

OBJECTION
to
MONARO ROCK QUARRY PROJECT
Submission
(SUB-94925707)

We own 33 acres under Beatty Hill at 1466 Old Cooma Road Googong and have lived here since 2002. We are approximately 2km from the proposed quarry.

The newly created Biodiversity Stewardship Site (Agreement ID BS0157) borders the back of our property and the proposed quarry.

Two home-based businesses are operated from our property:

1. **Wrens Nest Studio** (<https://michaelalaurie.gallery/> – Pictures inspired by nature with a dash of whimsical imaginings) – a professional arts business creating fine artworks and licensed designs.
2. **Blackbird Ridge** – a specialised Japanese citrus orchard growing Yuzu, Sudachi and Satsuma Mandarins for commercial sale. The first harvest is anticipated in the next 1-2 years.

With the proposed quarry within 2kms of our property, there will not only be impacts to our businesses but also social impacts on our health, home and road safety.

We strongly object to this project proceeding.

Business impacts

- For a professional artist, the noise from intermittent blasting, 500 large trucks movements along Old Cooma Road and machinery operating 6 days a week will be invasive and disturbing.
- The artistic works created require fine drawing, painting and coloured pencil processes. Vibration from explosions will create production challenges impacting the quality of works, the potential for wastage and increased cost of production.
- The inevitable dust carried by the very strong winds sweeping across the hill and valley will impact artistic works. Art materials, quality fine art papers, printers, the art scanner, and computer will be adversely affected. Noise cancelling headphones would be required to block out invasive noise from explosions and continuous crushing of rock and cement. Given some traffic noise can already be heard from Monaro Highway, the addition of continuous quarry operations and truck movements will significantly add to the current noise profile.
- To soundproof and dustproof the art studio workspace located outside the house area would cost thousands of dollars which is an unreasonable impact for this business.
- The Japanese citrus orchard will be very adversely affected by dust and pollution settling on leaves and fruit. Unplanned additional costs will be incurred to invest in machinery to remove pollution prior to sale and to assure fruit quality. This is an unreasonable overhead for a small business, increasing the cost of annual fruit production costs in going to market.

Safety on Old Cooma Road

- We are very concerned about entering our property from Old Cooma Road with a significant increase in truck volumes. Currently, to enter our property, traffic must slowdown from 100k/h to almost 0k/h. When traffic is coming from the opposite direction, we need to come to a complete stop, further impacting traffic following us. With addition of 500 daily truck movements passing our entrance, these impacts combine to significantly increase the risk of serious accidents and even fatalities. With truck drivers under pressure to meet strict performance requirements, this is a major concern for us.
- We are very concerned about exiting our property onto Old Cooma Road with the significant increase in truck volumes:
 - To the left of our exit is an approximately 150m slope with traffic moving at 100k/h. Cars and utes already take significant risk to overtake slower traffic down this slope. This also presents a significant risk to us exiting to the left of our property. These risks will escalate with the addition of 500 daily truck movements.
 - To the right of our exit, about 100m away, there is a drop in road height which creates a blind spot with existing traffic coming at 100k/h. The addition of 500 daily truck movements passing our exit will significantly increase the risk of serious accidents and even fatalities on attempting to exit our property turning left or right. With truck drivers under pressure to meet strict performance requirements, this is a major concern for us.
 - About 30m to the right of our exit is the intersection of Old Cooma Road and Cooke Drive, which services Little Burra and Royalla Country Estate. This road already carries a high volume of traffic at peak hours. With this local traffic attempting to enter Old Cooma Road, combined with the major risks associated with entering and exiting our property, this only further increases the risk of serious accidents and fatalities.
- Old Cooma Road is identified by the NRMA as one of the most wildlife accident prone roads in NSW. There is a natural wildlife corridor along Jerrabomberra Creek which crosses Old Cooma Road. There will be a significant increase in wildlife fatalities with the addition of 500 daily heavy vehicle movements as kangaroos, wombats and deer cross the road, causing great danger to humans and animals.
- Trucks and vehicles entering and exiting both Monaro Highway in ACT and Old Cooma Road in NSW, will pose greater danger to all using these roads, result in extreme damage to roads, and added air and noise pollution. Traffic volumes along Monaro Highway increase substantially during the snow and mountain biking seasons. Furthermore, trucks driving at 100Km an hour on our stretch of Old Cooma Road and then 80km past the Googong Township will be a significant disruption. Combined, this dangerously raises the risk profile of an already recognised Monaro Highway black spot on NSW highways and for the fast-growing Googong Township.
- The intersection of Monaro Highway and Old Cooma Road is already accident-prone with both historical fatalities as well as major accidents.

