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We strongly oppose the Martins Creek Quarry Expansion by Buttai Gravel (Daracon).

Daracon is an engineering company. We are professional engineers who live in the area directly affected by the transport of crushed rock from Daracon's mining site at Martins Creek. In our professional opinion, in the past, Daracon has displayed an appalling track record in their lack of genuine engagement with the community that is affected by their road transport of crushed rock. This track record is well known in the area and it is very widely disapproved of. Daracon has completely ignored the community's concerns and now wishes to effectively double the output, most of it by road. This is simply unacceptable and, in fact, almost unbelievable. In our opinion, their record is unprofessional, certainly unethical, and quite possibly illegal. Daracon's 'problem' seems to stem from the fact that their Martins Creek Quarry is some 25km from the main arterial roads such as the New England Highway. In its Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Daracon has evidently decided that it is not prepared to contemplate (presumably because of the cost) any appropriate upgrading of the rail siding at Martins Creek for rock transportation and instead has decided to highly emphasize road transport no matter what the consequences are to the communities through which such transport takes place.

The rock being transported is bluestone. This is actually a very hard rock, and is known to be harder even than granite. The windscreen of our car has been damaged twice on Tocal Road by rocks falling or being ejected from the wheels of empty Daracon trucks returning up Tocal Road. On one of these occasions the vehicle's top was also seriously damaged causing over \$6,000 damage and we were still responsible for the \$500 insurance threshold! We now refuse to use Tocal Road at all except for Sundays (no trucks). We're sure we are not the only road users that have been affected by this truck procession. Effectively doubling the number of such trucks using Tocal Road is unacceptable. In fact, it should be substantially reduced. It might be mentioned here that we have observed returning empty trucks sometimes use the wholly unsuitable Martins Creek Road, instead of going through Paterson. This probably violates the load limits of some of the rail bridges on this road. Truck-dog combos on it represent a substantial hazard to other road users on this narrow road.

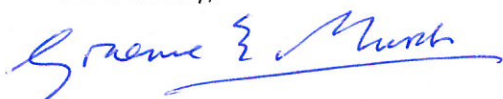
Furthermore, the noise of the procession of these trucks through towns like Paterson has destroyed the peace and quiet of such communities. It is impossible to enjoy a coffee at the cafes in Paterson (the owners of which are obviously losing business!) when a truck-dog combo thunders past at the rate of almost one every 90 seconds! It has greatly affected the ambiance of the town. The safety of local pedestrians has also been compromised. The existing number of trucks passing through Paterson is already way too excessive. Expanding the number is surely unacceptable.

In the Traffic Impact Assessment of the EIS Daracon states (presumably to avoid the town of Lorn) that they plan to use a new route. The predicted number of trucks that will use the new route of Flat Road (East Maitland) and the intersections in East Maitland is said to be only 1.9% of the vehicles

that use this road and therefore this is evidently not a problem. This is a highly misleading, possibly deliberately so. It seems to equate a truck-dog combo carrying crushed rock as equivalent to a car! It obviously is not. When fully laden, these truck-dog combos are very slow moving in the stop/start conditions near intersections. The intersection of Flat Road and Melbourne Street (East Maitland) already has a backup of some 500m at peak hour. Daracon's projected use of this route will make this bad situation far worse as it plans to now send a procession of laden trucks through East Maitland, instead of Lorn. This is unacceptable, as it already is for Lorn. It is also said in the same document that cyclists and pedestrians rarely use the various regional roads. While it is true that pedestrians rarely use them, cyclists certainly do. Every morning, we pass several cyclists on Paterson Road near Duns Creek (regularly used by these trucks) and also several on the projected new route of Flat Road. We have seen trucks veer to the wrong side of the road to avoid cyclists and we have had to brake hard as a result.

It is quite clear that Daracon has in the past taken the cavalier attitude that the local community's valid concerns can be completely ignored in their business plan. Now Daracon wishes to double their impact. All that seems to matter to Daracon is the transport of crushed rock to its destinations at the lowest possible cost. In our opinion, this quarry expansion at Martins Creek must be firmly stopped.

Yours sincerely,



Graeme E Murch

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