

**Objection to Proposed Hard Road Quarry “Deep Creek Quarry”
SSD-11591659 2020/8823**

Hours of business operation

I am concerned that the operating hours of the business have now been extended to 6am to 6pm, when, since December 2020 we have been advised both on the website and in fliers in the letterbox that operating hours will be 7am to 5pm. This change has been disguised in the body of the application as despatch of product, which means allowing heavy vehicles, truck and dog to enter the proposed rock mine site, load and leave via The Bucketts Way. My objection is to this extension is threefold:

Trucks will begin queuing prior to the 6 am opening time and will block The Bucketts Way or alternatively will turn into Forest Glen Road to wait and queue, using my private gateway which is the only place to turn around. The noise of unladen heavy vehicles rattling along the Bucketts Way and air braking to a stop will be excessive at 5am in the morning resulting in waking residents prematurely prior the onslaught of noise for the next 12 hours. It is totally unacceptable in a usually quiet environment as is noise from this source at any time.

5am in the morning is a peak traffic time for workers travelling to Durally Coal Mine add to this numerous trucks on The Bucketts Way at the same time, resulting in an increase in accidents on the Bucketts Way, a road already with a severely damaged surface that is never fixed with few places to overtake a heavy truck and dog.

Further to this the wildlife, in particular nocturnal animals such as koalas, bats and possums are retuning to their nests or roosts. These animals if impacted by a heavy vehicle stand little chance of survival. The developer has stated that he has no control over heavy vehicle's once they leave his property so who will be ensuring that wildlife is safe on the haul road, a known Koala habitat? 6am in winter the sun is yet to rise and 6pm in winter the sun has already set making conditions too dark to see small native animals on an unlit road resulting in many deaths of native animals.

I object on the grounds that the hours of operation are not sensitive to local residents and wildlife needs and as such totally unacceptable.

Road

The Bucketts Way is simply unsuitable for use of heavy vehicles. where the report commissioned by the developer states that at the time of the survey the road was “satisfactory for use”. The road survey was completed in Feb 2019, three years ago. Since then the road has deteriorated even more with the three kilometres between Limeburners Creek bridge and Tattersalls Road being almost un navigable.

There are whole sections that have rise ups due to displacement of road base caused by the heavy vehicles already using the road and are a hazard to any vehicle that does not have the ground clearance height of a 4WD.

The road edges are extensively broken up for almost the entire length of the Bucketts Way except for recently completed upgrades and there are patches upon patches on the Limeburners to Tattersalls section and indeed the whole length of the road to the Pacific Highway is in a constant state of disrepair. One would be forgiven if they thought that the sign that warns of “caution rain damaged pavement”, near Stoney Creek bridge, had been in place since the recent rains when in fact has been there for at least three years and probably longer.

The new section of road from just before Limeburners Creek Road and the village of Limeburners Creek, has begun to break up already. That section was only completed in 2020.

The intersection of the Bucketts Way and Pacific Highway that was recently up graded at a cost of \$1.4M has not alleviated the problem of safe access to the highway, in fact it has exacerbated queuing and wait times extended and with heavy vehicles added to the mix is an accident waiting to occur because drivers will take added risks to turn onto the highway. The roadwork has in fact made it harder to turn as vehicles turning into the Bucketts Way obscure the oncoming traffic on the Pacific Highway and oncoming traffic is only visible for about 100 metres, making turning hazardous.

Since March 2020 with COVID19 impacting on everyones lives, people are not travelling interstate and overseas and are spending their leisure time in their own state. As Sydney is barely 2 hours away by road the amount of traffic both on the Pacific Highway and on the Buckets Way has increased tenfold particularly from Friday lunchtime to Sunday evening further adding to wait times to turn. Long weekend and holiday times are even worse in terms of traffic density and queuing and turning times.

The Bucketts Way from Allworth to the Pacific Highway was in the NRMAs top ten worst roads in 2008.

Since I bought my property in 2001 there have been at least 5 deaths on that section of road, two of those deaths, in two different accidents resulted in the deaths of two residents from Forest Glen Road, my street. Two deaths in two seperate car accidents were within 1km south of Forest Glen Road and a further two serious car accidents have occurred within 1km of Forest Glen Road, in the past 5 years resulting in the Westpac rescue helicopter being called to airlift accident victims. Surely these are all signs that the road is dangerous and unsuitable for an increase in heavy vehicle traffic.

I object to the proposed rock mine on the grounds that the road is unsafe and the condition is not likely to improve in the near future but would in face result in major deterioration should the proposal be approved.

