



*Diocesan Shrine
of Our Lady of Mercy
Penrose Park*



2017 – Australian Catholic Bishops Conference - Year of Youth - 2018

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Planning Service
Department of Planning and Environment
G.P.O. Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

ATTN: Director – Resource Assessment

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing this submission to present my reservations regarding the proposed quarry – sand mine in Sutton Forest (SSD 6334).

My name is Fr. Damian Mosakowski OSCP, MTh (SCD), I am the prior of the Penrose Park Community as well as the rector of the Diocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Mercy situated in the immediate vicinity to the proposed project. Our community, here in Penrose Park, has been established by late Fr. Augustine Lazur of the Order of St. Paul the First Hermit (religious congregation within the Catholic Church). He came to Australia in 1981 with a mission of establishing a shrine (holy place) in honour of the Mother of God. He chose our property especially because of the two main features: the grotto-like rocky place, but over and above peace and tranquillity of the area. Our Order has been founded in 1215 in Hungary out of the gathered hermits, so there is an obvious purpose behind searching for the quiet places to build our monasteries.

During these last 30 years our Shrine became a renowned place of worship, either locally, nationally or even internationally. In a proximity of the proposed quarry there is not only our special Grotto of Our Lady but also approx. 50 international chapels built by Australians of many different ethnic backgrounds. It is one of those examples, where Australia can be proud of its multicultural diversity. Because of those features our Shrine is visited by around 40,000 pilgrims

per year, not only from all over Australia but also from around the World. Among those visiting are the Church dignitaries, as well as Presidents, Ambassadors, Consuls and High Commissioners from countries, of which communities have their chapels built in our Shrine.

The proposed quarry – sand mine is a serious endangerment to the goals and objectives of this holy place for many Catholic, Orthodox, Buddhist, and many other pilgrims and visitors.

To formulate my response to the invitation of the Department of Planning and Environment to express my opinion, which, I am assured on the Department's website, will be taken under consideration into the planning process, I would like to inform you that the public exhibition constitutes an insufficient time frame to construct respectable and credible answer to a sizeable Environmental Impact Statement of such a massive proposed project. For that reason, this submission is only an initial and interim one, where my organisation and I respectfully advocate for the rejection of this application in its entirety.

We, the Pauline Fathers and Brothers, together with many of our pilgrims are distressed with the idea that, so called in media, "the biggest sand mine in Australia" is suggested at our door step. Looking at the lodged Environmental Impact Statement as a response to the Director General's Environmental Assessment Requirements we are extremely concerned for the future, not only of our beloved Shrine, but also for our neighbours and the whole region of Southern Highlands, especially as immense project nearby – the Green Valley Sand Quarry in Paddys River – has been approved by the Department of Planning and Environment.

There is a great responsibility placed on the decisive authorities as these two extra-large projects, located just few kilometres apart, will pose an extreme threat to environmental, hydrological, biological, social and economic status of this ecologically sensitive area of the Southern Highlands.

Kind regards

Fr. Damian Mosakowski, osppe
Rector of the Shrine of Our Lady of Mercy
Prior of the Community of Penrose Park