parenting duties etc. to respond in such a limited time frame. I'm also sure that there are hundreds of Canberra n's who are

unaware of the Quarry and the impact it will have on their lives. Many would respond if they were aware of the noise, health and traffic implications the quarry will have on their lives. Being the person I am, I find community issues weigh heavy on my mind.

I've quickly pulled together a few personal thoughts on the impending quarry:

*Aboriginal artefacts: My husband and children are Ngunnawal, so aboriginal culture is very important to our family and many other culturally sensitive residents. The documents list the artefacts found as insignificant, to find any existing artefacts around this area is amazing as the aboriginals were displaced from this area around the 1880s when the pastoral lands were acquired. These artefacts are valued and should be left undisturbed, after all there are very few cultural artefacts left on Ngunnawal country. Ten to twenty metre barrier is insufficient to protect these artefacts, any mitigation strategy will not protect those trees from the effects of blasting.

* Biodiversity - The EIS acknowledges approximately 77.83 ha of native vegetation would be cleared, including 22.44 ha of Box-Gum Woodland listed as critically endangered under both NSW and Commonwealth legislation. Habitat for threatened flora and fauna—including Pink-tailed Legless Lizard, Key's Matchstick Grasshopper, Small Purple-pea, and Gang-gang Cockatoo—would be directly and indirectly impacted. The document states with avoidance, mitigation, and offsetting measures in place, the Project is considered to satisfy relevant biodiversity legislation and policies. (Page ES -23). From personal experience of planting over 2000 native trees it takes 20 years to even begin to bring back small native animals and insects. No amount of mitigation can replace the damage of removing trees that are fully established and endangered, this area should be formally identified and protected with no trees removed.

* Air Quality Impact Assessment (AQIA) :The AQIA identified multiple sources of dust and air emissions that would be created during daily operations. The daily activities include:

- Quarrying activities: drilling, blasting, material handling, processing, vehicle movements, wind erosion, and equipment exhaust.
- Concrete and asphalt facilities: material handling, vehicle movements on paved/unpaved roads, plant operations, and loading of products to trucks.
- Concrete recycling: material processing, handling, and vehicle activity.

With 500 trucks per day (documented in the report) they will be pulling out tonnes of rock each day, with the strong prevailing winds in the Royalla area excess dust including dangerous silica particles will definitely be floating into the surrounding area. This dust will settle on our roof and make their way into our water tanks. We will be

inhaling dust particles and drinking it in our water as we drink from rain water tanks filled from our roof. We would need to install expensive filters to attempt to remove contamination that doesn't currently exist on our property. The quarry say they will mitigate the risks of dust but no amount of mitigation will guarantee that the silica particles won't affect our health including life threatening cancer. In addition there are around five schools within a six km radius (as the crow flies) of the proposed quarry, so many little lives may be adversely affected. It takes years for health issues to arise, can the NSW Government really afford both morally and financially to take that risk? Sure there are other quarries around the area but none have been **deliberately** approved within such close proximity to so many residential houses and schools. Working in the Australian Public Service for 30 years including developing high level policies, if I was on the committee I could not sign off on a project like this when there is so much unknown. You only need to look at climate change to see that wind conditions are changing regularly and the quarry cannot guarantee the health of people in the district.

*Financial Disadvantage: In the early stages of the consultation residents raised issues around property prices and saleability of properties close to the quarry. This is a real concern and to date has not been sufficiently acknowledged or addressed in the proposed EIS or supporting documents. The approval of the quarry will have a significant financial impact on all Royalla residents and surrounding suburbs, our property included.

Its heartbreaking to hear that Royalla Reserve was approved for subdivision and marketed as a lifestyle dream so close to decisions being made on the quarry. The financial burden on the families who have recently purchased at Royalla Reserve without knowledge of the pending Quarry application is heartbreaking. These families would be significantly disadvantaged buying those properties. I urge you to think about the mental health of those families as they are under so much stress.

