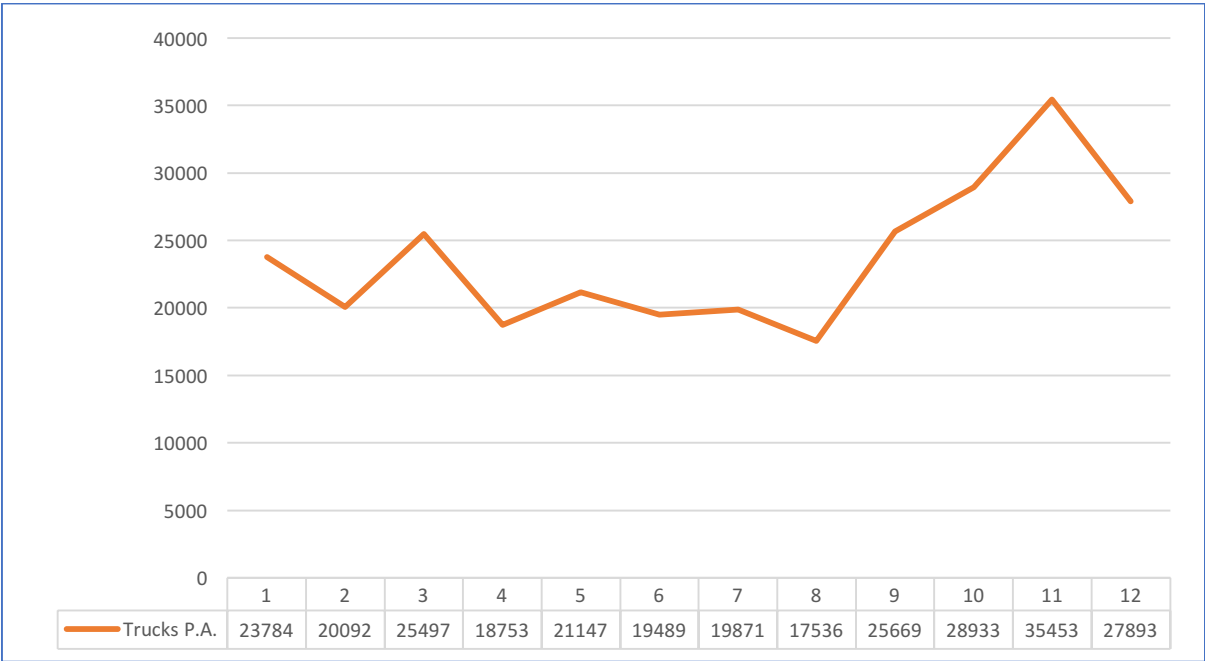


OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSED EXPANSION OF THE MARTIN’S CREEK QUARRY

I am writing to object to the proposed expansion of the Martin's Creek Quarry. My concerns about the proposal are set out below.

Misleading documentation

From the perspective of the EIS itself, the documents are misleading in that pertinent information is disaggregated over a number of documents and presented in ways intended to make them difficult to interpret and to misconstrue their meaning. For example, the graph showing truck movements on p.15 of *EIS AppD Heavy Vehicle Route and Market Assessment* is designed to downplay the real increase in truck movements since Daracon took over the quarry. The figure below better represents the real situation. Further the graph does not specify the years reported. The current application seeks to increase these movements further.



Amenity of Martin’s Creek residents and others living alongside the haulage route

While Daracon makes much of the longevity of the quarry, the land that my family occupies has been held by our family since 1974. Over that time, we have seen the quarry operations grow from a predominantly rail-based operation to one which is now almost totally road-based.

As the graph above shows the number of truck movements doubled from 17,536 to 35,453 over a four-year period.

Although the quarry commences operation at 6:00am, truck movements commence just after 5:00am with trucks queuing at the quarry site ready to load at 6:00am.

Daracon by its own admission indicates that in Year 11 (presumed to be 2013-14) some 35,453 trucks carried loads from the quarry. On average that equates to 236 truck movements (to and from the quarry) per day. However, elsewhere in the documentation, Daracon has reported peak traffic volumes of more than 560 trucks per day, that is one truck movement every 77 seconds of a 12 hour day.

Noise impact

Daracon's noise impact study appears to focus on the impact of quarry operations on Martin's Creek residents. Daracon's noise impact studies appear to be based on decibel measurements rather than interviews with local residents. Although our property is located approximately 2 km from the quarry on the opposite side of the river the noise from blasting and crushing operations is evident under some conditions.

Further there appear to be no noise impact studies into the impact of noise from heavy vehicles passing through Paterson village. As noted above truck movements commence just after 5:00am. These heavy vehicles travel as close as 15m from house fronts.

Road safety issues

Daracon's traffic study focusses on truck movements and downplays its interaction with other traffic on local roads. The amount of traffic on Gresford and Tocal Roads has increased exponentially over recent years with increased subdivision of rural lands further up the valley.

The document EIS AppH Traffic Impact, p.15 reports on traffic speeds at 5 locations. In the 60km/h zone heavy vehicles on average were travelling at 3 km/h above the speed limit, in an 80 km/h zone that were on average 7 km/h above the speed limit. In both 100kmph zones they were on average 3 km/h below the speed limit. It is noted that these data represent average speeds. Correctly reported data would include also information about the distributions (i.e. standard deviation) of speeds. In reality, the reporting of average data hides information on those vehicles travelling at excessive speed of which there are many.

Given the amount of traffic and the speeds at which heavy trucks are travelling, it is only a matter of time before there is a fatality involving trucks operating from the quarry.

Impact on local roads

I am also concerned with the impact of the heavy haulage traffic on local roads. While the documentation includes modelled estimates of road repairs costs into the future, there is no indication of contributions from Daracon. The email documentation between Daracon and Dungog Shire would suggest that Dungog, Maitland and Port Stephens Councils' ratepayers, and the NSW and Commonwealth governments carry the burden of road repair costs. Given that under the current road-based transport model that the quarry could not operate without access to public roads, ratepayers and taxpayers are effectively subsidising the cost of the quarry's operations.

Daracon's social licence

Daracon's net contribution to the local community is overstated. The benefits of its operations flow mainly to the broader region rather than to the local community. Further, Daracon does not state whether its employees live in the local community or whether they travel from further afield.

Daracon's net contribution to the local community is insufficient for it to claim that it has a social licence and overall positive impact on the local community.

Condition of approval

That the development application not be approved unless:

- any approved increase of quarry output is subject to rail transport, or
- Daracon is required to provide and maintain an alternative transport route from the quarry that by-passes Paterson. This could be achieved by Daracon constructing new rail crossings at Martins Creek, and realigning and upgrading Martins Creek Road to the same standard as Gresford Road.

Dr Bruce Mowbray