Traffic

From the outset we were advised that there would be 55 truck movements per day, that is only one way, which equates to 110 trips per day, or over a ten hour day, one every 5.45 minutes or over twelve hours operation, one every 6.54 minutes. On any given trip in those time frames two to three trucks will be encountered in any trip on the Bucketts Way. If, as we are now told, that this may increase to 250 in peak times. unacceptable to anyone who lives in close proximity to the rock mine for noise and dust reasons and unacceptable to anyone who lives along the Bucketts way for noise and safety reasons. The Bucketts Way road surface is in poor condition most of the time, has three places to overtake in the first 12km of the road.

Limeburners Creek Bridge is too narrow to pass a truck there is a "Caution sign" on both sides of the approach to the bridge. One lane is marked wider than the other and the approach is such that heading north view of the bridge is obscured by both a decline and a curve in the road and on the approach heading south, the view of the bridge is obscured by a curve in the road. Either way to stop to allow passage of a heavy vehicle invites a shunt from the rear, possibly into the path of an oncoming truck. A very dangerous situation.

I object to the proposal on the grounds that a new bridge needs to be built over Limeburners Creek, the entire length of the road to the Pacific Highway needs to be upgraded apart from a 1 km section from Limeburners Creek Road to Limeburners Creek village and an overpass needs to be built for access to Pacific Highway. If the council isn't prepared to do this, the state government will probable pay for the overpass, but the rest? \$10m?

Water

Dust will be a huge issue if the proposed development is approved. The development states that it will use the water in an old agricultural dam to contain dust both at the extraction site and on

the haul road. I fail to understand how that dam will have adequate capacity to meet these demands. That will result in either excessive dust in the air which will be totally unacceptable to the residents in close proximity or will involve the damming of Deep Creek a totally unacceptable outcome also as it is a zoned creek that feeds in to the Karuah River, Marine National Park. Flows in that creek are limited to times of heavy rainfall so would also not be a permanent solution. The only other option is to buy water which was \$250 a tanker load in the last drought. Will they pay that price? I think not.

Every household living in this area for 20 km collects rain water from their roof for their sole water supply. Dust in the air will settle on those roofs and we will be forced to drink water contaminated by silicon dust. Will the developer be supplying filters for the residents on a regular basis? I don't want to be drinking dirty water and I am sure nobody else does either.

This question has already been raised along with clarification regarding impact on ground water however whilst impact on groundwater was addressed, collection of drinking water from rooftops and the impact of silicon dust to these was ignored.

I object to the proposed rock mine on the ground that dust will collect on every surface, houses, trees, grass, inside houses and impact negatively on humans and wildlife, plants and animals.

Blasting

Blasting is hardly mentioned in the proposal. Blasting is the action, vibration the result. I am concerned that vibration caused by blasting will damage my house that is 1.5km from the extraction site, My house is built on the ridge line on bedrock, on the same rock strata as the extraction site and I believe it is the same rock formed by an ancient volcano that is under a large percentage of the housing in the locality. I have not had a representative of the developer contact me at any time to allay my concerns and these concerns were raised in the initial online questionnaire in 2020. If my house is damaged how do I get reparation? By costly court action? Not satisfactory and needs to be addressed by the developer. I object to the rock mine proposal on these grounds.

Details of blasting in the EIS are conflicting with different timeframes being mentioned so that we are not certain of the actual number of blasts per year let alone frequency of those blasts, some mention Monday to Friday timeframes, some mention Saturdays. Clarification needed here and the only satisfactory number of blasts is NIL.

I and others felt vibration five months ago early one morning. Media was checked and no earthquake had occurred. Could that have been a test blast and where exactly did that emanate from?

I object to the proposed rock mine as the effect of blasting, vibration will impact negatively on residents prime asset, their houses and as yet I have not heard how the developer proposes to fix any damage incurred.

Public consultation

Public consultation has been poor at best and on these grounds I object to the proposed rock mine development.

We were given the opportunity to comment on the proposed rock mine in December 2020 with the only information provided being a flyer 100mm x 210mm in size and that was dominated by photos. The information on this flyer was scant and the web site that we were directed to for further information contained exactly the same flyer with the same scant information. Needless to say fairly difficult to assess the impact on an individual's way of life without more information. I commented as best I could with little to go on.

The next stage was a questionnaire to be completed by concerned individuals. This questionnaire was not available by the advertised date and no notification was received to say when it was ready to be accessed.

The web site was added to from time to time and all had the opportunity to access at any time.

The final consultation was supposed to be an opportunity to ask questions via Zoom due to COVID restrictions. The sessions were Wednesday 4th August, 2021 between 10-11am or 6-7pm. As this area has a very poor internet service via WIFI not everyone has access to Zoom, furthermore at 10am most people are at work whether in a manual or indoors job and unable to access and at 6pm most people are yet to arrive home from work, Newcastle and Maitland are an hour away by road. These times were not convenient to stakeholders and had the effect, desired by Mara, hardly anyone accessed the meeting.

