

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Re: Martins Creek Quarry Project (SSD-6612)

Amended Development Application and Responses to Submissions

I write to express my opposition to this proposal.

, and my family, have shared a fenceline with the Martins Creek quarry for some 16 years including when the quarry was owned and operated by State Rail or Rail Corp and under the control of the Daracon Group.

As a neighbour, I have come to know Daracon as ever-willing to transgress any laws and regulations in relation to the getting, processing and transport of materials, in the effort to maximise corporate profit. AS I have previously noted, I once confronted a loader driver, while wearing my pyjamas, at 2am on a Monday morning about quarrying operations he and other staff had been undertaking for the previous few hours. The worker, to his credit, volunteered that the operations were noisy and disruptive for the local community. While on site I saw, he was refueling his front end loader and as I left drove off to a materials dump. I also saw to semitrailers with cement style tankers under two large silos. The area in which they were working was heavily floodlit and the grinding noise emanating from the machinery I recognised as the noise that had kept me awake, for several hours, from over a kilometre away. I can only describe the noise as a cross between a dentist's drill and a mild earthquake. Horrendously noisy in a rural valley late at night, when it is not unusual to hear road traffic from several kilometres away. I wrote Dungog Shire Council immediately to query why they would allow Daracon to extend operating hours without community consultation. I later learned that Daracon had no such permission and were operating illegally. The corporation had only a permit to quarry, basically in daylight hours Monday to Friday, I iterate that they were operating around midnight onwards on a Sunday night.

On many occasions before and since, Daracon has knowingly operated illegally. I believe from evidence provided at a public meeting at Tocal on 24 June 2021, that the Environment Protection Authority did little in response to these breaches. I raise the following questions:-

- * why is Daracon allowed to continue to operate a quarry under licence?
- * will Daracon abide and future conditions of operation?
- * is casual monitoring by the EPA sufficient to monitor Daracon's compliance with the law?

On all previous occasions, when Daracon has proposed expansions to operations, I as an immediate neighbour have never been consulted. More recently I have received calls from a Daracon liaison person but refused to return contact because I have no confidence in the honesty or integrity of the organisation that has continually placed profits over community wellbeing.

Further, I oppose the development on the following grounds:-

LOSS OF RURAL AMENITY.

For many years, the quarry produced a modest tonnage per annum, the majority was transported by rail. This was not ideal, but better fitted the rural nature of the area and many locals bought properties with full knowledge of the situation. Unfortunately, Daracon's periods of high output imposed much hardship on myself and the community. Namely;-

- Additional noise on my property. Normally the occasion "clang" of heavy machinery, gave way to an almost constant rumble, clang and general hum of machinery. It was most evident after hours or on weekends, when normal quiet levels resumed, and birds, distant traffic etc.
- Excess dust production. My home is to the East of the rock face and North East of processing plant. I have a composting toilet which has a small fan to extract odours, the air is drawn between the two sections on the toilet seat and down through the spoil box. When the quarry operates normally there is a modest layer of dust build up noticeable each week. At high production periods the same amount of dust residue was evident each day. For the past several months of very little production, the has been negligible dust build up. At last night's community meeting I was made aware that this dust is likely to contain silica, a carcinogen, and diesel exhaust particulates. This is likely to impact poorly on my health as well as those in the local community.
- I can also report that there was a feeling of living outside your body, as though you could never be within yourself due to the noise, that you were a subject of quarry noise and do nothing else but survive.
- Beyond my property the impacts of high output haulage on local roads were even more evident.
 - The quality of the roads suffered by asphalt deforming, pot holing and dust. This cannot be underestimated. Further, damage to roads was born by council ergo local residents. Residents' vehicles likely suffered greater wear and tear due to the harsh driving conditions. There is evidence that such damage spreads, as roads are damaged or blocked for repair, trucks or residents themselves, will detour onto other minor roads. Residents are left stressed and out of pocket left with the costs of repairing and maintaining their vehicles and local roads. Profits going to Daracon.
 - Driving was more congested, including frequent encounters with either a stream of trucks or a convoy where several trucks would follow one another in closed up formation. I felt totally overwhelmed and unsafe in these conditions. The potential for vehicle damage by restricted road access or accident due to the lack of safety margin, as high as I have ever felt in forty or more years of motoring.
 - Paterson township was transformed from a quiet rural village, of colour, calmness and conviviality to a crowded, noisy, grey place where residents rushed about to get a minimum of business completed and leave. It is not an exaggeration to describe the road from Bolwarra to Martins Creek as resembling a quarry environment; with inhumane levels of noise, dust and vibration. Since the effective quarry closure some months ago it has been amazing to witness the rebirth of the village to its best ever, groups of cyclists traveling safely about, ditto

with motorcyclists, day trippers, holiday makers and grey nomads. The village is thriving with regards to tourism and recreation in Tucker Park and beyond as people move on to the Barrington Tops. My firm opinion is that the presence of trucks, road damage and dust will kill a burgeoning tourism industry locally.

PROPERTY VALUES

Even when the original quarry was under operation, rural properties were slow to turn over. The property on which I have lived for about 16 years, has been on the market, modestly priced, for over five years. It is my firm opinion that should this proposal succeed that my property and many others would either lose value so as to become worthless, or be unsellable except to the quarry. I understand that at a public meeting, the then quarry manager David Mingay, when asked what he would do faced with the proposed truck traffic passing his front door, had concluded that he would move house. There is no other clearer piece of evidence available to you, that a manager responsible for the quarry at the centre of this submission, has indicated that he would not tolerate the conditions that Daracon seeks to impose on residents.

To allow a mining operation to impact on such a chain of beautiful small villages and towns would place at risk the health and financial wellbeing of hundreds of families.

I know of one family that lived adjacent the quarry face. They kept a few horses and animals and had an arrangement with the quarry, during periods of sub-400 000 tonne production, to telephone before rock blasting operations. This was done for the wellbeing and safety of the residents, but also the horses in particular as they would rush frantically about risking injury. In the long term, this solution proved inadequate and the family sold their property at reduced price and left the country. I have anecdotal evidence that this has been repeated in many other instances, where families have sold up and left to put distance between themselves and the impact of quarrying.

In fact at last night's community meeting there were many nods in agreement to the proposal to put a class action to Daracon of NSW Government for compensation in relation to reduction in property values, those properties having been purchased as a time when modest quarrying levels were being undertaken.

Regarding 24 hour loading of trains. The noise, vibration and dust that is associated with filling empty steel rail cars, from an massive overhead hopper deep within a quiet rural valley in the depths of the night are so ludicrous so as to be laughable. I believe, that as Daracon has previously pooed any request for rail transfer of product, this element of the proposal wreaks of their wreckless and spiteful attitude to the community. I strongly oppose this as a last ditch effort to create fear and loathing.

A major concern raised at last night's meeting was the likelihood that having been awarded a base measure of the right to expand operations, that Daracon would quickly apply for amendments for vary operations. So that a request, for example to shift from 24 hr rail loading to 24 hr rail and road loading would proceed without proper community consultation.

In closing, I would like to emphasise the fact that Daracon is a recalcitrant and flagrantly noncompliant corporate citizen, any encouragement for it to expand quarrying operations will enable this company to profit excessively at the cost of human wellbeing within a picturesque valley that is increasingly embracing its natural heritage and environment.

I have made previous submissions in response to previous proposals by Daracon in this matter.

I declare no political affiliations with any party and have made no political donations at any time.

