

Eagleton Residents Action Group

14th March 2017

Planning Services
Department of Planning and
Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY, N.S.W. 2001



ATTN: Minster for Planning

REF: Opposing the Eagleton Hardrock Quarry Development

Application No: SSD7332

Location: Lot 2 DP1108702, Barleigh Ranch Way, Eagleton

Applicant: Eagleton Rock Syndicate Pty. Ltd

The Eagleton Residents Action Group wish to lodge an objection to the proposed Eagleton Hardrock Quarry. In our opinion, we feel this development is inappropriate for this location, due to its proximity to existing residents and location within the Grahamstown Dam catchment.

We object to this development on the following grounds:

- 1 Economic, Social and Health Impact
- 2 Water Management
- 3 Environmental Impact
- 4 Traffic Issues
- 5 Dust
- 6 Acoustic Impact
- 7 Requests/ Actions

1. ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND HEALTH IMPACT

- 1.1. Lack of information by EIS on how quarrying will impact community and how possible impacts will be addressed. The EIS does not consider any social impacts.
- 1.2. Lack of community consultation before DA was submitted, by developer, to the Department of Planning. Only six residents were consulted and then a letter drop leaflet announcing that the DA is now on exhibition.
- 1.3. The economic and social benefits put forward in the EIS does not outweigh the benefits that an existing business "Eagleton Ridge Respite Centre" currently brings to the community. The Respite Centre is a facility that houses people with a disability and serves as a respite to families who are carers for people with high needs. The noise and dust impact from the proposed development could dramatically affect their clients and thus forcing this business to withdraw its service. If this was to happen than 25 employees would lose their jobs and this would have a wider impact on the local community, as the majority live in the immediate area. It will also impact the availability of placement for the NDIS, which is currently under supply.
- 1.4. No health risk analysis has been carried out, of the impact of this quarry, so close to residence. There are concerns of silica dust that has a potential risk to health. An overall assessment has not determined the level of risk that dust/noise would have on residence and the consequent mental health issues that arise from such problems. As a result, this leaves a possibility for litigation that could prove costly to the tax payer.
- 1.5. Diminished property values. This development will adversely affect property values in the area, including the proposed Kings Hill subdivision.
- 1.6. Financial loss – landholders will be unable to rent properties. Small businesses such as agisting horses or the Respite Centre for people with disabilities will suffer. The EIS does not cover or mention reimbursement for the financial impact this development could impose on existing businesses and property owners.

2. WATER MANAGEMENT

- 2.1. The proposed development poses a significant threat to the integrity of the catchment of Grahamstown Dam, which supplies the greater Newcastle region with drinking water.
- 2.2. Because a percentage of the Hunter's catchment has been affected by the "red zone", that is, the Williamstown PFOS/PFOA debacle, the Grahamstown Catchment should have a higher risk assessment for any developments, within the existing catchment, that could potential contamination the Hunter's water supply for drinking

- 2.3. A Sinclair Knight Merz (2008) analysis of Hunter Water Supply capacity and projected demand for water, showed that by 2025, Hunter water users will be demanding 85GL of water per year. This will result in a 1 in 25 chance of level one restrictions, with ongoing issues with PFOS/PFOA, with the Tomago Sand Beds, which provides approximately 20% of water usage, and potential, due to low rainfalls in the Williams River, which is vulnerable to outbreaks of blue-green algae, it is imperative that Grahamstown catchment be protected at all costs.
- 2.4. The EIS states that water available on site will be greater than demand for Quarry life, hence water management will always be an issue during periods of high rainfall as experienced recently. There should be a zero discharge limit applied. Any discharge should be required to be treated on site
- 2.5. Retention dams should be built to a 500 year ARI storm event as per other existing DAs in the catchment.



Photo 1: Ranch MX (MX Central) after rain event 4th March 2017

- 2.6. In two very recent occasions when Italia Road flooded, April super storm 2015 and January 2016, large quantities of water via the canal and via Seven Mile Creek (where waters are piped underneath the Pacific Highway) flowed into the Dam. This would be exacerbated with another quarry in the area, with very high potential for contamination.
- 2.7. The property is also subject to illegal tile dumping which is currently polluting the catchment, and has been ongoing for 10 years – still not resolved. This needs to be determined first before any development can proceed.

- 2.8. Under Hunter Water Special Areas Regulation, we understand, that the Director General, may give a direction for the removal of any substance in a special area to be relocated to another place in that area. Has the proponent sought this permission?

3. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 3.1. The State Government recognise that the koala's habitats, across the state, is under threat. This development will have a likely significantly impact on the local koala population, which is an unacceptable risk and threats to other vulnerable flora and fauna species are too great.
- 3.2. The subject site contains significant numbers of *eucalyptus punctate* trees. Since 2002, acknowledgment of this tree species as important, it is now commonly accepted by Port Stephens Council and the CKPOM steering committee and local experts, that koalas are known to use both *eucalyptus tereticormis* and *eucalyptus punctate* in this area and koalas have been located on this site and surrounds.

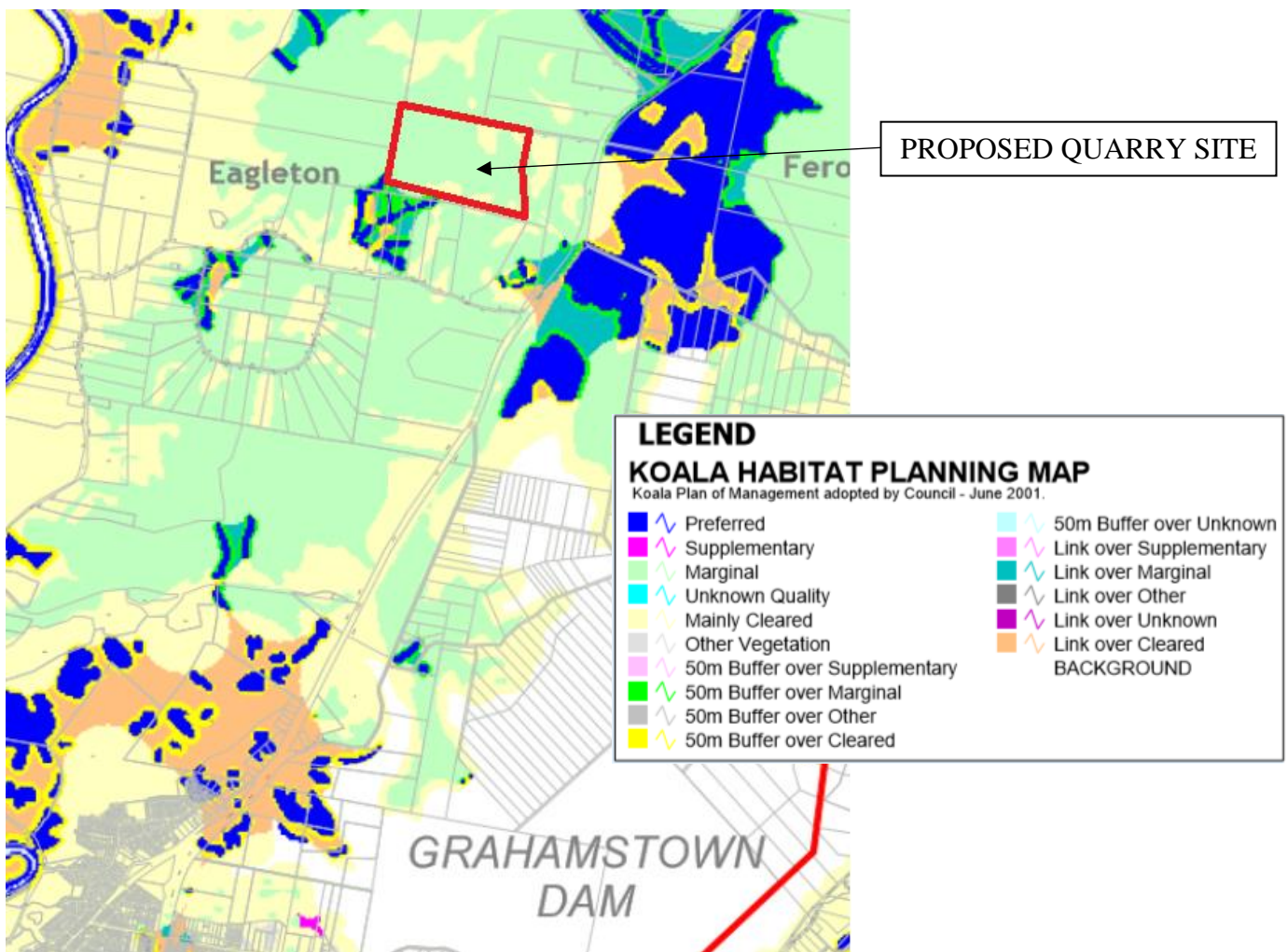


Figure 1: Koala Habitat Map for Port Stephens

- 3.3. Overall the site is used by koalas as stated in surveys and we demand that an extensive survey be conducted over a minimum of twelve months, to fully assess the species on site.



