

SUBMISSION TO EXHIBITION OF STATE SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT
Cabbage Tree Road Sand Quarry - Williamtown

Application No. SSD 6125

Location Lot 1012, Lot 11, Lot 121, Lot 1 Cabbage, Tree Road
Williamtown

Applicant Williamtown Sand Syndicate Pty Ltd

Council Area Port Stephens

Consent Authority. Minister for Planning

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Back Ground

I am 69 year old 3rd generation farmer, having been so for most of my working life. I have been a member of the NSW Farmers Association, for many years, during which time I have been an elected representative. (Executive Councillor, currently Region 7 Chair).

The property at 272 Fullerton Cove Road, is currently owned by Gary and Elizabeth So, 3rd generation Australian Chinese farmers of Cantonese decent. The farm was originally purchased by Gary's grandfather and operated as a Chinese market garden until the early 1970s.

Gary and his cousin operate one of the largest Chinese Market Gardens at Kemps Creek Western Sydney, supplying fresh Asian vegetables to Harris Farm Markets.

The Kemps Creek area has been earmarked for future urban expansion in the very near future, so as a result the decision was made to re-activate the farm at Fullerton Cove so as to be able to continue his business of supplying Asian vegetables to Harris Farm Markets.

It was also decided that due to the increased high demand for organic food, this farm would be prepared to go down the path of Organic Certification.

DESCRIPTION OF AREA LAYOUT AND SOIL MAKEUP

The land to the east of Fullerton Cove is a low lying swampy area less than one metre above sea level, which then meet sand dune rises as nears the Pacific Ocean.

The land to the north of Fullerton Cove is also low swampy flood plain, drained by a number of drains.

North of Cabbage Tree Road are a series of sand dunes that rise approximately 10 metres above the flood plain swamp.

The dunes are at present supporting native vegetation , which is of quite a diverse range of plant and tree species, which in turns provides habitat island for a diverse range of animal bird and reptile species.

The soil is made up of about 300 to 450 millimetres of black Hunter River flood plain Soil over 150 millimetres of clay, which is above sea sand (The Tomago Sand Beds).

The water table varies from at the surface level to approximately one metre below the surface during summer.

The swamps are drained by numerous drains constructed at some time in the early 1900s, to allow the land to be used for agriculture (mainly dairies and horticulture).

The drainage systems were routinely maintained so as to keep the land productive.

Since the decline of commercial agriculture and the land use more to rural lifestyle blocks, the maintenance of the drains has ceased.

There are two main drains which run East to West, (the fourteen foot drain and the ten foot drain) from East of and South of the RAAF Base to the north eastern shores of Fullerton Cove, where they discharge into the Circle Drain which runs from the northern shoreline of the Cove following the eastern shoreline, discharging into the Cove several kilometres south.

Dawsons Drain runs north south draining surface water from the western side of The RAAF Base into the Circle Drain near the junctions of the Fourteen Foot Drain.

I have concerns over this proposed development that cover a number of

issues.

1)

The increase of heavy truck movements will undoubtedly further intensify the vehicular traffic on Cabbage Tree Road, thus creating increased hazards to school bus passengers as well as increased noise pollution to those residents with dwellings near to Cabbage Tree Road.

2)

Water Run off.

The proposed area to be cleared and mined is stated as 53.9 hectares. The water table in the surrounding flood plain swamps varies from surface level and above, to approximately 450 ml below the ground surface during drier periods.

The removal of the vegetation on the dunes, on the quarry site will result in water which would previously have been absorbed into the dunes, instantly running off into the already over loaded drainage system, that drains the William Town Fullerton Cove area.

As the mining progresses in lowering the dunes run off water will increase

.

The runoff water however will not have been filtered as it is at present by the vegetation currently occupying the dunes, but will contain any pollutants that are deposited at the quarry site.

Another State Significant development site, Maria's Veggie Farm less than a kilometre away and down stream from the quarry site, has a protected cropping area of plastic green houses which cover 38 hectares, with a total work site area of approximately 50 hectares.

This development also, sheds its rain water run off into the drainage system?

It total these two development sites cover in excess of 100 hectares.

The William Town area RAAF Base weather station gives the area an annual rainfall of 1,000 millimetres per Annum, however as has been seen in the past twelve months this can often be much higher as has occurred during the storm in April 2015, and in January 2016.

The rainfall at my property for the period from January 1 st to February 13 has been 500 mls.

100 mls of rainfall, equals one mega litre of water per hectare, so as can be seen the two development sites cover in excess of 100 hectares, so as both the super storm in April 2015, and therein " event " in January. 2016 both dropped in the vicinity of 400 mls in one or two days over the Williamtown area, the runoff water from these two sites would have been in the vicinity of 400 mega litres.

The drainage system has not had or is proposed to have increased capacity works to compensate for this huge increase in runoff floodwater.

3)

Increased risks of further spreading the fire retardant contamination from the RAAF Base and surrounding land and drainage channel water.

As is stated in paragraph 2) above, the increased runoff generated by both development sites will overload the already stressed drainage system that runs from the William Town area to the south eastern shores of Fullerton Cove.

4)

Noise and wind.

The removal of both the vegetation and the dune height will increase noise pollution from both the RAAF base and Newcastle Domestic Airport, which is currently baffled by the height of the dunes and the density of the vegetation.

The height of the dunes and vegetation currently acts as a wind buffer and barrier to the hot north westerly winds that occur during summer.

They may also provide a wind buffer to both the RAAF and Commercial Airport.

5)

Wild life and vegetation diversity.

The flood plain and swamp areas around Williamtown and Fullerton Cove have been developed for both agriculture and rural life style uses.

This has resulted in the removal of native vegetation and being replaced with mono culture vegetative species, whether it be for grazing of

livestock or lawns on rural life style blocks.

The sand dunes have been largely untouched and have remained and are the breeding and restocking sanctuaries of both vegetation and wild life. The Koala corridor is just one example, however it is the smaller species of wildlife such as frogs, reptiles and birds such as wrens, that require understory vegetation for their existence, that make it very ecologically important that these last remnants of natural vegetation are to remain.

As I have indicated in my introduction, I am a farmer who produces Asian herbs and vegetables.

I moved the farm from Kellyville in Western Sydney, where the crops I grew were continually infected by pests and diseases.

Since I have been producing the same crops at Fullerton Cove, I have had minimal pest and disease infection of the crops, this is solely due to the diversity of natural pest predators, which inhabit the natural vegetated dunes within my property.

6)

Aboriginal Heritage,

Although I would not be considered a local, there is ample evidence the sand dunes and their dense vegetation was used by the local Aboriginal inhabitants, I would therefore suggest that the existing use rights of these people be considered.