

I work on a property within one kilometre of the Gunlake development.

Our children are often cared for by a relative on her property which is within 1 kilometre of the proposed pit extension and often directly down-wind.

Our children and their carer cross Brayton Rd to meet the school bus on a regular basis.

Our children often play outside on my relative's property. My family and I undertake farm maintenance activities on the property concerned.

I regularly drive on Brayton Rd and the Bypass road when travelling between properties where I work.

I have lived in the district for sixteen years and my wife has lived here since the 1980's.

**We consider the current level of impacts on the local community to be unacceptable.** I therefore feel compelled to object to the proposed expansion. I have photographed dust clouds emitted from Gunlake quarry for some time and attach these as examples. The captions indicate the date and time each shot was taken. The dust is quite difficult to capture with a phone camera. Some shots show the dust emitted better if you zoom in or expand the image. In the proponent's EIS executive summary on air quality impacts states that existing controls should be continued to control impacts of the expanded development. To me it is clear from evidence produced in the photographs that existing controls are failing to curtail dust emissions.

While working nearby, I have noticed increasing impacts of this development over the past five years, mainly in the form of visible airborne dust, but also in the forms of noise and vibration from quarrying activities such as blasting, heavy machinery activity like loading, increased traffic volumes, noise and road impacts, including unsafe road design and close calls with heavy vehicles. Whilst some of these effects are not directly attributable to the quarry, they are correlated.

#### **AIRBORNE PARTICULATES**

Our relative and carer (a pensioner in her 70's) has increasingly suffered from breathing problems, which have become more pronounced in recent years, especially after being outside on windy days. She has resided on the property since the 1980's, when there was just one small quarry with much smaller outputs, located generally down wind of her. This project has already detracted much from the peaceful country setting to which she moved and now it is potentially threatening her health and longevity.

We have experienced a dusty taste in the tank water, gritty feeling washing, excessive dust in and on her house and irritated eyes, nose and or throat on some days. Our relative complained about late-night truck movements disturbing her sleep. This resulted in a

meeting with Mr O'Neill from Gunlake. He offered her a number of fairly inadequate measures to combat the impacts, such as double glazing (only to the upper storey windows of her house), and air conditioning, which she couldn't afford to run, but in return he asked that she sign a document indemnifying his operation against litigation! As pathetic an attempt to ameliorate impacts as it is, it doesn't protect occupants from the impacts outside of the dwelling on the 30 Acre property nor does it allow for natural cooling or ventilation through windows and doors.

Additionally, the (known carcinogenic) diesel particulates emitted from the large number trucks, passing close to residences on Brayton Road is of concern, as well as quarry dust being unwittingly inhaled. We consider Gunlake's environmental **impacts** to be **poorly managed at present**, and therefore fail to see how the proposed development would be likely to operate with impacts reduced to an acceptable level. Such an operation would need to be fully enclosed with transport completely segregated at a suitable distance from dwellings.

We also have concerns for the health and safety of our children, myself at work, colleagues and relatives, working and/or living so close to this development in its current state of operation, due to the health effects of airborne silica and other harmful particles in **dust clouds which are frequently seen to be emitted by Gunlake quarry** (see photographs). For example: driving north along Brayton Road on 3 May 2016, I could see a plume of dust being blown from the WNW over the ridge directly over my relative's property. In the afternoon light of May 5 2016, on exiting the property where I work, I could clearly see what I consider to be a high concentration of dust wafting through the trees, from the direction of Gunlake (photo with smooth barked trees in foreground attached). It is often difficult to capture the dust with a phone camera. The dates on the photo's should at least serve as a record of when I attempted to capture dust visible to the eye.

## **ROAD AND TRAFFIC IMPACTS**

The number of trucks currently using Brayton Rd to convey quarry products is already at a point where their noise is an impost at our relative's home. If in conversation one often needs to speak up to be heard over trucks passing or pause the conversation until they are gone. Having to put up with this, is annoying. Prior to Gunlake's commencement, trucks were occasional and B-Doubles were not permitted. Additionally, the frequent use of exhaust brakes on a descent near her dwelling, exacerbates the problem. This vehicle noise was never a major issue prior Gunlake's commencement.

On several occasions I have encountered what appear to be trucks driving on the wrong side of the road to avoid areas with **damaged road surface**. For example look at the surface on the bend approaching Western side of Joaramin Creek bridge, (see attached pictures) of Eastbound lane on the Bypass Rd). It had been in this shocking state of repair without any warning signage for months, despite there being repair outline markings painted around

them. It was just patched this week and is already breaking up again. I regularly encounter trucks on the wrong side of the road on the bridge following this point. If the previous state of Brayton Rd is anything to go by, it won't be long until the newly refurbished roads revert to a patchwork quilt of pot-holes and 'squash-outs'. Any local can attest to the shocking state this road remained in for over ten years. Increasing truck movements will hasten and exacerbate this problem.

Trucks regularly appear to **speed** along Brayton and Bypass Roads. This is often evident when working by the roadside and when my children and carer have been waiting to cross the road or waiting at the school bus stop. Truck drivers driving dangerously are an impact which is out of the proponent's control. Reducing the speed limit cannot ensure safe driving habits and the low levels of policing do little to curtail this behaviour already.

The turn out from the bypass onto the Hume Highway is also, in my view, **sub-standard**, with a negative camber and no slip lane. How was this woefully constructed road ever allowed to open? Once again big business is permitted to go ahead to the detriment of local residents' safety and convenience (they have no choice but to use this dangerous road) and to add to the insult, the turning bay onto the South bound side of the highway was closed, so that someone wanting to head South now has several kilometres detour, either through Marulan or out the just as dangerous Northern end of Red Hills/Wollumbi Road.

