

Dear Sir/Madam,

I'm writing to you regarding my concerns about the Brandy Hill Quarry expansion and would like to reiterate that Brandy hill is a residential area, which currently has a population of around 700 residents.

We purchased our property along Brandy Hill Drive in 2012 knowing that the quarry existed at the end of the road and were quite accepting of the status. However, in 2013 Hanson announced their expansion plans, which is why I would like to raise my concerns.

My concerns are outlined below:

Traffic and Noise:

My alarm is set for work at 5 am and currently there are already trucks going to the quarry at this hour. It's loud and noisy and the sound carries much farther than during the day. My concern is our quality of sleep, we can put up with the **current** number of trucks starting early at this hour but it will be unbearable if this carries on all through the night.

The EIS states that at present their peak hourly traffic volume is 84 vehicle trips per hour (vtp), which equates to 1.4 quarry trucks per minute going along Brandy Hill Drive. The EIS further states that the expansion will see 904 vtpd or 150 vtp, which is 2.5 trucks per minute. This traffic is quarry trucks alone and does not account for the other vehicles that utilise Brandy Hill drive.

The EIS states:

"Sidra modelling of the local road network with the additional traffic generated by this proposal added to existing traffic has shown that both the Clarence Town Road / Brandy Hill Drive and Brandy Hill Drive / Seaham Road intersections will continue to operate satisfactorily at least through to 2044."

I don't believe this statement is true and I cannot see that the roads will be able to operate satisfactorily with the increased volume of traffic. Please note that I'm sure others will have more accurate figures than what I have provided.

My husband works from home and is affected now by the current traffic noise and frequency of the trucks going along Brandy Hill Drive. In 2016, there was a large increase in quarry trucks, I believe from Martins Creek Quarry, and the constant frequency and noise from the vehicles was aggravating, however this will only be a small fraction of what it will be like if the expansion is granted.

When I leave for work, 80% of the time there are trucks waiting to turn right at the intersection of Brandy Hill and Seaham Roads. The traffic at this hour on Seaham Rd is at a minimum and only increases from this time onward. There are many vehicles turning from connecting roads onto Seaham road that will also feel the impact if the trucks increase. For example there have been countless times that I have witnessed vehicles backed up from the beginning of the bridge on Raymond Terrace road waiting to turn right onto Seaham Road. This is nearly 1 km of traffic waiting to cross onto Seaham road and this is with the current traffic load at peak hour. This will only exacerbate if the trucks increase. The trucks also turn right from Seaham Rd into Raymond terrace road, which will only slow traffic more so.

Road degradation:

The road on Brandy Hill drive does not get maintained well. We have potholes and large areas that are affected by the heavy trucks now. Increased loads will only adversely affect the road surface and create more areas of degradation.

Quality of life and Safety:

If the expansion is approved then the 24/7 truck noise will simply become intolerable and will affect our quality of life.

My husband and I are avid pushbike riders and usually ride from home on a Sunday (or weekday evenings in daylight savings time). This will cease if the trucks increase.

I reported a near miss to Hanson in 2015 when my husband was nearly hit by one of their trucks on a weekday morning ride. He was riding on a section of Brandy Hill Drive that was clearly visible to both directions of traffic; we are unsure if it was a lapse of judgment or a deliberate act by the truck driver, however the truck missed him by barely 1 inch and nearly knocked him off the road. If he wasn't an experienced rider it would have pushed him off the road or caused him to fall into the trailer wheels. It frightened him immensely and he rang me at work when he returned home. It was then that we made our decision to not ride between 6am-6pm weekdays or Saturday mornings, but only when the trucks had ceased. How will we ride if the trucks are 24/7?

Not only is it not safe to ride bikes when trucks are in operation, it is difficult to walk/jog, as there are no safe verges along Brandy Hill Drive. There is nothing in the EIS that says that Hanson will address this issue either, but simply their suggestion of Port Stephens Council to implement paths and safe bus stops for pedestrians.

In Appendix 8 of the EIS Hanson state that there will be no adverse impact on the local road network. The EIS also states:

“Much of the road noise issues and residential amenity issues associated with heavy vehicle traffic can be controlled through the preparation and implementation of a Traffic Management Plan and Driver Code of Conduct for the quarry.”

I disagree, Hanson is unable to demonstrate or ensure the safety of the pedestrians, other road users or minimise noise now, and therefore they won't be able to manage this effectively if they increase their output.

Brandy Hill is a suburban area with nearly 700 residents. There are families with schoolchildren who walk along and cross over Brandy Hill drive to get to the bus stops. These bus stops aren't the safest now and the expansion of the quarry will only create more danger.

There is a preschool along Seaham Road that is very busy when parents drop off and pick up their children. Cars are parked along the side of Seaham road leaving the minimum room for large vehicles to travel pass. It is an unsafe area to be picking up children and will become more so if the trucks increase.

House prices

I'm concerned of the devaluation of our houses if this expansion is approved. Brandy hill is a community that people like to live in, we all accept the current status of the quarry, however, if this expansion is approved then our house prices will be adversely affected. Brandy hill has always maintained strong capital growth and we would envisage that it would remain this way. However, many articles and studies show that when the traffic increases, the house values drop, and people often will not buy a house that is effected by traffic noise.

An article from property update states:

"In Australia though, we live according to our traditionally hotter climate and as such, have houses built more for good ventilation than noise suppression.

Additionally, most of us enjoy the great outdoors and the customary ritual of a summer "barby"; and we'd rather not have to listen to passing traffic while enjoying the company of friends and family.

But excessive noise is not the only reason I warn clients away from properties on main roads; there are plenty of convincing arguments why main roads are definitely a real estate no-no..."

Sourced from: <http://propertyupdate.com.au/why-main-roads-are-a-real-estate-no-no/>

Unfortunately, if this expansion is approved, then Brandy Hill Drive will not be a residential road but become an industrial road that is heavily utilised by trucks. This will be a major deterrent for potential property buyers and will decrease house values in the area.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission, there is much more that I could say but I hope that it has highlighted some of our main concerns.

Thanks again for your time

Kim