

Submission re Martins Creek Quarry Expansion

I have lived in Martins Creek since 1987.

We moved here from inner Sydney to enjoy a more relaxed lifestyle with a healthier natural environment.

We made a conscious decision to live more remotely (and pay the associated costs eg fuel, travelling time) in order to gain the benefits of the rural / bushland environment.

At the time the Martins Creek Quarry was owned & operated by NSW Rail and the product was largely distributed via the purpose-built railway line from the quarry. At the time locals could also visit the quarry with a trailer attached to their vehicle & purchase small quantities of gravel for home projects.

If the current expansion proposal were to be approved it would impact our lives in many ways. The current state of the quarry and its practices is already unacceptable on many levels, to myself and the large majority of those living & working in the surrounding area, as well as those along the transport routes.

The impact on our lives is:

Noise – our home is located a ridge or 2 away from the quarrying site – we can often hear the noise of the processing (a constant rumble of varying volume, or the crashing sound of large rocks tumbling - we assume this is what it is, or the noise & vibration of the blasting). This has woken us up on numerous occasions. We have lodged complaints on the EPA website and written to local & state members in office at the time. Apart from acknowledgement of the lodgement of the complaint, nothing seems to be done.

Dust – living in a “cleaner air” environment than a polluted city I would expect cleaner air. However, the dust levels have increased significantly over the last few years. This has a detrimental effect on our health, and means our home needs more constant cleaning.

Home / Property value – the quarry has already detracted from the natural beauty & relaxed atmosphere of this area. Add to that the increased danger of travelling on the local roads and the stress that this situation has added to the township as a whole, and it makes the prospect of future generations wanting to buy in the area much less appealing.

Environment – it disturbs us greatly that large areas of natural fauna & flora are getting wiped out by the quarry. We also see increased roadkill along the distribution roads – again adding stress to our existence here.

Trucks – the current volume of trucks is unacceptable, should the expansion be approved it will be disastrous to the towns & people living & travelling along the distribution routes. The trucks start early, and go all day – they are noisy, too large for our local roads and too numerous. I understand that the drivers need employment, however if the product were to be shipped by rail to a hub (Hexham?) they would still be employed – however they would be driving on roads more designed for their purpose.

The trucks cause interruption to business in the local area – when they are travelling past the noise they create makes it impossible for the local business owners / employees to speak on the phone and carry out business in a normal fashion.

The idea that has been proposed to alter the roads (King & Duke Streets) in Paterson would make it impossible for those local businesses to survive – or for the traffic of the town to flow as it has done up until now.

The trucks are known to cause damage to the roads – even if Daracon did honor their agreement and contribute towards repairs & alterations, it is the local people who have to be continuously held up on our travels waiting for roadworks, spending more time than necessary washing our cars and having chips & cracks in our windscreens.

In summing up, I cannot see how the financial benefits to so few can be worth the detriment to so many.

If the quarry was to continue at a reduced level of production, and shipped their product from the site by rail, it would be a resource that would be available for many more years and generations to come, without having such a destructive impact on the environment and those who choose to live & work here.