*Horse riding: The subdivisions around Royalla were marketed as lifestyle blocks including horse riding. The excess noise, heavy traffic and blasting will create a danger to all horse riders in the area. Horses are easily spooked and stressed, to have a blast everyday with horses in near by fields will cause a horse stress and will create ongoing issues with those horses. No mitigation strategies will save these horses from stress, I cant remember reading how they address this issue or even acknowledge it as a major safety concern.

*Traffic: The EIS outlines there will be up to 500 trucks per day using the Monaro highway. They also claim there will be minimal impact on traffic. This confuses me for a number of reasons which I will try to unpack.

- They claim that most of the trucks will go up and down the highway into Canberra, I travel that road multiple times a week. On any given day there can be 10 - 30 cars backed up at the Calwell round about. Add 500 trucks per day and you will have significant traffic issues. Add snow traffic and you will have major traffic accidents. I've travelled through that round about and have counted up to 200 cars in the queue, they often back up to the top of the hill during snow season and at various times of the day.
- Documents shows the quarry will work 7am to 6pm most days and Saturday mornings. This covers all peak workday traffic hours and snow traffic hours, the roundabout and entry to the highway will definitely be congestion and traffic hazards increased. This scares me, we often make a concerted decision not to go out on intense snow traffic days to avoid the excess traffic on that highway, it's dangerous.
- We live on Redbox PI one of the highest hills in Royalla. We have views all the way to the Solar Farm up to the top of the Monaro highway. Many days and early evenings we sit and can see the traffic backed up on the highway bumper to bumper. It can be quite entertaining to watch, unfortunately we have seen many times when accidents occur and traffic is at a stand still or redirected by police. Before approving the quarry application I urge you to relook at the traffic flow on the highway between Calwell and Williamsdale, an additional 500 trucks per day would significantly add new issues. Just because there are not huge accident statistics to support this claim does not mean that there isn't a potential disaster looming.
- The Quarry is an application for significant development for NSW not the ACT. Surely some of those trucks laden with construction material must be destined for NSW (or there would be no benefit for NSW). That means trucks will also travel down the Monaro highway towards Cooma or on the Old Cooma Highway towards Googong. This is not acknowledged in the Quarry EIS but will cause excessive traffic at all entries to Royalla, plus every entry/exit on the Old Cooma highway into Queanbeyan. These roads are already at significant accident risk due to heavy traffic in peak hours, add the quarry trucks and it will become very dangerous.
- From quickly reading the EIS they note the heavy trucks won't be going down the Old Cooma Road. They avoid mentioning selling to Googong developers. I think this needs further investigation, did they deliberately leave these details out of the EIS as its inferred in Appendix I. It concerns me as I use that road regularly and it's still partially a single road.
- I know from personal experience trucks converse by radio and will advise other drivers of congested roadways and to use a different path to save time. This will happen in particular during the snow season when traffic increases dramatically. This means that trucks will use Old Cooma Road to reach Canberra over the congested Monaro Highway.

*Benefit to NSW: The Monaro Quarry EIS is a well written document, however when you make your way through the 500 pages you discover that this proposal is really only making two families richer and providing a maximum of 30 jobs (only 13 new jobs). When you consider the Environmental issues and Health risks to hundreds of families in the Royalla, Fernliegh and the ACT suburbs near the quarry you quickly discover that the proposal is high risk with minimal financial benefits to the NSW Government and the local community. In addition there are already three quarries in the immediate area with the ability to service the area. When you add the cost of updating the existing roads to ensure safety, the benefits of the new quarry quickly disintegrate. Finally, the social injustice of putting a quarry so close to a residential area causing financial disadvantage to residents, interfering with aboriginal cultural sites, moving aboriginal artefacts and destroying endangered vegetation the proposed quarry is not a moral or financially viable proposition for the progressive society we live in. I urge you to have a public hearing to unpack all the issues.