Photo 2: Koala on adjoining property 21st February 2017

- 3.4. The proposed development plans on destroying, and completely dismissing the importance of the Wallaroo/Raymond Terrace wildlife corridor. The regional corridor will be unacceptably impacted upon and while it may still perform a role as a corridor and habitat, this role will be clearly diminished by its reduction in size.
- 3.5. The removal of 30 hectares of native vegetation can have an adverse impact on local biodiversity. The site supports a range of threatened species and provides habitat for native flora and fauna. Isolating fauna from their potential food source and habitat.
- 3.6. The noise impacts will also have a damaging effect on wildlife, driving them further into the surrounds, and away from their chosen habitat.
- 3.7. The increase in the incidence of bushfire should not be disregarded. The bushfire assessment given in the proposal concentrates mainly on the effect of fire on the facility. Fires can spread quickly into adjoining properties, without warning.

- 3.8. Light pollution that can be seen, will be intrusive to rural character of area.
- 3.9. For the EIS, spotlighting for terrestrial mammals (and other fauna groups) was undertaken for a total of six person hours across all survey events on the 15-16th January 2013, how can this survey thoroughly acknowledge the species on the entire site? What about seasonal change to species habit for the remainder of the year?
- 3.10. As per EIS a number of threatened fauna species listed on the TSC Act 1995 and or the EPBC Act were detected in the study area, including the Spotted Harrier, Brown Treecreeper, Black Falcon, Square-tailed Kite, the Grey-crowned Babblers, the Large-eared Pied Bat, Eastern False Pipistrelle, Little Bentwing Bat, Eastern Freetail-bat, Southern Myotis, Eastern Cave Bat, Rufous Fantail and the Koala, were recorded as vulnerable.
- 3.11. EIS states that the proposal would retain 58.8ha within the study area as a bio-banking agreement as part of their off-set, where is the rest of the off-set to be established?
- 3.12. Proponent would retain the suitable Koala and Southern Myotis habitat in the study area (approximately 80% and 69%), therefore one could say that 20% of Koala habitat and 31% of Southern Myotis habitat would be lost.
- 3.13. EIS assessment also included a likelihood that a total of 26 threatened for a species and 8 EPBC Act – listed migratory species were likely to be potentially impacted by proposed development.
- 3.14. Once again, the need for quarried material, which is plentiful in the Hunter area does not support the need to harm the threaten species of flora and fauna present on the greenfield site.
- 3.15. Was the environmental surveys carried out before or after Circuit Italia Raceway cleared an extensive area of habitat for their approved development? Hence affecting the impact of this clearing and compounding the need for this site to remain untouched.
- 3.16. Port Stephens Council internal conservation assessment finds the subject land parcel has a high to very high conservative value, and established a number of threatened species are known to occur within the site and locality. Councils GIS indicates that the subject potential contains vegetation communities commensurate with the endangered ecological community (EEC) lower Hunter Valley dry rainforest.
- 3.17. A rehabilitation fund needs to be setup prior to the operation of quarry. A guaranteed availability of money, especially if the developing company “folds”. This would ensure the site can be fully restored to a natural habitat.
- 3.18. The quarry operator should be required to commence replanting as soon as each bench has ceased operations. This would enable trees over a large sector of the site to be providing habitat and water filtration as the quarry develops. Surety of site if the company goes into liquation before 30 years of consent.

- 3.19. Poor assessment in the EIS of impact on dependent ecosystems. Request that the footprint of quarry be smaller and biodiversity offset areas to be enlarged to cater for endangered flora and fauna.