Environmental impacts

- Our property borders the newly created Biodiversity Stewardship Site. This is home to important flora and fauna as clearly listed in Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement ID BS0157 for Beatty Hill. This biodiversity site borders the quarry site. It will suffer from the environmental impact of explosions, dust, water usage, disruption of water flows, and noise in general. The site is also a haven for feral animals (pigs and deer), as well as native wildlife (kangaroos, wombats).
- Environmental impact has not been a focus of the owners of this site over the past 22 years we have lived here. We are highly sceptical the site will be maintained to the level required by the Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement without additional unplanned government oversight and cost.
 - Previously, the owners of Beatty Hill and the land proposed for the quarry ran thousands of sheep on this site.
 - Over many years, sheep pushed through fences into properties along large stretches of Old Cooma Road. Little respect was shown to property owners in either removing sheep or fixing fences. Significant effort was required to get the owners to address these problems, which continue to this day,
 - Sheep were diseased, unshorn and abandoned. Property owners had to report this to the relevant authorities before any attempt was made by the owners to resolve concerns.
 - We are concerned this attitude towards neighbours, animals and the environment will be carried over with this new venture.
- Our home has solar panels. Dust will reduce panel performance and increase the cost of maintenance.
- Our area is subject to high winds, gusting sometimes to 60-90k/h. Dust suppression proposals will need to operate continuously to mitigate the risk of increased dust resulting in higher noise pollution and water usage. Homes, including their solar panels and other equipment such as air conditioners, will need increased maintenance and be subject to reduced operating lives.
- Our home and working areas do not have double glazing. Explosions from the Queanbeyan Quarry, which is over 10km away, can be heard. Our working areas, including a professional artists studio, are not sound proofed. The disruption associated with explosions will be material with the proposed quarry less than 2km away and operating 6 days a week.
- We rely on rainwater. Dust not suppressed will run off our roof into our rainwater tank. We will need to add high quality filtration to address this risk.
- The potential for silica dust to enter our water ecosystem further increases our respiratory health risk and reinforces the need for commercial scale filtration, and the associated increased cost.
- Water runoff from Beatty Hill flows into Jerrabomberra Creek which in turn flows into the Jerrabomberra Wetlands and Lake Burley Griffin. Any wastewater runoff, reduction in water flows, or reduction in the quality of water, down Beatty Hill will have a detrimental impact on these environmentally important areas. This risk needs to be considered in the context of downstream impacts in protected areas in the ACT and NSW. Disruption to the water table and the risk of environmental damage to Jerrabomberra Creek, its wildlife and flows downstream to Lake Burley Griffin is not an acceptable environmental risk.

Health and quality of life impacts

- It is inevitable this quarry will create silica dust. Dust suppression will need to operate continuously while crushing operations are in effect to crush rock and cement. With more evidence surfacing about the long-term health impacts of exposure to silica dust, continuous independent oversight of quarry operations must be conducted by the relevant government authorities – another hidden cost to government and the taxpayer.
- Every person moving into this area did so with the expectation of a specific lifestyle. Zoning in this area protects the expectations associated with “Country Living, City Life”. Zoned C2 (Environmental Conservation) and RU2 (Rural Landscape), this prohibits establishing the proposed quarry with all its environmental and social impacts, going directly against the objectives of the zoning.
- Clearing 22 hectares of critically endangered woodland and 78 hectares of vegetation overall, right next to the newly created Biodiversity Stewardship site, will further reduce the over 300 species of flora and fauna, including endangered box-gum grassy woodland. Attempting to offset this impact by establishing an adjacent Biodiversity Stewardship site does not mitigate the reduction in much needed green areas when considering climate and environmental impact. Should the Biodiversity Stewardship site be maintained with the same attitude shown by past behaviour of the owners, biodiversity offsets will not be delivered.
- The social impact associated with the increased safety risk of heavy truck movements and merging along Old Cooma Road, in entering Monaro Highway, and passing through Googong and Caldwell into heavily populated areas, is high. The increased potential for major accidents and fatalities is unacceptable. The cost of future mitigation needs to be considered in addition to the personal impact on families resulting from the inevitable accidents.
- Blasting from quarries will be felt in homes both near like ours, and kilometres away. We already have experience of this from the Queanbeyan Quarry. Blasting so close is expected to cause cracks in walls and windows. Combined with long hours of crushing operations and the associated noise, nearby areas and residents’ quality of life will decline. Resident disquiet is likely to be felt in future elections.

Conclusion

We strongly object to this project proceeding.

The project will adversely impact the region for the next 30-50 years. The project adversely impacts road safety, biodiversity, environmental water quality and important downstream areas, business costs, resident health and quality of life for not only us but also across the region. Compounded by existing quarries around the region and the increased pollution produced, the impacts are unacceptable.