



Melanie Gibbons MP

Member for Menai



Major Projects Assessment
Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

To Whom It May Concern,

RE: Objection to the proposed Concrete Recyclers Facility – Moorebank (05_0157)

Please find below my submission outlining some of the concerns from the proposed Concrete Recyclers facility. This is not an exhaustive list, but is made up of my reading and concerns outlined to me by members of the community. As the State Member for this area, I have received a great deal of correspondence highlighting what I believe is a very real fear as summarised below.

Site Access:

On 8 August 2006, Chris Wilson (as Executive Director, as delegate for the Director-General) wrote to the Moorebank Recyclers proponent, Mr Brent Lawson attaching a copy of the Director General's requirements for the project.

In that letter, Mr Wilson noted *"The Department understands that site access issues are yet to be resolved. Consequently you are required to ensure that suitable site access agreements are in place prior to the lodgement of the draft Environmental Assessment"*. My understanding and reading of the latest information submitted by the proponent is that this situation is still unresolved. In fact, there is a Supreme Court ruling against one option and a court case against Liverpool City Council for the other. So not only is there no written evidence of landholder's consent, but there are active measures continuing to avoid giving access.

I am surprised that this application has been placed on public exhibition without adequately addressing this need which should surely render the Environmental Assessment incomplete and therefore invalid.

Need for the Project:

One of the Director-General's Requirements is that the need for the project be given. I do believe there is a need for this type of recycling, but I do not see why it needs to be situated in this area. The applicants state that the site is an ideal midway point between the likely places of demolition and reuse, but as this now practically neighbours a residential area surely this need can be addressed in a more appropriate location. I don't believe that alternatives have been considered as specified either.

The applicants have an existing facility in Camellia, known as Concrete Recyclers (Group) Pty Ltd. This would appear to be in a more appropriate location, with industrial neighbours such as Shell Company of Australia, Downer Edi Works Asphalt, Earthpower, Boral Plasterboard, Sita Environmental Solutions, Hymix, KLF Recyclers, and Air Liquide Australia - as outlined in the Concrete Recyclers Pollution Incident Response Management Plan.

The neighbours for the Moorebank Recyclers are outlined in the Executive Summary of the Environmental Assessment as the Georges River, Benedict Sand and Gravel and access handle, a large area of environmentally sensitive vegetation, a small section of the Georges Fair residential estate, and the New Brighton Golf Club.

While this would appear to be accurate on first glance, I would like to highlight that the Georges River is environmentally sensitive and prone to flooding, the access handle mentioned is still under dispute, and the small section of Georges Fair residential estate is no longer "small" with several hundred homes for an anticipated 3500 people, now occupied or under construction. Additionally, the New Brighton Golf Club has been in discussions for a significant period of time about aligning their golf course to facilitate their own land release in this same area. Benedict Sand and Gravel have an application in with Liverpool Council to replace their concern with a marina and function centre – as they agree that this type of industrial activity is no longer appropriate for this area.

Currency of the submitted reports:

Many of the figures, reports and statistics provided by the applicant are likely to be now out of date. The currency of the Environmental Assessment should be questioned. Some figures, such as the traffic data provided, were taken before several hundred homes and a linking road were built in 2003 making them a decade old!

The air quality figures were taken in 2005, 06, and 07. I would request updated figures be submitted. The air quality monitoring station at Rose Street Liverpool, mentioned on page viii of the Executive Summary, may not have been giving accurate data since a tree had been causing an obstruction. This has only been rectified this year. The report also compares data from the Hunter Valley – a completely different environment to ours.

The noise data at the nearest home back in 2007. The Environmental Assessment claims that “although some time has lapsed, these data are still considered relevant”. I would disagree with this statement as in the intervening five plus years, four blocks of homes have been developed closer to the site and the noise levels should also be considered from these.

I am not sure why 26 Elouera Crescent, Moorebank was chosen for noise monitoring when there were closer homes in 2007. The new development will also have homes up to eight streets closer than monitored.

Community Concerns:

There are significant community concerns about this proposal.

The DGRs state that during the preparation of the Environmental Assessment, consultation must take place with the affected landowners. I submit that adequate consultation has not been undertaken. There are landowners that are currently building in the new George’s Fair Estate that have expressed to me that they were unaware of this proposal until very recently.

Appendix 8 of the Environmental Assessment has also only provided one piece of community consultation from May 2011. May people have moved into their homes since this date. It is doubtful that the majority of neighbours would be aware of this proposal.

The applicants have told me that they held a community meeting earlier in this period, but were worried about aggression and misinformation being spread in that meeting, so have not undertaken any more.

With new land owners just purchasing and building now, a letterbox drop alone would not be an adequate way to communicate with the neighbours.

Traffic movements:

It is argued that a positive of this proposed development is that it will “limit the amount of truck traffic on many metropolitan roads”. It will however, have a negative effect on the neighbouring areas.

