

Mackas Sand Project – S75W Modification

As a daily commuter between Nelson Bay and the Williamstown RAAF Base I am very concerned about the proposal from Macka Sand to develop a new access road from Lot 218 directly onto Nelson Bay Road.

Since the extraction from Lot 220 has begun I have noticed a significant increase in truck (and trailer) traffic entering Nelson Bay Road via Oakvale road. This extraction from Lot 220 appears to have some time restrictions on traffic movement, yet frequently I seem to always encounter trucks entering at Oakvale Road and at the Richardson's Road roundabout. The proposal now seeks to increase transporting from Lot 218 to 24 hours per day, 7 days a week.

Should this proposal be approved it will see nearly a doubling the frequency of large trucks using this roundabout as the empty trucks will need to travel another 4 kilometres total along Nelson Bay Road just to gain access into the new road.

Although an acceleration lane has been proposed, to allow trucks exiting to increase speed when entering Nelson Bay Road, this is a single lane road with a blind curve and I fail to see how this can be done safely.

With both Lots 218 and 220, along with other sand quarry companies operating in the area, at least one 24/7, it will increase large truck movements to an unacceptable volume along the single lane section of Nelson Bay Road between Richardson's Road roundabout and the roundabout at Medowie Road.

The Medowie Road roundabout has a single lane along Medowie Road and the eastern section along Nelson Bay Road, coming from two lanes to the west. This is already very dangerous with frequent accidents as cars try to merge. There is approximately 2500 staff from the RAAF Base going through this roundabout traveling towards Newcastle or Nelson Bay region.

I gather it is initially proposed to extract 500 000 tonnes of sand from each Lot, with this perhaps increasing to a maximum of 1 million tonnes each, this will result in another doubling of the proposed truck movements again.

With such large volumes being transported around, It would appear to me that if this was wheat or a coal mine the developer would be required to establish a railway line.

The estimated traffic flow in the traffic report appears to be developed only on two days of actual traffic counting and old figures from 1995 and 2004. A significant increase in commuters travelling along Nelson Bay Road travelling both ways to work in the mines, Newcastle and Tourist activities in Nelson Bay has occurred in the past few years. A large number of school buses travel along this route. I have experienced delays along the road during peak holiday periods taking 1.5 hours which normally takes only half an hour. These holiday and weekend traffic flows have not been taken into account.

I cannot see any justification in approving this new access route, as there doesn't appear to be any benefit in using a direct access to Nelson Bay Road than the initially approved access via Lavis Lane over the increased dangers of at least a doubling of truck movements along the single section of the road between Medowie Road and Richardson Road.