Like everyone else who registered to attend the Zoom meeting I was given the link to access but that didn't work and I had to be given another link to access resulting in late joining of the meeting and the evening meeting I was unable to join at all and many people who were able to join were muted and unable to speak or ask questions.

The meeting was comprised of an update of the proposed rock mine which took about half of the allotted time the remaining half hour for questions. Totally inadequate consultation and a high handed management style of the meeting by a representative of Mara not the developer in person.

I believe that the process was rushed, brevity was paramount in case someone asked a difficult or distasteful question and answers to questions were offhand as they had been in the initial consultation in December 2020.

Timing for consultation was also strategic and clever as just prior to Christmas for both initial consultation and for proposal being open for public comment is at the busiest time of the year when many people just don't have time with work and family commitments.

All of these things add up to something to hide. They have not been open and honest with stakeholders and on this basis alone I ask that you reject the proposed development.

Deep Creek

Deep Creek is a zoned creek feeding the Karuah River, a Marine National Park. I object to the proposed rock mine being called Deep Creek Quarry as they don't own the name, only own land on one tributary of the creek and use of that name implies ownership.

Deep Creek is a natural corridor for Koalas movement into the surrounding area as it contains food trees desired by these unique and endangered native animals.

I object to the use of Deep Creek Quarry as a business name as it offends me and other stakeholders.

Noise

Noise carries a long way in the bush.

We live in an area zoned RU2 which to all intents and purposes is sparsely populated with native bush surrounding the proposed rock mine. The proposal dismisses noise being a problem however my objection relates to the amount of noise that will be generated by blasting, bulldozer operation, scraping of the ground and crushing in the crusher plant, a term that is not even mentioned in the proposal. I have been near the Karuah rock mine and have experienced first hand the amount of dust and noise emanating from that enterprise, from the crusher, so have no doubt as to the amount of noise pollution that will emigrate from the proposed rock mine.

Every weekend we are subjected to the sound of hundreds of motorbikes as they make their way to Gloucester and Taree via the Bucketts Way then on Sunday afternoon the same as they make their return trip.

We are under the flight path of planes travelling from Williamtown Airport to Brisbane and also are regularly overflown by RAAF jets practicing for warfare. These activities are acceptable as we must have transport and our country needs to be kept safe, however noise from a money making enterprise that benefits no-one except the owners is not acceptable in a rural environment.

If this proposal is allowed to go ahead we will have no peace at all with noise from motorbikes, planes, jets and then added to that blasting, heavy vehicles, bulldozers and the crushing machine.

Over the past 5 months there has been extensive work carried out on the Bucketts Way immediately north the proposed rock mine haul road. We can all hear this work being done and that project is 2km to 2.5 km away in a gully. I we can hear that work being done there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that we will hear the sound of mobile plant and equipment as it goes about clearing the site and blasting, extracting and crushing and loading into trucks rhyolite from the mountainside, despite being assured that this will not occur.

There would be less noise in the city, a place we all chose to leave for peace and quiet.

I object to the proposed rock mine on the grounds that excess and ever-present noise will impact on my and others mental health and wellbeing.

Dust

Dust emanating from the proposed rock mine, we have been told will be minimal. I have worked at mine sites in the Hunter Valley and have first hand knowledge of the amount of dust in the air not just surrounding the mine site but travelling over nearby towns and farms. One only has to observe on any day the dust cloud overhanging Singleton and Muswellbrook and all points between and around these towns. I can see no way that there will not be dust and as there is no purpose built dam or water supply to alleviate this massive problem, dust will be in the air, on the leaves of trees and understory and on our roofs, our only source of water.

Information in the report, modelling for sound and dust impacts on receptors doesn't actually show you which receptor you are and can't be distinguished from the map as it shows no road or property boundaries. A very clever tactic but not missed on some or us. Not acceptable in any way shape or form. These developers will complain that so many people have objected but they are scant with their information and deceptive if questioned.

When the wind blows from the right direction pink dust from Karuah rock mine lands on everything, that enterprise is 11km distant.

I object to the proposed rock mine on the grounds that dust will impact on all humans inhabiting the area and animals and wildlife including Koalas.

Wildlife

Fauna

I object the proposed rock mine on the grounds that it will severely impact on the known population of Koalas that inhabit the area.

Directly opposite the proposed development, rock mine is Karuah National Park, an area of considerable size that extends to the opposite side of the Karuah River and includes the river itself.

