

Submission re Eagleton Quarry Application No. SSD 7332.

Applicant Eagleton Rock Quarry Syndicate

Please find attached my submission in relation to an application by Eagleton Rock Quarry Syndicate Lot 2 DP 1108702 Barleigh Ranch Way Eagleton.

Introduction

A rock quarry at 176 Winston Rd Eagleton has already proved to be problematic as Port Stephen Council fought unsuccessfully to stop the operation of this small-scale quarry. The Winston Rd quarry had sunset clause requiring it cease operation after five years and be limited in the volume of material that could be removed, it had no legal approval to use crushers on site and despite all this the quarry continues to operate with limited conditions of consent, dust, noise and impact on local water supplies from silt run off have all been ignored by the local Council and the EPA. The locals can have little faith that any controls for a quarry of massively larger proportions in the area will be any better managed and controlled regardless of the strict conditions imposed.

Impact on water Supplies.

The most critical and important natural resource to mankind is certainly not rock minerals and its associated by products but rather fresh clean water that allows our community to live in a safe and healthy environment. Water is the basis of life and without it a secure safe clean water supply, then it's all over.

The area proposed for this mega quarry is highly sensitive to water runoff and any potential contamination makes its way through both seven-mile creek and runoff to the Ballicker canal transferring its liquid gold directly into Grahamstown dam. The resource representing an extremely important water supply for the Newcastle region providing some 75% of Newcastle drinking water supply.

The construction of holding ponds and swales will do nothing to hold back the flow from the quarry as the damaging flows that carry high quantities of silt only occur with major down pours usually occurring in lengthy wet periods when the ground is saturated. Therefore, holding ponds and ground adsorption is at its lowest capacity in wet periods resulting a large-scale erosion and silt transfer to natural and manmade water transfer canals leading to Grahamstown Dam. The soils in this area are both thin and fragile consisting clay based minerals that are fine and provide an excellent base for agriculture soils holding minerals and organic material but highly vulnerable to erosion in high volume rain periods.

Vegetation and wildlife.

The Koala in Port Stephens is rapidly becoming a threatened species as the peninsula sees its vegetation broken into small and separated fragments. There are several threatened species of both flora and fauna that have been observed in this area and further detailed independent investigation is warranted to protect EEC's and trigger species impact studies.

The Koala is being forced into small pockets of vegetation on the Port Stephens Peninsula and the western forested area of our community represents the last opportunity to preserve this unique Australian icon. The increase in noise dust and traffic are added threats to the koala's survival as stress add to outbreaks of Chlamydia associated with anxiety and stress of these animals when their habitat is threatened.

Local home industries live in harmony with the fauna e.g. the Eagleton Ridge respite care facility, this business employs a relatively large numbers of people (25 has been quoted and set to grow) with low impact on the environment and flora and fauna.

Transport Impacts and Risk

The intention to increase truck movements on any of the roads in the area including Six mile Rd, Italia Rd and Barleigh Ranch Way is of great concern as these roads generally follow the topography to minimize road cuttings and vegetation removal and they generally follow boundary lines and therefore cannot be altered without extensive civil works and vegetation removal.

These roads are relatively safe for small commercial and private vehicles but large bulk handling trucks and dogs add serious risk to residents and contractors using these roads, as they are narrow with poor vision, little road edge with deep drainage and wash aways.

The large volume of additional heavy vehicles places residents at risk and will destroy the roads rapidly. The amount of levy funds collected from the quarry operation and passed to Council will not cover the cost of grading or filling pothole's in any one year quoted at some \$25,000

The intersection from any road in the Eagleton area intersecting with the M1 Motorway is seriously hazardous regardless of 100 or 110 km per hour restrictions day and night and without considerable acceleration and deceleration lanes in highly visible areas these intersections represent black spots for the motoring public. Heavily loaded trucks attempting to cross double lane north bound traffic to negotiate and travel south with truck and dogs, noting most of the mined material will head towards the Sydney metropolitan area. The Port Stephens Council have been working with Raymond terrace north development and RMS require flyover construction to facilitate this development, unless a similar style connection can be conditioned then motorists will be at risk.

