Section 6

Evaluation and Justification of the Project

PREAMBLE

This section concludes the assessment of the Project. The key assessment requirements (identified by the Director-General's Requirements) and other issues identified as having moderate, high or extreme unmitigated risk rankings (see Section 3.3.1) are reassessed based on the implementation of the proposed safeguards, controls and mitigation measures and a residual risk level determined. The Project is then evaluated based on the residual risk posed and in consideration of ecologically sustainable development.

A justification for the Project is then provided based on the residual impacts of the Project, the likely economic and social benefits that would be generated and the consequences locally, regionally and nationally of the Project not going ahead.

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6.1 INTRODUCTION

As a conclusion to the *Environmental Assessment*, the development and operation of the Oberon White Granite Quarry is evaluated and justified through consideration of its potential impacts on the environment and potential benefits to the local and wider community.

Project evaluation has been undertaken by firstly re-assessing the risks posed to the local environment by Project activities, and then considering the implementation of the commitments for controls, safeguards or mitigation measures summarised in Section 5. The Project has also been evaluated against the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) in order to provide further guidance as to the acceptability of the Project, as presented in the *Environmental Assessment*.

Section 6.3, which presents the justification of the Project, revisits the predicted residual impacts on the biophysical environment, considers the socio-economic benefits which would be provided and assesses the consequences of not proceeding with the Project.

6.2 EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

6.2.1 Residual Environmental Risk and Impacts

Following consideration of the proposed operational safeguards, controls and mitigation that would be implemented by the Proponent as part of the Project design, **Table 6.1** reassesses the risk associated with each of the potential environmental impacts identified in Section 3.3.

Through the implementation of the proposed controls, safeguards and mitigation measures summarised in Section 5, the risk rating for the majority of potential environmental impacts has been reduced to either a moderate or low risk rating.

In some cases, a rating is no longer provided as the relevant assessment recorded in Section 4 determined the likelihood to be so low, or consequence so insignificant, as to be virtually non-existent. This approach was taken generally when the risk rating could not be considered any lower than "high" due to a likelihood classification as "almost certain" or consequence classification as "catastrophic" so as not to suggest a significance that does not exist.

Table 6.1
Analysis of Environmental Risk

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Potential Environmental Impacts (see Table 3.6)	Level / Scale of Impact (if applicable)	Consequence of Occurrence if Mitigated	Likelihood of Occurrence if Mitigated	Mitigated Risk Rating
Groundwater				
Groundwater Pollution by leaking/spilt hydrocarbon	Contamination requiring minor recovery works.	**2**	**E**	**L**
	Contamination requiring major recovery works.	**3**	**E**	**M**
Drawdown of groundwater levels	Drawdown resulting in reduction of bore or local spring yields of <15%.	**2**	**D**	**L**
	Drawdown resulting in reduction of bore or local springs yields of >15%.	**3**	**E**	**M**

Consequence of Occurrence: 1 = Insignificant; 2 = Minor; 3 = Moderate; 4 = Major; 5 = Catastrophic
Likelihood of Occurrence: A = Almost Certain; B = Likely; C = Possible; D = Unlikely; E = Rare
Risk Rating: E = Extreme; H = High; M = Moderate; L = Low