*Appendix N -Social Impact Assessment Report prepared by Landscape Research Communications: This appendix was submitted but has been redacted. Why? I cannot find the replacing document.

Regardless of being redacted I've read that report and its in the public forum , it outlines the Quarry Operating hours of 7am to 6pm Monday to Saturday. Concrete and asphalt production would occur from 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday and from 8am to 1pm on Saturdays. This includes:

- A maximum extraction and processing rate of up to 1,000,000 tpa at full capacity
- (At most) weekly blasting events between the hours of 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday
- **Importation** of up to 20,000 tpa of waste concrete for recycling and reuse in road base or similar products.
- Transportation of quarry products involving a maximum of 25 laden heavy vehicles per hour
- and no more than 200 laden heavy vehicles per day and 50 concrete agitators per day, between the hours of 5am and 6pm Monday to Saturday.
- Ongoing operations for a period of 30-35 years (life of the Project) from the commencement.

My concern is attachments within the portal boast of the in-depth consultation done with the community. At no stage of the consultation process was this level of detail discussed or provided. The scope of the quarry activities has increased significantly since consultation with stakeholders. Surely the increased scope of the quarry undermines the stakeholder consultation process. I also note stakeholder consultation

was significantly limited within the ACT, given the close proximity to schools and houses this is totally unacceptable. The lack of information provided in the initial consultation and the increased scope of work proposed at the quarry, should render the stakeholder consultation process as flawed and needs to be reassessed.

*Appendix M Economic Statement - prepared by Gillespie Economics:

- The report documents there are four hard rock quarries located within a 30 km radius from the centre of Canberra which supply Canberra and Queanbeyan. Collectively, these have insufficient reserves (34 million tonnes) approved for extraction to meet the projected demand over the next 26-years. One of the existing four quarries potentially has additional reserves that if approved for extraction would reduce but not eliminate the supply shortfall.

It's worth noting the report did not explore options for expansion of the other existing quarries and did not take into account that changing technologies over the next 26 years may see a change in the construction industry that may not require as many resources from quarries. It's noted there is limited data on quarry reserves as that information is retained by quarry owners. However there was no consultation or stakeholder discussions between existing quarries. This should be further investigated, after all we have up to 26 years to have those discussions before we run out of current quarry resources. The physical and mental health of our community, residents and children deserve that extra time and investment before approving another quarry.

The above appendix invests just two lines to validate competition. They summarise it as follows:

- 2.4 Competition - Notwithstanding the above, increased competition among suppliers increases consumer choice, drives down prices, improves quality, and drives efficiency and innovation in production.

The above statement is not supported by any independent advice from industry experts or factual information that proves new competition in this field lowers prices. My husband has worked in the construction industry and believes this not be true and no benefit will flow through to consumers. Surely this economic report should provide further information to support this claim rather than a two-line sweeping statement.

- 5.2 - Analysis of Direct Jobs and Income. - The economic report provides a table showing the actual value of the new quarry. In fact only 13 new jobs are created

not 30. Refer to Table 5.1. If these new employees reside in the ACT due to its close proximity there will be no financial gain to the NSW Government.

*Appendix I- Road Transport Assessment prepared by The Transport Planning Partnership Pty Ltd

I've highlighted my personal concerns around traffic in my above submission based solely on the EIS, these concerns are in relation to information provided in Appendix I.

- Table 2.1: TfNSW Traffic Volume Data – Monaro Highway, Bredbo (TfNSW Station 6114)

The table provides a yearly average of cars travelling the Monaro highway, in my opinion their table distorts important figures that a committee should see before approving the project.

When I used the Traffic Volume Viewer on the Transport of NSW website (Bredbo area) I saw figures as high as 10,000 on a single day, for example on the 19 July 24 the figure was 10,479 (noting this does not capture all cars that should be counted as the counter is based at Bredbo not Royalla). These high daily figures are not reflected in the tables provided in the expert report as they only report on yearly averages which significantly masks the volume of cars on high traffic days. I also note that there were a lot of days in the tool where no data was available, it's unclear how blank days are accounted for in the yearly averaged data.