4. TRAFFIC ISSUES

- 4.1. The development application predicts 170 truck movements per day when the quarry meets full capacity, plus deliveries, such as, fuels, spare parts, staff, contractors, etc. These are additional to the existing traffic using the Italia Road/Pacific Highway intersection.
- 4.2. Currently there is limited visibility for vehicles entering the Pacific Highway from Italia Road, from north bound traffic. Even though heading north the highway speed drops to 100km/h before the intersection, very few vehicles obey the speed limit, particularly in the holiday periods. Making it very difficult to cross two lanes of highway in a car let alone a semi-trailer truck.
- 4.3. In addition to that we have grave concerns about the entry for the quarry via Barleigh Ranch Way, being so close to the Pacific Highway. On many occasions local residents have been brought to a sudden stop after exiting the highway onto Italia Road, when after coming around the first bend, they have approached a very slow moving landscape truck entering that very road. With additional large trucks using this entry for the proposed quarry there could potentially be a line-up of many vehicles reaching out to and onto the Pacific Highway. This would greatly impede the visibility for any traffic turning left or right out of Italia Road onto the Pacific Highway, making it extremely dangerous.
- 4.4. Local residents are concerned that the intersection of Italia Road and Pacific Highway will become too congested for the trucks, that they will start to head west along Italia Road to avoid any delays. This, with the expected addition of increased local traffic, at the completion of the sealing of East Seaham Road, through to Clarence Town, will only degrade the road surface further.
- 4.5. The proposal's council levee is inadequate to repair the damage that Italia Road would endure. Truck movement need to be restricted, to head east from the development, onto the Pacific Highway only.
- 4.6. Public safety will be affected, as the number of "near misses" will hugely increase at the intersection of Italia Road and Pacific Highway.
- 4.7. Currently there can be a 10 - 15 minute wait for local traffic as trucks try to enter the highway. This will increase naturally.
- 4.8. The traffic study was carried out during a 'quiet phase', for a limited period. If the study was conducted during the extensive school holiday period the result would have been dramatically different.
- 4.9. No real data on potential traffic using Barleigh Ranch Way intersection and Italia Road, when Circuit Italia Raceway, Paint Ball, Ranch MX (MX Central),

Gardenland, and MG Car Club, have traffic departing and arriving at these locations, particularly when two or more of these facilities are using this intersection at the same time.

- 4.10. No upgrade to Italia Road/Pacific Highway intersection, despite medium-high risk allocated to intersection in independent road safety audit. Only offered additional traffic signs and line marking. If the quarry is approved, then the intersection of Italia Rd and the highway will need to be upgraded, that is, the intersection will require a complete redesign, adjusting heights to the approach from Italia Road, to help improve truck movements. The redesign should extend from the Pacific Highway intersection to and including the Barleigh Ranch Way.

5. DUST

- 5.1. Another quarry in the area will significantly increase the dust contamination to our tank water. This is an increase cost to residence for tank cleaning, roof cleaning, solar panel cleaning, and window cleaning. This, we believe, should be compensated for, to all residence affected.
- 5.2. Dust will settle on our solar panel, reducing their efficiency, they will need to be clean more often, which will take more of our personal time.
- 5.3. The dust and blasting residue in the air could adversely affect asthma suffers.
- 5.4. Proposal does not detail staged shutdown during adverse weather conditions, where PM10 particulates would exceed criteria set, or system in place to warn residents in the immediate area.
- 5.5. Air quality (Ch7.6) Only one AQ monitoring station committed. How is dust to be mitigated during weekends and holidays periods when dust is blowing onto neighbouring properties onto roofs, solar panels and into drinking water tanks?
- 5.6. EIS does not detail weather conditions onsite, it only relates to Williamtown data which is outdated.
- 5.7. What emission controls are used to keep dust down on stock piles, benches and quarry floor?
- 5.8. What trigger points are used to suppress dust?
- 5.9. Who do the residents, who feel they are being adversely affected by dust, contact for help, to reduce the dust issue?
- 5.10. In the Western Australian's EPA Guidance for Assessment of Environmental Factors – No 3, 2005, state that extractive industries, such as a hardrock quarries, that impact noise/dust, have a minimum buffer of 1000m. This is definitely not the case for this development.
- 5.11. All screens/conveyors to have dust suppressers which include covers over belts and water sprays.

- 5.12. Proponent to cease topsoil stripping when wind is blowing towards affect properties.
- 5.13. A continuous PM10 monitor to be onsite at all times and monitors placed in neighbouring properties, to take place in different wind conditions for local area.
- 5.14. The developer will need to provide, residents most affected by dust, a paid cleaning service and compensation for extra water used to help reduce the dust on surfaces, especially during dry periods.

6. ACOUSTIC IMPACT

- 6.1. Some residents already have a degree of impact from the operations of the existing Boral Hardrock Quarry with blasting, vibrations and occasional noise issues despite them doing their utmost to minimise the effect on the community. Fortunately, at the moment this impact is nowhere near as severe as it could be as we have a decent buffer zone of vegetation and large hill separating us from their operations and absorbing the majority of the noise, dust, etc – the exact same hill the developer wants to quarry.
- 6.2. The removal of the hillside will only compound the exposure, for residents of Winston and Six-Mile Road, to the Boral Quarry, Circuit Italia Motorway, and Ranch MX (MX Central) Motorbike track.
- 6.3. Noise issues will also be a major concern with heavy machinery operating at all hours without much respite, according to the ludicrous proposed hours of operation being tabled.
- 6.4. Noise modelling has not taken into account the different heights of benches that noise sources would make with different temperature inversions.
- 6.5. No modelling has taken place for excavators with rock hammers used to break large rocks into smaller rocks (commonly used in all quarries).
- 6.6. No tolerance has been allowed for inversion layers. Noise modelling indicates that the quarry operations will be reaching their acoustic exceedances on normal operations.
- 6.7. EIS is not clear on whether production plant will be fully enclosed and also what height are the proposed noise barriers.
- 6.8. No noise modelling done with temperature inversions in place.
- 6.9. Projected noise levels have been averaged out, but EIS does not provide detail on peak noise levels that would cause intrusiveness, such as loading trucks and drilling.
- 6.10. What procedures will be put in place to ensure that Boral Quarry and the Proponent will not blast on the same day or time?