Table 6.1 (Cont'd)
Analysis of Environmental Risk

Potential Environmental Impacts (see Table 3.6)	Level / Scale of Impact (if applicable)	Consequence of Occurrence if Mitigated	Likelihood of Occurrence if Mitigated	Mitigated Risk Rating
Air Quality				
Nuisance - deposited dust	Deposited dust levels attributable to the Project occasionally (for one or two months every year) above DECC guideline, affects only adjacent landholders.	**2**	**D**	**L**
	Deposited dust levels attributable to the Project regularly (exceedances greater than DECC guideline for >5 months per year) affects landholders some distance from the Project Site.	**3**	**E**	
Health - PM_{10}	PM_{10} levels attributable to the Project occasionally (once every 1 to 2 years) above the Project goal, affects only adjacent landholders.	**2**	**D**	**L**
	PM_{10} levels attributable to the Project regularly (>5 times per year) above the Project goal, affects landholders some distance from Project Site.	**3**	**E**	**M**
Greenhouse Gas Emissions.		**1**	**B**	**M**
Erosion and Sedimentation				
Soil erosion	Minor erosion within Project Site.	**2**	**C**	**M**
	Minor erosion external to the Project Site.	**2**	**D**	**L**
	Major erosion external to the Project Site.	**3**	**E**	
Sediment Load and Turbidity	One-off discharge of dirty water from the Project Site.	**2**	**D**	**L**
	Regular discharge of dirty water from the Project Site.	**4**	**E**	
Surface Water				
Reduced natural surface water flows	Reduced availability of water for agriculture.	**2**	**E**	**L**
	Stressing of downstream native vegetation due to restricted flows.	**2**	**E**	**L**
Reduced quality of downstream waters	Isolated and minor event resulting in temporary degradation of water quality in local creeks and tributaries, eg. Minor and one-off discharge of hydrocarbon	**2**	**D**	**L**
	Continuing discharge of contaminated water resulting in ongoing degradation of water quality in local creeks and tributaries, eg. frequent/periodic discharge of dirty water	**3**	**E**	**M**
Reduced quality of downstream waters	Isolated and major event resulting in temporary but wider spread degradation of water quality, eg. large discharge of hydrocarbons	**3**	**E**	**M**
	Repeated major event resulting in long-term and wide spread degradation of water quality, eg. continued discharge of dirty or contaminated water	**4**	**E**	

Consequence of Occurrence: 1 = Insignificant; 2 = Minor; 3 = Moderate; 4 = Major; 5 = Catastrophic
Likelihood of Occurrence: A = Almost Certain; B = Likely; C = Possible; D = Unlikely; E = Rare
Risk Rating: E = Extreme; H = High; M = Moderate; L = Low

Table 6.1 (Cont'd)
Analysis of Environmental Risk

Potential Environmental Impacts (see Table 3.6)	Level / Scale of Impact (if applicable)	Consequence of Occurrence if Mitigated	Likelihood of Occurrence if Mitigated	Mitigated Risk Rating
Threatened Flora and Fauna (terrestrial and aquatic)				
Loss of or fragmentation of existing habitats.	Disturbance to native vegetation / habitat within nominated areas.	1	A	
	Disturbance to native vegetation / habitat outside nominated areas.	2	D	L
Direct adverse impact on threatened species.	Disturbance to Threatened flora / fauna and endangered communities.	2	E	L
	Disturbance leading to local population reduction.	4	E	H
	Disturbance leading to local extinction(s).	5	E	
Operational Noise and Vibration				
Increased noise levels associated with Project Site activities causing annoyance, distractions, i.e. amenity impacts.	Occasional minor exceedance of noise criteria (1-2dB(A)).	2	C	M
	Regular minor exceedance of noise criteria (1-2dB(A)).	3	E	M
	Occasional marginal exceedance of noise criteria (3-5dB(A)).	2	C	M
	Regular marginal exceedance of noise criteria (3-5dB(A)).	3	E	
	Occasional major exceedance of noise criteria (>5dB(A)).	2	D	L
	Regular major exceedance of noise criteria (>5dB(A)).	4	E	
Increased noise levels associated with Project related road traffic activities causing annoyance, distractions, i.e. amenity impacts.	Occasional minor exceedance of noise criteria (1-2dB(A)).	2	D	L
	Regular minor exceedance of noise criteria (1-2dB(A)).	3	E	M
	Occasional marginal exceedance of noise criteria (3-5dB(A)).	2	E	L
	Regular marginal exceedance of noise criteria (3-5dB(A)).	3	E	M
	Occasional major exceedance of noise criteria (>5dB(A)).	2	E	L
	Regular major exceedance of noise criteria (>5dB(A)).	4	E	
Maximum noise levels resulting in sleep disturbance.		3	E	M
Vibration from blasting resulting in damage to buildings and structures		3	E	M