The **construction standard of the bypass road** is unacceptable and proving to be dangerous when combined with the current number of trucks – let alone the number proposed. The proponent cannot control these impacts and they are likely to increase along with a higher volume of trucks on the road.

For example: recently I encountered a driver attempting to reverse his truck and dog like a drunk snake down the Western incline of the bypass road after it had gearbox issues with the ridiculously steep pass. Its tracks can still be seen weaving across both lanes for roughly 200 metres down the hill.

Is this road built to the correct standard? Should it not at least have passing lanes? These road safety impacts are unacceptable. The roads obviously need to be built to a better standard. There is little the proponent can do to mitigate these types of impact therefore they should be obliged to come up with an acceptable transport solution. The proponent's option of a dedicated haul road to the South Marulan overpass and a rail link are the only acceptable options to avoid absolute chaos (noise impacts) and a constant state of disrepair (road safety) on Brayton Rd.

## ROADSIDE LITTER

Working to farm maintain boundary fences, I have noticed high levels of roadside litter, predominantly in the form of non-alcoholic drink containers along the haul route (for example, on 2 May 2016 while checking for fallen trees, I picked up seventeen pieces of this kind of litter washed under the boundary fence from a single roadside, drain). Whilst this litter cannot be proven to come entirely from quarry trucks, I can be pretty sure that's where much of it comes from, as the amount I find beyond Gunlake's haul route or along Canyonleigh Road is far less. This is an example of an **unacceptable indirect impact upon the local environment and water catchments**, which will increase in proportion with this development's expansion. The proponent can have little mitigating effect on these types of impact.

### PROPERTY VALUES

I was told by a local resident who'd had valuations carried out that their land value dropped by hundreds of thousands after Gunlake quarry commenced operation. This quarry has a financial impact on the lifelong investments of those living nearby.

### NOISE AND VIBRATION

For local residents, the **truck noise at present traffic volumes**, along the haul route **no longer allows peaceful enjoyment of the country setting**, for which most of them moved to the area initially. Nor does the noise and vibration of blasting and crushing of rock. Allowing the proposed 440 truck movements per day, and processing around the clock can only compound impacts such as this.

The noise from trucks is already affecting residents' sleep and where additional guard-rails have been recently placed, the reflected noise adds to the noise impact. **Current noise levels are already unacceptable**. It is not reasonable to subject local residents to this type of impact.

Around the residences and sheds on the property where I work, the noise from gravel trucks on Brayton Rd is already intrusive upon the peace and quiet of the country setting. While they would be over a Kilometre away, with the prevailing winds they sound like they are within one hundred metres. I dread the thought of the noise impacts from nearly three times as many trucks and at all hours. I feel for the owners and their elderly relatives who reside there.

With proposed pit expansion bringing these impacts to within 1.6km of our relative's residence, we feel that their effects will be significantly more noticeable at the dwelling where our children are cared for and our elderly relative resides full-time.

With hours of operation increasing to outside the hours of a normal working day, I feel that these impacts will be **an unreasonable impost on local residents' right to a good night's sleep and peaceful existence.**

## CONCLUSION

The impacts at the present level make us want to leave the area, but we consider the current and proposed impacts would hamper resale opportunities and reduce property values, making this process excessively difficult and stressful. We believe current property values would have increased far more if this quarry development didn't exist. Increasing truck volumes to 440 per day and extending operating hours will only serve to worsen all associated impacts. Our carer and relative feels trapped and surrounded by quarrying operations. Nobody in their right mind would buy a farm near this quarry if they fully understood its impacts, current and potential. We fully object to all current and proposed future operations of Gunlake Quarry. It is a blight on our landscape and a threat to our health and livelihood.

**We consider the current scale of the proponent's operation to already have unacceptable impacts and that its expansion should not be permitted.** In fact, more needs to be done to mitigate the existing impacts. One must assume that these impacts will increase their effects if this quarry is allowed to expand in size and be in closer proximity to private residences.

If this development is permitted to go ahead, then the proponent or the permitting authority should be obliged to buy out and compensate any residents who feel they are being affected by its impacts. No matter how small the number of nearby residents, the seriousness of the impacts on them still needs to be considered. The only acceptable means of preventing this development impacting on the health and well-being of local residents is to acquire a large enough buffer zone around the development, so that the nearest residences receive 'normal background levels' of dust, vibration and noise and by establishing suitable alternate transport means ie. Rail and dedicated exclusive haul route OR by not permitting the proposed expansion to proceed.

Ultimately, if this development is allowed to go ahead without protecting local residents, I believe the State Government could potentially be found liable for the effects of related impacts. Please don't put long established local residents in such a stressful predicament, whereby Government controls fail to protect their wellbeing and rights to continue to exist in a quiet country setting with clean air, where they chose to live prior to this development. This development has already detracted greatly from the local setting and should not be allowed to expand. **Tighter environmental constraints need to be placed on the existing operation or it should be shut down.**

Yours sincerely, 'concerned locals'

**Appendix 1 Photographs of dust emissions**

**Most of the photos were taken on different dates from around mid 2015 to present.**

**Details can be provided of dates and locations on request. More photos available also.**

**See next page**











Figure 1 Dust in air looking NW 30.3.16



Figure 2 Faint dust plume blowing Eastward





Figure 3 4.5.16 14:57



Figure 4 18.5.16 Brayton Rd looking West over Quarry