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Department of Planning, Industry and Environment,
Major Projects.
Submission made online, NSW Planning Portal.

23 June 2021.

Dear Secretary,

RE: Martins Creek Quarry Project SSD-6612

The 1000+ members and Friends of Birding NSW **objects** to the expansion of the Martins Creek Quarry, Hunter Region, which will require the destruction of 36.8 ha of vegetation as well as land required for infrastructure for the following reasons:

Land clearing and ensuing habitat destruction has been identified as the main driver for animal extinction in Australia. Land clearing in NSW continues unabated despite evidence-based reports of species being added to the threatened species lists.

In the Hunter Region alone, 90 species of birds are classified as threatened under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and/or the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (Roderick and Stuart 2016). Of these 44 species are woodland birds.

Birding NSW thinks that:

- the surveys for avifauna were carried out in 2014 and 2015 and were inadequate to detect already rare threatened species in such a fragmented landscape. Long-term surveys are required to establish presence or absence of threatened species especially in woodlands.
- the fact that suitable habitat for threatened species is present should be sufficient to retain the habitat, not clear it. Clearing this land will further fragment remaining forest leading to detrimental effects.
- the proposed development site sits in a landscape already largely cleared making this forested area even more significant in terms of providing refuge for extant species and the opportunity for further recruitment.
- hollow-bearing trees are crucial in the life cycle of nocturnal species. Clearing them is to clear out those dependent species.
- offsetting strategies such as the system of trading credits may not protect threatened species. The idea of offsets does not and cannot work. Bush that has taken millions of years to develop cannot be replaced.
- land clearance and deforestation are activities exacerbating climate change.

Birding NSW respectfully calls for an urgent reassessment of the project in order to save remnant habitats. We tend to focus on bird species but if the birds are present then thousands of invertebrates and animals are there too.

Sincerely

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Office of Conservation, Birding NSW

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