- 2.6.3 Surveyed Traffic Volumes -Table 2.2 presents a summary of the daily two-way traffic volumes at the surveyed locations, being the total number of vehicles passing the surveyed location in both directions during each 24-hour period (On specific roads around proposed Monaro Quarry).

The chosen dates in 2021 only reflect opening day of snow season 4th June 2021. Most people delay going to the snow until mid season when the snow is heavier. Additionally these surveys were conducted during the Covid period, not necessarily during shutdown but definitely the whole of 2021 was an irregular year particularly as most Public Service Departments developed a work from home policy for most of that year and people were not going to the snow, resulting on fewer people on the roads.

To give a true reflection of traffic flow the surveys should be run again now Covid irregularities wont distort figures. One survey showing 6 days during peak snow season and one at another time of the year. This would provide more accurate figures for the Minister to make an informed decision.

- 4.3 Operational Traffic Distribution - All heavy vehicles transporting material or products to and from the Project Site would enter and exit the Project Site via the Quarry Access Road to and from Monaro Highway. On a day-to-day basis, the distribution of haulage traffic generated by the Project would vary depending on the ancillary activities occurring each day and the location of customers for the various products. Over an extended period, it is estimated that approximately 90 percent of heavy vehicles would approach and depart to and from the north on Monaro Highway, and 10 percent would approach and depart to and from the south. Due to the campaign nature of the transport activities, the day-to-day directional distribution of the haulage trucks can vary considerably, with all transport occurring to the north or south on any particular day, although due to the longer term distribution, haulage to and from the south would be infrequent. On any one day, the total trips generated to and from the Project Site may therefore occur on Monaro Highway to the north or the south of the Quarry Access Road, but not north and south of the Quarry Access Road simultaneously. This assessment has therefore considered the impacts of the Project's haulage for the possible scenarios during which all Project traffic travels to and from either the south or north.

My understanding of this clause confirms the quarry will take customers from all over the region. If the customer is in Googong they will send up to 500 trucks south on the Monaro highway and then down the Old Cooma Rd.

While Appendix I confirms the trucks will go to the customers, congesting the smaller roads around the entrances to Royalla, Burra, Fernleigh and Googong the main 500 page EIS avoids confirming they will send trucks down the old Cooma Road. This will affect me and every other resident of these suburbs, creating a dangerous situation on all of the adjoining roads.

- Table 2.6 indicates that the CSTM shows significant growth in demands between 2021 and 2026, reduction in demands between 2026 and 2031 and further increases from 2031 to 2041. **It also indicates that the CSTM predicts that on Monaro Highway, demand will exceed capacity by 2026 in the morning peak.**

While I don't have time or the in-depth knowledge to understand and analyse the tables the words speak volumes. This is a major concern for anyone travelling on the Monaro Highway including myself. Additional trucks from the quarry will create additional chaos due to their size and inability to move quickly through the roundabout. The complexity of this issue is compounded when approval of this project belongs to NSW Government and that section of the Monaro Highway falls within the ACT. This Information scares me

as I know from personal experience how quickly that roundabout backs up and how impatient drivers are.

In summary, this project affects me personally but it also effects my moral compass and my responsibility to be a voice for others in the community, including those small children at schools in close proximity to the quarry. As outlined above the quarry has severe impact on the Royalla community and residents in suburbs of the ACT, it also impacts the environment and cultural sites with little benefit to NSW as a whole. I ask the Minister to:-

- A. Reject the proposal for the quarry outright due to the issues raised in my submission.
- B. Recommend that area never be considered for a quarry.
- C. Hold an open hearing to allow transparency in the consideration process.

Regards

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