- 6.11. All power plants such as screens, crushers, stackers should be electric powered, from the commencement of quarry operations, to mitigate noise sources as well as potential pollution to waterways.
- 6.12. No reversing beepers to be allowed on site including contractor and deliveries, instead vehicles to be fitted with a BBS-TEC backup alarm, which is a broadband reversing alarm or similar device.
- 6.13. Proponent to provide double glazed windows to noise affect properties.
- 6.14. We request the developer, to monitor noise, with an all-day logger, at residents' dwelling. Noise monitoring to be conduct for a full day of sale/operations and not 15 minute intervals.

7. REQUEST/ACTION

- 7.1. Proponent to reduce working hours to 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 7am to 12pm Saturday, for operations and sales due to the proximities to residential dwellings and cumulative noise sources from existing nearby businesses.
- 7.2. The proponent to inform residents of blast and time and monitoring at requested location, to assess impact of blast.
- 7.3. The new quarry will need to provide to us a paid cleaning service and compensation for extra water used to help reduce the dust on surfaces, especially during dry periods.
- 7.4. Have the developer redesign the intersection of the Pacific Highway and Italia Road, to meet the same standards that the RMS has placed on the flyover for the new Kings Hill intersection from the Pacific Highway. The reconstruction should go all the way to and including the intersection of Barleigh Ranch Way with Italia Road.
- 7.5. All monitoring of dust/noise/water equipment is to be electronically connected to a website setup by the Department of Environment and Climate Change and updated in real-time. The website is to be available to any member of the public. This is required for residents to be aware of potential health risks and compliance of approval conditions.
- 7.6. Request developer to setup a community consultative group to resolve possible impacts and issues and communicate with residents.
- 7.7. Monitoring that reflects community exposure is imperative in order to estimate any potential risk to community.
- 7.8. Proponent to provide ducted air-conditioning to affect properties who cannot open windows due to the intrusiveness of acoustic and dust impact.
- 7.9. Some residents may require double-glazed windows to be installed, due to resident's need to sleep during the day, after a night shift.
- 7.10. Proponent to have a 24 hour contact, in case of complaints or emergencies.
- 7.11. We want the social impact of the proposal to be investigated in greater detail, to assess the impact of dust/noise and the mental health implications of exposure to these factors.

- 7.12. We want the environmental impact tested against their modelling. After all the site is used by koalas, as stated in surveys and we demand that an extensive survey be conducted over a minimum of twelve months, to fully assess the species on site.
- 7.13. The quarry operator should be required to commence replanting as soon as each bench has ceased operations. This would enable trees over a large sector of the site to be providing habitat and water filtration as the quarry develops. Surety of site if the company goes into liquidation before 30 years of consent.
- 7.14. All biodiversity areas should be listed and a management plan installed before quarrying activities commence.
- 7.15. Request that the footprint of quarry be smaller and biodiversity offset areas to be enlarged to cater for endangered flora and fauna.
- 7.16. Retention dams should be built to a 500 year ARI storm event as per other existing DAs in the catchment.
- 7.17. The developer is adamant that rock hammers are not required, therefore the consent conditions should prevent any use of rock hammers before, during or after the operation of the quarry, including during construction of infrastructure.


Residents moved here for the “quiet rural life”, to get away from the “city life”, they purposely sought out a rural property to enjoy the rural and agricultural lifestyle, and the activities associated with this.

The proposed development has no place in close proximity to the Newcastle regions drinking water and existing residential dwellings. The potential impact on the environment, surrounding landholders’ quality of life is completely unacceptable.

I hope that the Department of Planning will take all our concerns into account. Please notify us of your decision with regard to the Development Application as soon as possible.

The Eagleton Resident Action Group request a meeting with major planning and request a reply to our submission.

Kind regards

 on behalf of E.R.A.G.