

Planning Services  
Department of Planning and Environment  
Director-Resource Assessments

RE: CABBAGE TREE ROAD SAND QUARRY

In July 2014 my family and I moved from inner city Newcastle to Cabbage Tree Road Williamstown with a view to enjoying a more rural lifestyle. It did not take long for the prospect of this new way of life to be ruined with the revelation a sand mine was being proposed just 40 metres from our boundary. Our peace of mind has been destroyed not only by the threat of this damaging development but also by the further blow that our property is now within the RAAF contamination zone. Our property searches, at time of purchase, did not reveal either of these negative issues, although they were both known to relevant organisations years before. Obviously we would not have proceeded with it had the information been made available. Economically the move has been disastrous as the value of the property has been drastically reduced. We joined Williamstown and Surrounds Residents Action Group and have actively campaigned against this inappropriate development. Attending all public meetings, talking to neighbours and even reviewing the media analysis in the EIS have demonstrated the local concern, even fear about the impacts we will suffer if the mine is approved.

There is no doubt that Umwelt has compiled a slick and professional sounding EIS to promote the benefits of allowing the sand mine proposed for 398 Cabbage Tree Road Williamstown to go ahead. They have attempted to put forward answers for the many objections that could be raised against the idea. However in all fairness there is one aspect that should be considered paramount above all else in the decision to allow or deny this project and that is its proximity to residential homes. During any evaluation of this EIS most people would have to ask themselves the question "Would I like to live so close to this mine, or would I be happy for my family to do so?" Inevitably the answer would be a resounding NO ! There are at least 5 other mines in the area to obtain the required sand. Accordingly it can't be necessary to construct another one so close to peoples' homes.

There are a large number of threats to the fragile environment and threatened flora and fauna posed by this mine and these will be outlined in many of the submissions tendered. Neighbours I have spoken to have grave concerns for their respiratory health and others are fearful of the increased traffic and truck movements that will be an inevitable result. One of the most damning sections of the EIS is the Social Impact Assessment. The concerns of those who will be living close to this project are outlined very clearly in the EIS. Figures 5.2 and 5.4 demonstrate the very valid fear residents hold. Realistically for most of these issues there are no effective mitigation actions that can be taken. As a resident, with local knowledge, I am sure that a lot of these concerns will actually eventuate if the project proceeds but by then it will be too late as the ball will be rolling and almost impossible to halt.

It is difficult to have faith that the undertakings by given Williamstown Sand Syndicate (via Umwelt) to redress any problems that will inevitably arise if this project gets underway will be honoured. Realistically there will not be a watchdog to ensure people are protected and the EIS seems to put a lot of responsibility for monitoring problems back onto residents. It is a project that would be better never to launch rather than relying on a "wait and see" approach and then trying to deal with the range of problems that will arise.

The veracity of the EIS is questionable on many levels but most notably for me in relation to the cursory consultation process which was not completed in the consultative manner portrayed.

Therefore it can be assumed that many of the other processes put forward to mitigate damage will also be overblown and not followed through. As a result it is those living close who will be dealing day to day with the noise, dust, extra traffic, road danger and environmental damage. The prospect of providing employment is also mentioned many times in the EIS but as there will only be around 6 staff employed it is hardly the major advantage it is presented as.

If the mine is approved my family and I will be placed in a position where increased noise and traffic from changes occurring will make our home an unpleasant place to live. With the removal of the sand hills across the road we will be subjected to noise from the airport and RAAF base with the loss of the sound buffer. Already there is a level of apprehension when we try to turn into our driveway because of the traffic and large number of trucks on Cabbage Tree Road. This will increase with the new mine and also because of the possibility of increased truck movements for Macca's sand trucks.

Much has been said about the questionable nature of the way the tender was awarded for this development . While ICAC may have cleared the process of corruption the reality is it was ethically wrong. Please do not disregard the welfare of the people who will be faced with a huge reduction in their life style if this inappropriately located development goes ahead.

Kind regards

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