Consequence of Occurrence: 1 = Insignificant; 2 = Minor; 3 = Moderate; 4 = Major; 5 = Catastrophic
Likelihood of Occurrence: A = Almost Certain; B = Likely; C = Possible; D = Unlikely; E = Rare
Risk Rating: E = Extreme; H = High; M = Moderate; L = Low

Table 6.1 (Cont'd)
Analysis of Environmental Risk

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Potential Environmental Impacts (see Table 3.6)	Level / Scale of Impact (if applicable)	Consequence of Occurrence if Mitigated	Likelihood of Occurrence if Mitigated	Mitigated Risk Rating
Traffic and Transportation				
Increased traffic congestion.		**2**	**D**	**L**
Road pavement deterioration.		**3**	**D**	**M**
Elevated risk of accident/incident on local roads	Minor accident - no injury.	**2**	**D**	**L**
	Minor accident - minor injury.	**3**	**D**	**M**
	Major accident -moderate injuries requiring hospitalisation.	**4**	**E**	**H**
	Severe accident - severe injuries or death injury.	**5**	**E**	**H**
Aboriginal Heritage				
Impact on unidentified sites and/or artefacts of Aboriginal cultural heritage as a result of soil stripping and extraction activities.		**3**	**E**	**M**
Visual Amenity				
Reduced Visual Amenity from surrounding residences.	Temporary views of disturbed areas.	1	B	M
	Medium-term views of disturbed areas.	1	C	L
	Long-term views of disturbed areas.	1	E	L
Reduced Visual Amenity from surrounding landholdings.	Temporary views of disturbed areas.	1	A	L
	Medium-term views of disturbed areas.	1	B	M
	Long-term views of disturbed areas.	1	E	L
Socio-Economic Impacts and Property Values				
Improved economic activity and related social impacts attributable to reduced unemployment and capital expenditure.		**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**
Reduced quality of life (actual or perceived).		**3**	**D**	**M**
Reduced property values	Temporary decrease in property values	**2**	**C**	**M**
	Moderate term decrease in property values	**3**	**D**	**M**
	Long term decrease in property values	**3**	**E**	**M**

Consequence of Occurrence: 1 = Insignificant; 2 = Minor; 3 = Moderate; 4 = Major; 5 = Catastrophic
Likelihood of Occurrence: A = Almost Certain; B = Likely; C = Possible; D = Unlikely; E = Rare
Risk Rating: E = Extreme; H = High; M = Moderate; L = Low

Further consideration is given to the potential impacts which retain a "high" risk rating as follows.

- Disturbance leading to local population reduction.

  Despite the implementation of appropriate management measures, it is possible that there could be a reduction in the population of some local species. Despite the likelihood being extremely limited that any substantial reduction would occur, in the event of a reduction this could potentially have a major impact on that particular local population. Therefore a high risk rating has been retained.

- Major or severe accident resultant from road transport from the Project Site.

  While every precaution has been and would be taken by the Proponent in relation to the design of traffic management and education of its workforce, the potential consequence of a major or severe accident is such that a high risk rating applies.

The risks associated with the majority of possible environmental impacts are considered moderate or less and therefore, while these may result in impacts deemed unacceptable to some stakeholders, the development and operation of the Project with the implementation of appropriate management plans is generally considered acceptable.

6.2.2 Ecologically Sustainable Development

6.2.2.1 Introduction

Sustainable practices by industry, all levels of government and the community are recognised to be important for the future prosperity and well-being of the world. The principles of ESD that have been recognised for over a decade were based upon meeting the needs of the current generation while conserving our ecosystems for the benefit of future generations. In order to achieve sustainable development, recognition needs to be placed upon the integration of both short-term and long-term environmental, economic, social and equitable objectives.