Deep Creek provides a corridor for our native wildlife to move out into the larger environment and to perhaps save the larger population from total extinction in a large bushfire. Keeping in mind that the Karuah rRiver is natural barrier to movement in an easterly direction the animals con only go north or south or west. If this corridor is eliminated or at least blocked as it would be by this

noisy just producing proposal the Koalas have nowhere to go. There is a reference to 39 sightings of Koalas in the area in the last 40? years. Just where does one report a sighting of a Koala to? To suggest that there are few due to the number of sightings is ridiculous and dangerous. Residents in Allworth and Limeburners Creek see koalas on a regular basis.

There was barely any recognition of the diversity of wildlife in the area under discussion. No mention of snakes or lizards, of which there are many and hardly any of frogs and insects. On any night the sounds of insects, frogs in particular, can't help but be recognised as significant.

I am an avid bird watcher and have identified 124 different birds on my property and on the one immediately behind which houses Deep Creek. Species include Regent Bowerbird (2005) but not observed since, Blackfaced Monarch, seen every year since 2005 but not in 2017, 2018, 2019 but seen in 2020 and 2021. It is impossible to do a flora and fauna study by only attending the site on a few days/nights in a couple of months. Animals move about and are not in the same location all of the year, they follow food supply. There are also Superby Lyre birds in the immediate area. I have a recording of one that calls every morning if you would care to hear it?

The proposed quarry is in the creek bed and forms an important hunting place for bats, and there are many of them at any given time.

As for owls, they couldn't have looked very hard or for very long. Every night when I drive into my property there are at least two, sometimes four owls on different fence posts as I make the half kilometre journey along my road to my house. They have to be on that proposed development property too. Five different species have been seen.

No mention of Echidnas? Seen by residents on a regular basis.

I object to the proposed rock mine on the grounds that it will unfairly and permanently impact on wildlife and any environmental scientist who calls a Koala population as "unimportant" and doesn't recognise that it is dark in winter at 6am and 6pm needs a new career path.

The most disappointing section of the EIS is the Flora and Fauna study. I am not qualified in that particular field but having done our own approved DA for a large Aquaculture project, in the local area, could have done a better job.

Flora

There are two species of plants that are endemic to this area and are in abundance in the proposed rock mine site. Destruction of these species appears to be of no consequence to the developers regardless of their endangered status. The two plants are Tetratheca Juncea and Callistemon lineifolius, these plants are in danger of extinction and the report treats their survival in this site as insignificant or unimportant. If approved and it should not be, even if this one issue is considered on its own merit, offsets need to be in the immediate local area as suggested by Mid Coast Council, and not in Dubbo or Broken Hill.

I object to this proposal based on its planned destruction of hundreds of Tetratheca Juncea and Callistemon Linearifolius. Once these plants are gone they can't be brought back.

Economic

Funding for maintenance of roads

We have been advised that the proposed rock mine will provide \$10m over 30 years this equates to:

12 km of road

5km Port Stephens council

7km Mid Coast Council

\$.833,333.333 per km over 30 years

\$27,777.77 per km per year

\$138,888.88 PS per year

\$194,444.44 MCC per year

These figures if correct are totally inadequate based on the amount of work that is currently carried out on the road, the amount of damage to the southbound lane that 55 fully laden trucks per day will cause given current truck usage and the amount of damage they cause and the value for \$1.4 that we received when the intersection with the Bucketts Way and the Pacific Highway was completed in 2021. The amount of damage to the road, that we at the residents, will have to navigate on a daily basis.

I object to the proposed rock mine on the grounds that \$10m over thirty years will go nowhere near to funding the damage to the road made by trucks fully laden with rhyolite.

I read that over the next 30 years \$28M will be paid to the Federal Government in Income tax both Business and personal by the owners and employees of the proposed rock mine. That figure is insignificant when compared to the impact on surrounding property,

The small community of Forest Glen Road, a community of 17 properties has already been impacted by this development with three long term residents already selling and moving elsewhere because they couldn't take a cut in the value of their property and couldn't stand a disruption to their day to day lives as they currently exist.

As to input into local suppliers. The developer has other businesses and existing suppliers. It would be bad practice to not avail himself of economies of scale by using his suppliers to provide, fuel and other goods for this project. I don't see any economic gain by the local community, 20km surrounding the proposal.

Employment opportunities won't go to locals (20km) as already stated in the proposal the jobs will go to the best applicant whether from Lake Macquarie or Newcastle.

Finally just because someone thinks they can make money from an idea doesn't mean that it should be approved with no benefit to the people who will be impacted the most.

I object to this proposal on the ground that there will be no economic benefit to the local community.