

**Blayney Export Meats Smallstock Abattoir**

Application No            SSD 6594

Date of this submission 22 May 2015

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This proposal will have significant impacts on the Blayney community for the following reasons:

**1. Major health risk – Q fever**

The potential impact of Q fever has been comprehensively explained by a local veterinary expert in community meetings and reported in the local media and therefore it is not necessary for me to explain the medical implications. However, I understand very well the seriousness of this issue. While the greatest risk will be borne by the Blayney community, expert advice makes it clear that all communities along the transport routes identified in the development proposal will have some exposure to this health risk.

**Conclusion: The potential health risk is too great – one person contracting Q fever as a result of this development is one too many. The community should not be expected to ‘hope and pray’ that it doesn’t happen.**

**2. Location of proposed development**

Although the proposal indicates this development will be located in an ‘industrial site’ this is disputed. The recognised industrial zone is located on the northern outskirts of Blayney – a much less intrusive site than the Newbridge Road site. Based on information provided by Mr Ray Hornery at a public meeting in November 2014, the proposed site was selected on the basis of ‘convenience’ and ‘cost minimisation’. This rationale clearly meets the proponents ‘benefits’ but fails to consider the significant ‘costs’ of such a development to the Blayney community.

It cannot be overstated that siting this development in this location will have a devastating impact on the owner’s amenity of the heritage homestead ‘Athol’ and their country garden wedding business which is operated from the homestead.

Professional advice (presented at public meeting, 7<sup>th</sup> May) identified serious issues that had seemingly not been addressed in the Environmental Report such as:

- the development’s impact on the flood plain, ground water (Belubula River), water supply (Carcoar Dam) and third order water course; and
- the effects of easterly winds on residents and businesses in direct line of the proposed site

**Conclusion: As there are other more suitable sites available the proponent be required to reconsider site selection and present a cost-benefit analysis that considers all interested/affected parties.**

**3. Increased traffic – inappropriate vehicle types and movements**

Based on available information, there will be:

- 48 large stock trucks carrying up to 4500 goats per day;
- unknown numbers of trucks moving rendering and waste products to other locations;
- additional vehicles moving ‘finished, dressed carcasses’ to other locations; and

- multiple vehicles bringing workers to and from the site each day (proposal indicates 165 workers, most of whom will come from other areas)

This massive influx of vehicle movements is simply too great for a town the size of Blayney to accommodate safely and/or efficiently.

These vehicle movements will pass:

- two schools
- a pre-school
- kindergartens
- Blayney's only hospital
- residential aged care facility
- residential units for the elderly

Blayney Council has indicated that an extensive road works programme would be required to meet this continuous volume of traffic going through the main street, then making left and right turns into, and out of, smaller streets. Apart from the final impact, there will be extensive disruption to normal traffic and pedestrian movements within the town, while this work would be undertaken. ***All completely unnecessary.***

It should also be noted that there is rail crossing –with automatic gates – at the northern end of the main street. When the gates are closed there is a build-up of waiting traffic, often across intersections. Should there be trucks loaded with goats (at the end of a very long trip) held up in that queue, one can imagine the unhealthy and unpleasant effect on everyone within the range of the accompanying odour and noise.

**Conclusion: Blayney's main and subsidiary roads are totally unsuitable for this dramatic change in vehicle traffic.**

#### **4. People and place**

Within 1 -1.2 km of the proposed development site there are:

- Residential aged care/retirement units housing a significant number of older residents. These units provide a safe environment, are extremely well maintained and close to all the town amenities.
- Many residences.
- Blayney's only supermarket which services the town and surrounding villages. It employs a large number of local people including school students with after-school and weekend work.
- Cricket fields used by juniors throughout the summer
- Heritage park – a major infrastructure project undertaken by Council over a number of years which offers children's play areas and picnic facilities. It is popular with locals and travellers alike.
- The town's only tennis courts which are used regularly.
- The main street – which includes the post office, majority of Blayney's small businesses, churches, pre-school/kindergartens, restaurants, cafes, motels, tourist information centre and Council chambers. This is the hub of the town and will not be shielded from the odour, noise, traffic and health risks emanating from a 24 hr per day working abattoir.

- The majority of people living and working in the town area will be affected to some degree; many will be significantly impacted. The obvious question arises: Does the benefit of one business outweigh the costs to health, economy and amenity of a large number of people?

**Conclusion: Blayney's ability to continue offering amenity of living to its people will be significantly compromised by this development.**

## 5. The 'economics'

Much has been said about the economic benefits of this proposal to Blayney and the surrounding region. This is a moot point – hard data has not been forthcoming. (As at 7 May, Blayney Council had not undertaken an economic analysis of this proposal.) It would seem the community is to accept the economic benefit as an indisputable fact. However, the proponent's representative made it clear (public meeting November 2014) that the oft-quoted 165+ jobs will not be sourced from the Blayney community – rather the specialist skills required for this operation will necessitate hiring workers from Orange, Bathurst and other regional towns. This will bring limited or no economic benefit to Blayney's small business people. Employees will come to Blayney to work then return to their home towns – very little contribution to the economy will come from this source.

Another important economic consideration is the inevitable decrease in the resale value of homes within the 'impact zone'. It is more than likely that, instead of new arrivals to Blayney bringing with them an economic 'upswing', we will see departures from our community as the full impact of this development begins to take effect. It will certainly deter anyone who might have seen Blayney as a desirable place to live.

**Conclusion: Until an independent cost-benefit analysis is able to provide clear economic data the community has every reason to regard the 'benefits' of the proposal as questionable at best, perhaps illusory.**

## 6. Compliance issues

At the Council-initiated public meeting held on 7 May, in responding to a question from the audience, the Mayor acknowledged the proponent has a record of non-compliance – over a period of approximately 10 years - with Council conditions relating to the existing Sea Link site and operations. (The Mayor also acknowledged the Council had not been sufficiently diligent in monitoring and enforcing such conditions of consent but noted that Blayney is a small council with limited resources.) This record of non-compliance calls into question the proponent's willingness to comply with any conditions placed on the current proposal and the ability of state and local authorities to monitor and enforce such conditions.

It will be too late to back-track once the development is approved. The abattoir will be in operation and issues of non-compliance will be immaterial. The damage will have been done and no amount of 'remediation' will restore the amenity of living for the people of Blayney.

**Conclusion: Consideration of this proposal should address the valid concerns of compliance/non-compliance and the irreversible impact of a 'wrong' decision.**

Additional information reported in Blayney Chronicle, Thursday 16 April 2015:

- Letter to the Editor from Mrs Joan Thwaite
- Summary of the Environmental Impact Statement relating to this development proposal