Throughout the design of the Project, the Proponent has endeavoured to address each of the sustainable development principles. The following sub sections draw together the features of the Project that reflect the four principles of sustainable development, namely:

- the precautionary principle;
- the principle of social equity;
- the principle of the conservation of biodiversity and ecological integrity; and
- the principle for the improved valuation and pricing of environmental resources.

6.2.2.2 The Precautionary Principle

To satisfy this principle of ESD, emphasis must be placed on anticipation and prevention of environmental damage, rather than reacting to it. During the planning phase for the Project and throughout the preparation of the *Environmental Assessment*, the Proponent engaged specialist consultants to examine the existing environment, predict possible impacts and recommend controls, safeguards and/or mitigation measures in order to ensure that the level of impact satisfies statutory requirements or reasonable community expectations.

Throughout the development of the Project, the Proponent and its consultants have adopted an anticipatory approach to impacts, particularly that of irreversible ecological damage, by undertaking an analysis of the risks posed by activities of the Project, an appropriate level of research and baseline investigations and environmental evaluation. The controls, safeguards and/or mitigation measures have therefore been planned with a comprehensive knowledge of the existing environment and the potential risk of environmental degradation posed by Project activities.

The implementation of the environmental safeguards, controls and mitigation measures has been formalised by the Proponent as the draft statement of commitments presented as Section 5.

Examples of matters relating to the precautionary principle that were considered during the various stages of the Project are outlined as follows.

Objectives of the Project

The Project has been designed with the principal objective being to develop and operate the quarry in a safe and environmentally responsible manner which meets the requirements of local and State government agencies, accepted industry standards and wherever possible, reasonable community expectations. The Proponent recognises that only through comprehensive environmental assessment and an environmentally responsible approach to the design and operation of the Project can the risk of harm to the environment be minimised.

Design of Project Components

A number of design aspects of the Project were modified and additional aspects incorporated during the planning stage in order to ensure the requirements of local and State government agencies, accepted industry standards and, wherever possible, reasonable community expectations were met. These included the following.

- A biodiversity offset area has been included to offset potential biodiversity impacts arising from the clearing of vegetation.
- Compensatory planting areas have been included to further enhance the ecological value of the site and improve visual shielding, albeit from distant vantage points, of product truck movements within the Project Site.
- The components of the office, amenities, workshop and stockpiling area were located such to minimise the clearing of forest and woodland to the greatest extent practicable.
- The western boundary of the extraction area was adjusted following the Planning Focus Meeting to avoid the drainage line located adjacent the proposed western extraction boundary.

Integration of Safeguards and Procedures

The framework for ongoing environmental management, operational performance and rehabilitation of the Project Site would be provided through the project approval and be managed through an integrated environmental management strategy for the site. This strategy would incorporate the following elements.

- A program for implementation of project approval conditions.
- A summary of statutory requirements.
- An outline of environmental management responsibility and roles.
- A strategy for environmental management and implementation of an environmental monitoring program incorporating the monitoring proposed throughout Section 4 and summarised in the draft Statement of Commitments (Section 5).

The success of environmental safeguards and management procedures would also be reviewed annually through the preparation of an annual environmental management report.

Rehabilitation and Subsequent Land Use

Long term adverse impacts on the local environment would be avoided through the design and rehabilitation of a landform suitable for reestablishment of the forest / woodland currently present within and surrounding the Project Site and agricultural practices, principally grazing.

Conclusion

The precautionary principle has been considered during all stages of the design and assessment of the Project. The approach adopted, i.e. risk analysis, initial assessment, consultation, specialist investigations and safeguard design, provides a high degree of certainty that the Project would not result in any major unforeseen impacts.

6.2.2.3 Social Equity

Social equity embraces value concepts of justice and fairness so that the basic needs of all sectors of society are met and there is a fair distribution of costs and benefits to the community. Social equity includes for both inter-generational (between generations) and intra-generational (within generations) equity considerations.