Currently Boral trucks are turning left at Italia Rd and driving to the Medowie intersection they then must negotiate to cross the M1 100 km per hour twin lane highway then run through the middle of the residential community of Medowie. Medowie residents would like heavy transport to stay on the highway and not place its residents at risk where 50 km per hour restriction apply and large pedestrian numbers are encountered at the Ferodale intersection roundabout, additional heavy vehicles ads risk to local communities like Medowie.

Impact on residential amenity and employment.

The topography in and around the proposed quarry site is dotted with private residents, these residents have settled in the area to enjoy the natural environment graze a few horses and bring up children in an environment that is close to our forbearers experience while enjoying the benefits of modern facilities. They have installed water treatment facilities so they are largely self-sufficient with water supplies dependent on dam and tank storage, installed solar panels for hot water and solar panels to generate power self-sufficient, grow their own vegetables and fruit trees, recycle organic manures and take care of local wild life. The installation of massive quarry at their backdoor not only places their amenity under threat and their ability to continue to operate live in high self-sufficient environment.

Dust will impact water storage and supplies settling on roof tops, gutters and exposed water supplies, run off from water in the quarry catchment will silt up creeks and dams contaminating water storage sources. Monitoring achieves nothing, all it tells you is the water supplies and storage have been contaminated after the event when it's all too late.

Noise will be an issue as it is impossible to operate a gravel quarry without associated explosives, crushing machinery, earth moving equipment and material handling trucks and maintain the level marginally above natural ambient noise levels, it just cannot be achieved. I have lived for 37 years in a rural residential environment and the open space results in more noise transfer because of the lack of physical barriers and noise adsorption than in denser living residential location.

This quarry operation is described as providing 10 full time employment positions. I would dispute this as most jobs will be provided to contractors operating trucks for transport and development applicants always overstate employment opportunities. This operation places at risk current sustainable eco-friendly businesses that employ many times this number of employees right now with more to come if the environment is not destroyed by the proposed venture.

We already have video and photographic evidence of the impact of dust imposed on neighbors from the Winston rd. quarry, a tiny operation in comparison with this proposal so there is absolutely no argument to support the applicant's assertion they will manage dust with sprinklers and reduced operation on windy days. These controls are reactive

and rely on the operator placing schedules and production volumes at risk with pressure to fulfill orders so it will become a case of constant complaints from the residents and authorities such as EPA chasing constant complaints. Water and rock crusher tailings become a problem with clumping and machinery blockages added to boggy access surfaces so damping will be avoided where possible.

Impact on the visible landscape.

The proposal to remove a substantial natural mountainous mass in this quarry operation is destructive in so many ways, visually, drainage, removal of noise barriers, destruction of water flows and wind rain patterns etc. Mining by its very nature if it not chasing seams underground, then open cut operations are highly destructive and you only need to travel to the Hunter valley to see the massive destruction of agricultural land that future generations will condemn us for re-open cut coal mining.

Digging up a mountain scars the landscape forever; it cannot be restored and the topography that has been mounded and formed over millions of years is changed to the point that new water ways will develop, rain patterns will shift, wind impacts patterns change and noise will impact on residents will increase. Removal of the proposed hill over time impacts on visual appearance and reduces noise protection to residents from the existing Boral quarry operations. The removal of this natural barrier adds together both noise from the Seaham and the Eagleton quarry's potentially exceeding any allowable increase in DbA levels above the ambient noise level.

A mining operation should be about minimal impact on the environment and the owner's ability to restore the area following completion of the project. I understand that there is no sinking fund proposed for restoration of the mined area. Rock quarries by their nature result in large scale material volume removable with resulting scars to the landscape that last forever unless there is massive upheaval from volcanic or earth quake activity and this is unlikely occur in this stable geographic location.

In Summary.

There are numerous hard rock quarries throughout the lower Hunter with more than adequate capacity to supply the growing southern market with a doubling of capacity being sought by both Hanson's Brandy Hill quarry and the Daracon operation at Martins creek facility, these DA's are both currently being assessed by your department.

The major reason you should reject this application is:

- Impact on the Newcastle & Hunter water Supply
- Impact on the water supplies and health of the local community
- Impact on the amenity re noise in the local community

- Hi risk to local road users and increased risk to M1 highway users.
- Impact on the local flora and fauna
- Impact on the visible landscape
- Impact and possible loss of employment for local people in environmentally sensitive activities

[REDACTED]