When the neighbours were notified during the public consultation period (appendix 8 of the EA) on 16 May 2011, they were advised that the capacity would be equal to “around 80 deliveries of 20 tonnes each”. Yet the later documentation breaks the movements into Raw Materials of 81 trucks in and another 81 out, and into Processed Materials again of 81 trucks in and 81 out. There is a significant difference to the 80 deliveries the neighbours were advised of, to the now 324 expected movements. Spread evenly across the 11 hours of

operation, this would be a truck every 30 seconds. Obviously there would be less at some times and significantly more at others, but in any case far more than the new residents in the adjoining site would ever have envisaged

The 324 truck movements area apparently based on 292 working days per annum (including Saturdays) and an average load of 21.2 tonnes.

A press release in the "What's on?" section of the Georges Fair website, states that *"Investa Property Group has invested approximately \$9 million in the design and construction of Brickmakers Drive to ensure that it provides optimal safety, discourages large vehicles, limits the ability of vehicles to exceed the speed limit and reduces traffic noise."*

It is important to note that it was designed to discourage large vehicles. A standard axle fitted with dual tyres and loaded to 8.2 tonnes will cause 2250 times more damage than a car. Questions need to be raised as to how much weight Brickmakers Drive can take, and who is responsible to repair the damage. The EA states that "the life of a dense graded asphalt wearing surface is in the range of 8 – 20 years". Is there any change to that life expectancy should Moorebank Recyclers be approved and if so, who is responsible for the repairs and resurface?

It is also important to note that the traffic data figures were taken in 2003 – long before Brickmakers Drive was built. Strangely other figures provided claim zero growth in Nuwarra Road between 2002 – 2011. I would like these figures to be independently assessed. Also, the traffic created from Georges Fair estate and the cumulative effect of other proposals in the area also needs to be taken into account. These proposals include the changes to the Benedicts site, the changes to the New Brighton Golf Course, and the massive impacts that would be caused should either one or both Intermodal Terminals at Moorebank be approved.

The suggested "access handle" off Brickmakers Drive is yet to be agreed to – and is awaiting the result of a court case. Should it be agreed to, the main traffic impact will be at Georges Fair at the very point where the Estate is closest to the site and not buffered by the environmentally sensitive vegetation.

Page 8 of Appendix 4 claims that "Trucks will not be able to turn left into Brickmakers Drive..." but there is no significant proposal that would stop this movement being able to occur. Moorebank Recyclers have suggested that they would request all trucks enter and exit along the same part of Brickmakers Drive (closest to Newbridge Road) but there is still no guarantee that they would not enter and exit utilising Nuwarra Road. The evidence shown from the existing Benedicts Sand and Gravel site shows that this is an attractive path for drivers to take and it cannot actually be avoided.

The estimated morning peak time is also from 8am – 9am. This is also rush time for school drop off and at the tail end of when our roads are at their busiest as people start work for

the site? The report mentions that the operational activities would be protected from flood waters, but how would this be guaranteed and what impact would this then have on neighbouring industry and homes in the area?

I am also concerned at the plan for the swale to “eventually drain into a drainage channel which runs beneath the entrance to the Site and then into the Georges River”.

The EA also states that “the water management system would remove 91% of the suspended sediment load within runoff from the developed site. This means that only 9% of the suspended solids load from Site runoff would enter the Georges River”. I question the amounts and types of contaminants that may enter the river and the risk involved to the health of the river and surrounding environment.

It is planned that runoff from non-operational areas would flow directly to depressions and be conveyed to the Georges River. Whilst from non-operational areas, this runoff could still contain contaminants that may then enter the river system. It is more concerning to note that “pollutants which could potentially originate from the Materials Recycling Facility include suspended solids in the runoff, and oil, fuel or chemicals used on the Site”. What guarantee is there that these suspended solids and other contaminants will not pollute the river? It should also be noted that only 91% of the suspended solid load within runoff from the operational area would be captured on site.

The cleanliness and health of the Georges River has been receiving a great deal of attention recently after the water quality was found to be poor. Funds are being spent to rejuvenate the quality of the environment, and activity on and along the river are being actively promoted. Further negative impacts should be avoided.

Noise Impacts:

Page xi of the Executive summary outlines the Operational Noise Impact. Unfortunately it confuses Benedict Sand site as being the Georges Fair residential land release that has been built on the former Boral site. Therefore it is difficult to ascertain the location of the proposed noise barrier, and who is responsible for its proposal and funding.

The new residents are also not keen on a barrier being built as they purchased believing they would have the tree views without a barrier blocking them. A barrier higher than 2 metres is also suggested so that it may also shield from truck exhaust. I submit that if this barrier is needed for truck exhaust then perhaps it would not be sensible to be adding so many extra truck movements into this area.

The EA also mentions blockwork noise barriers at Araluan Crescent and Elouera Crescent, and yet the proponent has gathered noise data for their submission from Elouera Crescent.

The EA has recommended that “further review of potential construction noise impacts at any new residences on the Boral site can be considered once they are occupied”. Has this

been done? It was estimated that the closest future residences would be over 400 metres from the site but this does not take into account the noise created by the trucks utilising the access handle.

It should be taken into account that the New Brighton Golf Club has been in discussions for a significant period of time about aligning their golf course to facilitate their own land release in this same area – what would the noise impact be on these future residents?