Equity within generations requires that the economic and social benefits of the development be distributed appropriately among all members of the community. Equity between generations requires that the non-material well-being or "quality of life" of existing and future residents of the local community would be maintained throughout and beyond the life of the Project.

Both elements of social equity are addressed through the design of the Project itself, the implementation of operational safeguards to mitigate any short-term or long-term environmental impacts, and the proposed rehabilitation of the areas directly disturbed. Examples of matters relating to social equity that are relevant to the various stages of the Project are outlined as follows.

Identification of Project Objectives

The primary objective of the Project is to further develop the alaskite resource and meet the identified supply demands of existing and potential markets. The Project has also been designed with the following objectives.

- Provision of local employment and economic benefits to the community throughout the life of the Project including approximately $500 000 to $750 000 per year in wages relating to direct on-site employment and purchase of consumables.
- Progressive rehabilitation so as to provide a final vegetated landform which is consistent with surrounding land uses and the visual landscape.

Design of Project Components

The Project has been designed to maintain inter-generational equity, i.e. in recognition that the proposed quarry is a relatively short-term land use, and to ensure components of the existing biological, social and economic environment available to existing generations would also be available to future generations.

Integration of Safeguards and Procedures

The Proponent recognises that all members of the local community should benefit from the Project either directly or indirectly. In order to ensure a realistic distribution of benefits, the Proponent would continue to consult with the local community and maintain a pro-active approach to issues of interest. This dialogue would also include a system to record, manage and respond to any complaints relating to the operation. The Proponent's involvement in the community, such as through sponsorship and other contributions, would also continue.

Rehabilitation and Subsequent Land Use

The final landform and land use would provide for nature conservation and limited agricultural activities, principally grazing. It is noted that the establishment of the biodiversity offset within the Project Site, rehabilitation of the extraction area and establishment of compensatory plantings would provide ongoing benefit through maintenance and protection of biodiversity values and visual amenity. It is also considered unlikely that the final landform would be incompatible or restrict any future extraction activities within the alaskite resource area.

Conclusion

The principle of social equity has been addressed throughout the design of the Project. The Project would contribute to the economic activity of Oberon community through the generation of employment and increased demand for local goods and services and flow-on effects. The Project was also designed such that elements of the existing environment available to this generation, particularly biodiversity values, would continue to be available to future generations. The Proponent would adopt a pro-active approach in identifying and addressing any concerns identified by the local community.

6.2.2.4 Conservation of Biological Diversity and Ecological Integrity

The protection of biodiversity and maintenance of ecological processes and systems are central goals of sustainability. It is important that developments do not threaten the integrity of the ecological system as a whole or the conservation of threatened species in the short- or long-term. Details of how the Project has been designed to achieve compliance with these principles are set as follows.

Identification of Project Objectives

The Proponent is committed to undertake all activities in an environmentally responsible manner, and recognises the need to ensure that changes to natural components of the environment do not adversely affect biological diversity or ecological integrity. As such, the Project has been designed to firstly avoid impacts where possible and then mitigate and offset unavoidable impacts in order to extract an economically viable resource.

Design of Project Components

The Proponent, on advice from the specialist consultants commissioned to assess the impact of the Project, has provided for the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity through the following design elements.

- Minimisation of native vegetation clearing through strategic placement of the office, amenities, workshop and stockpiling area.
- Proposed compensatory plantings and biodiversity offset area.
- Use of water management structures (i.e. bunding surrounding the extraction area and additional sedimentation dams) to reduce the potential for ‘dirty water’ discharge to the Duckmaloi River.

Integration of Safeguards and Procedures

The Proponent would implement the following safeguards and procedures to maximise the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity on and surrounding the Project Site.

- Vegetation to be retained would be clearly defined and marked prior to the commencement of site establishment to ensure that native vegetation clearing is confined only to those areas required for Project operations.

