

Submission: Martins Creek Quarry

As a resident of Tocal Rd, Bolwarra Heights, I would like to make this submission to oppose the application for the expansion of Martins Creek Quarry. We moved to Bolwarra Heights 6 years ago for its quiet, leafy rural lifestyle. Despite living on the main traffic route, the cars, bikes and moderate amount of truck traffic went unnoticed. It wasn't until Daracon ramped up its output from the Martins Creek Quarry, to what we later found was way beyond its current DA allowance, when we took notice of the devastating effects of Daracon's operations on our suburb and quality of life.

Daracon's DA would affect my household adversely in the following areas:

Noise

The noise of the empty trucks rattling past my house as early as 4:30 am some mornings and at speeds way over the 60km/h limit is unbearable. We tried to remediate it and installed double glazing, but it didn't make things better and is absolutely useless in summer when the windows are open.

Dust

As an allergy sufferer I can attest first hand that the increase in truck traffic has had a dramatic effect on my health. With any increase, we will have no choice but to seriously consider moving. Something we cannot afford.

Road congestion

The proposed haulage route is along narrow country roads through quiet leafy towns eventuating up at either Belmore Bridge in Maitland or the Flat Rd / Melbourne Rd intersection in East Maitland. The Flat Road /Melbourne Rd intersection is already a high congestion point during morning peak hours with 1km long ques to the traffic lights. This intersection will not handle any additional trucks and will drastically extend my commute to work. I envisage that this will enrage all the local residents once they realise this is permanent.

Road quality

The section of Tocal Road in front of our house was resurfaced approximately 2 yrs ago after a lot of lobbying from residents to Maitland Council. This road has since been patched many times and currently has large pot holes along it. With Council rates currently going up by incredible amounts, how much will now have to be offset away from other local improvements to maintain the roads destroyed by extra truck traffic from the quarry?

Road safety

Most of the trucks do not slow down to 40 km/h in residential part of Tocal Rd. Quite to the contrary, they often speed above 60 km/h. Daracon has no control over the vast majority of the heavy vehicles travelling from and to the quarry. Any increase in the volume of trucks on Tocal Rd would dramatically reduce the safety of pedestrians and other road users, including the many motor bike riders and cyclist .

Property Value

If my house is currently worth X amount, due to its leafy quiet location, how much will it be worth with trucks passing every minute, 6 days/week? We have worked very hard on our 1 acre block to create a tranquil experience, spending thousands of dollars on plants and improvements to attract a variety of wildlife and increase the quality and the value of our property. It would be all jeopardised with any increase in truck traffic.

Detriments vs Benefits

Looking at the number of people disadvantaged by the proposed expansion, compared to how many people would benefit, where is the rationale? In the Daracon's application it reads "*overall, it is considered that at full capacity the proposed works will create an estimated 16 ongoing positions*" - as opposed to the thousands of people inconvenienced daily by the way of their physical health, mental wellbeing, quality of life, economic loss, safety, environmental damage, just to mention a few. The hundreds of homes devalued, compared to the wealth of one man increasing.

The quarry owner / Executive Director David Mingay, when asked at a public meeting 'How would you like living on this haulage route' replied '*I would move*'. I think it sums it up.