Visual impacts:

The height of the vegetation was surveyed in November 2003. With almost a decade having passed, is this vegetation still providing the same cover? Is it anticipated that it will continue to be able to provide a screen for years to come or will ongoing planting need to be considered?

Many homes have since been built in Georges Fair that may void the claim that “the land surface on which the proposed development would exist is not visible from any existing residential location outside the site”. Please note that “existing” residences are considered, but there have been two storey homes built and significant sales of land in the intervening time and so this should be reassessed.

I notice that the stockpiles appear to be located in the area at which the houses are closest leading me to be concerned about the visual impact, but also about the dust that may reach these nearby homes.

I do not consider the comparison with the views into the Benedict Quarry and recycling site to be relevant, as the people making this area their home were aware of the existence of this operation on purchase. The owners of this site also have a development application under consideration to change the use to a marina and function facility.

Should the marina and function centre be approved, it would be unfortunate for it to have views over the Moorebank Recyclers site and this may impact what is seen to be a positive development for this area.

The EA mentions that the “Benedict site would be likely to be filled and levelled and could provide some views toward the site once the potential residential development is constructed in the future”. I am unaware of a plan for residential development on the Benedict’s site – is this correct or could it be referring to the Boral site? If the Boral site, we need to be aware that many of these blocks of land have already sold and this would be a disappointing result for them.

The EA outlines that “further buffer planting appropriate to enhancing the existing screening effect along the northern boundary of the site would assist in reducing any unreasonable visibility from this future residential area”. It is disappointing that this planting has not been undertaken in the past ten or so years that this has been planned so that a suitable, mature, buffer could have been established.

Dust Concerns:

The air quality figures were taken in 2005, 06, and 07. I would request updated figures be submitted. As mentioned earlier in this submission, the air quality monitoring station at Rose Street Liverpool, mentioned on page viii of the Executive Summary, may not have been giving accurate data since a tree had been causing an obstruction. This has only been rectified this year. The report also compares data from the Hunter Valley – a completely different environment to ours.

The stockpiles are planned to be located at what appears to be the closest point to homes. Surely dust will escape from the piles and the trucks as the materials are transported causing a potential health impact and nuisance in this area. This part of South West Sydney has the highest rate of asthma in NSW and the dust could exacerbate this condition.

What is the guarantee that no asbestos will be mixed in with the concrete and other materials?

Why is air quality monitoring only planned for the six months of construction? I believe that the neighbouring residents would expect this to be an ongoing, independent assessment, with results openly available.

Residents in the Georges Fair and Moorebank area already find that they are continually wiping down their outdoor furniture before use because of the exhaust from trucks and the dust from the Benedicts site. They should not be forced to live with their windows closed and with a fear for the health of their families.

Geotechnical impact:

As this site is proposed for a former landfill, have the appropriate studies been undertaken to ensure that the local environment is not disturbed by any changes to the use of this land. Also, what assurances are given for long term settlements and the stability of the new buildings and structures that would need to be constructed for the operation of the facility?

Standard operating procedures are proposed to be introduced to correct any local settlements from the stockpiling of materials, which may adversely affect surface drainage. How long, and to what degree, would these adverse impacts need to occur before they would be addressed? How quickly would it be noticed and corrected?

What is the current management for the landfill gas? Is it being monitored or released now? Should ongoing monitoring be a requirement for this site? I note that the EA only says that "ongoing monitoring of landfill gas within the final building structures may also be required".

It is suggested that the groundwater would be sampled for monitoring every three months for the first year of operation. Is that too long between samples? How often would it occur after the first year? Is the testing obtained by an independent body?

Flora and Fauna:

While there are no threatened flora species on the site, there are species that have conservation significance. The Castlereagh Ironbark Forest is an endangered ecological community.

The cumulative impact of the loss of surrounding vegetation and habitat should also be taken into account. It is worth considering the clearing for existing and proposed developments such as the Georges Fair Estate, Coopers Paddock, the Gandangara West Menai land release, and the two Moorebank Intermodals to name just a few. Natural habitat is declining in this area and loss of endangered and significant flora should be given great consideration.

This area may also be a habitat for the green and gold bell frog.

Opportunities:

The applicants have suggested that they would be open to providing a corridor for the public to have access to the water. This offer does not appear to be mentioned in any of the plans provided in the Environmental Assessment. Should this be approved, I believe the corridor would be welcomed but would not negate any of the concerns given above.

Conclusion:

I oppose this application as there are many shortfalls that I do not believe can be overcome.

The lack of approved access to the site should have prevented the proponents from submitting this application as it is contrary to the Director General's requirements.

No need has been given that would justify the negative impacts that could result to the residential area, the neighbouring sites and to the surrounding environment.

Many of the reports submitted are up to a decade old and are out of date for the vast changes that are occurring in this area.

This proposal is no longer compatible with the existing and future use of this changing area and is not supported by the local residents.

Please feel free to contact me if I can provide further information or clarity with any of the issues raised.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Melanie Gibbons', with a large, stylized initial 'M'.

Melanie Gibbons MP

State Member for Menai.