- Noxious weeds would be controlled on the Project Site.
- Before being brought to site, machinery which as been working within foreign soil material would be cleaned down to minimise the risk of introducing weeds and plant pathogens.
- Domestic grazing animals would be excluded from the Project Site (except where required to control fuel loads to manage fire risk).
- Annual reporting of the progress and performance of rehabilitation and effectiveness of management measures.

Rehabilitation and Subsequent Land Use

The final landform has been designed to provide for native vegetation conservation and some agricultural activity, principally grazing. The principle area of disturbance, the extraction area, would be returned to native vegetation which would be integrated with the proposed biodiversity offset in the southern part of the Project Site.

Conclusion

The Project would address the principle of conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity through the implementation of the design and safeguard measures and establishment of compensatory planting and offset area. Weed control programs would also be implemented as appropriate and would further assist in addressing this principle.

6.2.2.5 Improved Valuation and Pricing of Environmental Resources

The issues that form the basis of this principle relate to the acceptance that the polluter pays, all resources are appropriately valued, cost-effective environmental stewardship is adopted and the adoption of user-pays principle based upon the full life cycle of the costs. A reflection of these issues on the Project is set as follows.

Identification of Project Objectives

The Proponent's principal objective is to operate the Project in a profitable, safe and environmentally responsible manner, which demonstrates that an appropriate value has been placed on elements of the existing environment.

Design of Project Components and Integration of Safeguards and Procedures

The extent of research, planning and design of environmental safeguards, mitigation measures and offset strategies to prevent irreversible damage to environmental resources, other than the granite to be extracted, is evidence of the value placed by the Proponent on these resources.

Rehabilitation and Subsequent Land Use

The design of the final landform to integrate some agricultural activities with nature conservation illustrates the value placed by the Proponent on both the agricultural and ecological elements of the Project Site.

Conclusion

The value placed by the Proponent on environmental resources is evident in the identification of Project objectives, extent of site-specific research, planning and environmental safeguards and measures to be implemented to prevent irreversible damage to the environment on and surrounding the Project Site.

It is planned that the income received from the sale of the granite would be sufficient to enable the Proponent to achieve an acceptable profit level whilst undertaking all environmentally-related tasks and meeting all commitments in all approvals and licences required and those made to the local community.

6.2.2.6 Conclusion

The approach taken in planning the Project has been multi-disciplinary, involved consultation with potentially affected local residents and various government agencies and emphasis on the application of safeguards to minimise potential environmental, social and economic impacts. The design of the Project has addressed each of the sustainable development principles, and on balance, it is concluded that the proposed Oberon White Granite Quarry achieves a sustainable outcome for the local and wider environment.

6.3 JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROJECT

6.3.1 Introduction

In assessing whether the development and operation of the Project is justified, consideration has been given both to biophysical and socio-economic factors including the predicted residual impacts on the environment and the potential benefits of the Project. This section also considers the consequences of the Project not proceeding.

6.3.2 Biophysical Considerations

Table 6.1 presents the range of residual impacts on the biophysical environment predicted should the Project proceed, i.e. after the adoption of a number of design and operational procedures, mitigation measures and/or offset strategies. The Project would have a range of impacts on the biophysical environment with those considered of greatest significance, and the proposed management of these, summarised as follows.

Noise

The Project would generate noise levels over and above those currently experienced throughout the existing environment. These noise levels, assuming the implementation of the operational commitments identified in Section 5, would remain within the DECEW nominated criteria for all operational activities. It is acknowledged that exceedances of these criteria could potentially occur for short periods (less than 2 weeks) during vegetation clearing campaigns (undertaken every 5 years). However, the proposed management measures would minimise or eliminate such exceedances.

Air Quality

Air pollutant levels are predicted to be below DECCW criteria for deposited dust and PM_{10} at all surrounding residences, i.e. assuming the adoption of a range of standard dust control measures. Similarly, greenhouse gas emissions would only lead to a minor increase in Australia-wide and International emissions.

