

Director – Resources Assessment
Planning Services
Department of Planning & Environment
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Linda_lowndes@bigpond.com

Attn: Mr Howard Reid

23 Nov 2016

Dear Mr Reid,

Martins Creek Quarry – Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
Proponent – Buttai Gravel Pty Ltd (Daracon)
Application No SSD-16-6612

I write to object to the proposed development as described in the EIS recently put on public exhibition. As a resident of Paterson directly impacted by this development I wish to make the following comments.

Impacts

My family own a heritage listed property built in 1900. It is immediately adjacent to the main haul route on Paterson. We don't expect to live in perfect silence. However, nor do we expect to live adjacent to a haul road. This is what the proponent is proposing. If we were to allow it, our lives would be consumed by the proponent's current activities never mind their proposed expansion.

Specific Concerns

Daracon seek to dispatch product even earlier, from 5.30am, meaning the current 5.45am truck alarm from empty quarry trucks banging over the potholes outside our property will move to 5.15 am at the latest. Why should my children have to be wakened at this early hour every day including Saturdays?

Daracon seek approval to run 80-90 trucks per hour from 5.30am (effectively 5.15 am). We know what this looks like! In Feb/Mar 2014 they pushed around 60+ trucks per hour through our town for weeks. We felt under siege. Lines of trucks, nose to tail, up to 10 at a time. Convoys meeting in both directions. Convoys trying to negotiate school buses. Convoys passing within 1m of where my daughter catches her school bus. Convoys to be negotiated when crossing the road with my younger daughter en-route to school. Filthy diesel particulate matter coating every surface of our home, even with windows tightly shut. Rocks the size of rock melon landing from a truck at our gate, again where my daughter stands to catch her bus. (Figure 1 inc email to Daracon)

I love to work in my garden and spend my working life with plants. The noise and the smell of diesel fumes during these peak periods made gardening all but impossible other than on a Saturday afternoon and Sunday.

Trucks consumed our lives during those weeks causing stress both at home and in the community. Daracon's complete disregard for us was never more apparent than when David Mingay visited our home with Paul Walker the quarry manager in April 2014. Although acknowledging the appalling state of the road outside our house he was unapologetic for their actions claiming existing use rights.

Worries re damage to our property caused by vibration and the effect on it's value if we decided to sell (as recommended by David Mingay) added further stress. I fear for our physical and mental well-being if this proposal is approved.

General Concerns

In summary our general concerns reflect the issues raised above:

- The proponent seeks approval for truck movements which are totally incompatible with the amenity, heritage and lifestyle of our community
- The current hours of operation are unreasonable, the proposed ones even more so.
- Daracon by their own admission, have no control over customers and non-Daracon owned trucks
- While the behaviour of their own drivers is generally exemplary, when demand peaks we see an influx of cowboys in badly driven, poorly maintained, ancient vehicles spewing diesel fumes.
- Many vehicles can only be identified from the rego plate. This makes reporting infringements to Daracon (or the authorities), difficult.
- We support the council view that Daracon have been operating outside of their current consents since Dec 2012. Nothing to date in their actions suggests intent to be good corporate citizens and co-exist with the community. David Mingay's "if you don't like it move", approach sums up their attitude.
- Previous actions and proposed actions seek to achieve "un-constrained" operation whenever there is a market opportunity
- We fear for the general welfare of our community, its people and the businesses which are its lifeblood. Paterson is a tourist destination and a gateway to the Barringtons. Many of our businesses cater to this market. Who wants to visit/stop on a haul road?
- Cyclists and pedestrians are given no consideration. With traffic volumes of the order experienced in 2014 it is only a matter of time before disaster strikes.

Comments on the EIS

I lead a very full life and don't have time to study a 2,400 page document full of statistics. I believe from discussions with my friends and neighbours the EIS is deficient in the following areas

The main areas of deficiency relating to Paterson are:

- It uses "disputed" operations as its baseline i.e. 900k T as opposed to the approved 300k T
- It makes no mention of community amenity
- It does not adequately address the noise issue of increased truck noise in Paterson versus the approved background
- The suggestion of allowing 80-90 trucks per hour at peak periods is a rate 30-50% higher than the peak of Feb/Mar 2014 which provoked community outrage
- It does nothing to assess the vibration impact on our heritage properties
- It does not assess air quality on haul routes
- It does not address truck standards. Even my 9 year old can tell the difference between Daracon's modern fleet of trucks and many of the rest just by the noise and vibration
- Their total contribution to the welfare of Paterson is to propose a median strip at the intersection of King St and Duke St. Apart from restricting access to King St from the south,

it will remove parking from outside local businesses and do nothing to enhance the visual appeal of the town.

- It makes no provision for school bus safety, school children safety, cyclist safety or pedestrian safety.
- They have not consulted the community in any meaningful way.

Requirements

Despite Daracon's contemptuous treatment of the community since assuming the lease at MCQ we are prepared to co-exist with the quarry although in truth there would be a huge party/celebration were it to close!

As residents directly impacted by trucks only we make the following "non-ambit" claims:

- Operating hours from 7.00am-5.00pm 5 days/week. Even by their own numbers for Saturday operation it would barely be missed but would give residents and tourists a break from the early morning "truck alarm".
- Truck numbers capped to a max of 15 loaded trucks in any hour through Paterson i.e. 30 truck movements per hour including trucks supplying material to the quarry
- Truck standards imposed allowing only low emission vehicles to access the quarry
- Driver codes to maintain the 40kph limit through the town

I would trust the above represents an acceptable compromise from our side.

I asked my 9 year old to tell us what she thinks of trucks. Here's what she wrote:

I do not like it when people driving trucks go so fast through Paterson that it wakes everybody up in the morning.

I also do not like it when I'm crossing the road how there less than a metre away from you.

I would not like it if my dog Dennis got out and got run over by a huge truck.

I think that there needs to be a limit speed and a limit of trucks a day. I think that the limit speed should be 30km an hour, not 50km.

Conclusion

Daracon's proposal is completely unreasonable and totally unworkable for the village of Paterson. Apart from the voluntary 40kph speed limit nothing they have done to date shows any empathy for our community. I think it is shameful that a company which clearly demonstrates professionalism in many other aspects of its operations is treating us with such contempt. I urge you to reject this proposal in its current form and preserve the long term health of my family and community.

I have not made a reportable political donation

Yours sincerely,

Linda Lowndes

35 Maitland Road
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NSW 2421

References



Figure 1 My daughter then 6 with a rock witnessed falling from a quarry truck April 2014

From: Linda Lowndes <linda_lowndes@bigpond.com>

Date: Mon, 07 Apr 2014 21:24:07 +1100

To: <paulw@daracon.com.au>

Conversation: Rock.....

Subject: Rock.....

Hi Paul,

When I turned up at school this afternoon to pick up my daughter I was presented with this rock.

A local friend was over at Stockers and heard a bang crash and witnessed this rock falling from a truck going towards Maitland. A car going the other direction was lucky enough to miss it but you can imagine what could have happened and what will happen one of these days.....

This rock was picked up out the front of our small gate where my daughter stands to catch the bus each morning. How are these trucks leaving the quarry with the load so unsafe?

Linda Lowndes



Figure 2 Photo from Daracon presentation to CCC meeting oct 2015 - the worst section of paving on the haul route - adjacent to our property