Water Resources

A proportion of the surface water currently flowing through the Project Site would be captured and utilised on site for dust suppression. The total dam capacity (for both 'dirty' and 'clean' water) would be only slightly above the maximum, although the 'dirty water' dams are in fact exempt from these calculations. Without the inclusion of the 'dirty water' dams, the remaining 'clean water' dam capacity is well below the maximum harvestable right dam capacity for the Project Site. Wherever possible, clean water would be diverted to natural watercourses and sediment-laden or 'dirty' water would be captured within sediment management structures.

It has been assessed that the Project would not result in any adverse impacts on off-site surface water resources, including the Duckmaloi River. Furthermore, it is considered that there would be no impacts on surrounding groundwater users.

Flora and Fauna

Disturbance to native vegetation and fauna habitats has been minimised wherever possible with the disturbance required for the Project being compensated for through the establishment of an offset area. Appropriate management measures would also limit the potential impacts upon fauna species within the areas to be disturbed.

Aboriginal Heritage

There would be no disturbance to any Aboriginal heritage sites. The Proponent is committed to ensuring that any artefacts or sites of Aboriginal heritage significance that may be identified in the future are appropriately protected and/or managed.

Visibility

Activities on the Project Site would generally not be visible to the north, east and west although some activities within the extraction area, particularly on the upper benches would be visible to the south. The Proponent has committed to minimising the medium term visual intrusion of these upper benches in consultation with the potentially affected landholders. The long term visual amenity of the Project Site would be retained through the establishment of vegetation on the final extraction benches.

Traffic

It has been assessed that traffic would not reduce the level of service on Hampton Road and that the high level of service would be maintained over the life of the Project. Also, given the implementation of the proposed safeguards, it has been assessed that the Project would not significantly impact upon the safety of the existing road network. Furthermore, analysis of the Ferndale Road pavement indicates the design capacity is well in excess of that required for the proposed number of truck movements.

6.3.3 Socio-economic Considerations

The Project, if approved, would enable the Proponent to obtain access to a valuable resource and meet market demands both now and into the future. The Project would also provide a continued source of employment and economic benefits to residents in the Oberon Shire through the payment of wages and purchase of consumables. The Proponent would maintain a proactive approach to community consultation including participation within a community consultative committee should there be interest from the community.

6.3.4 Consequences of not Proceeding with the Project

The consequences of not proceeding with the Project include the following.

i) The identified State significant resource would not be further developed and approximately 5 million tonnes of alaskite (white granite) would not be recovered. Such an outcome would be contrary to the I&I NSW-MR and the Proponent's objective to maximise resource utilisation.

ii) The opportunity to create up to 10 full-time on site jobs would be foregone together with 15 to 20 contract truck driver jobs.

iii) The disposable wages from the workforce and ongoing expenditure associated with the Project would be foregone, a substantial proportion of which would be spent in the Oberon area.

iv) The minor impacts on the local biophysical environment would not eventuate.

It is considered that the benefits of proceeding with the Project therefore outweigh the potential residual impacts on the environment that would result.

6.4 CONCLUSION

The Oberon White Granite Quarry has, to the extent feasible, been designed to address the issues of concern to the community and all levels of government. The Project provides for the extraction, crushing, sale and despatch of up to 250 000tpa of a high quality granite product to meet both current and future market demands. The expanded operation of the quarry would provide additional employment opportunities and contribute to the local economy. Wherever possible, all adverse impacts upon the local environment and community have been minimised.

This document and the range of specialist consultant studies undertaken have identified that the Project should proceed because it would:

i) contribute towards satisfying the demand for high quality aggregates;

ii) reduce risk levels associated with possible incidents and impacts on the environment to an acceptable level;

iii) have a minimal and manageable impact on the biophysical environment;

iv) satisfy sustainable development principles;

v) provide for continuing and future use of the Project Site for nature conservation and some agriculture; and

vi) address the perceived social impacts.