

NSW Planning Assessment Commission Determination: Gunlake Quarry Extension Project - D447/16

5 April 2017

Gunlake Quarries Pty Ltd (the Applicant) sought consent to increase its processing rate at its Marulan quarry from 750,000 tonnes per annum (tpa) to 2 million tpa for a period of 30 years and increase the quarry footprint from 48 hectares (ha) to 99 ha. The Applicant also sought to increase the average number of daily truck movements from 164 to 440 and increase the maximum number of daily truck movements from 230 to 590. The project, if approved, was predicted to employ an additional 7 employees and generate an overall net benefit of between \$16-27 million to NSW.

The NSW Planning Assessment Commission is very conscious of the high level of demand for aggregate to supply the construction industry at this time, particularly the Sydney market, and the likely contribution of the Gunlake quarry expansion project to this overall supply.

The Gunlake project proposes the use of road transport for moving quarry product from the project site to the Applicant's Sydney based batching plants. The significant increase in truck movements proposed by the project and the potential for this to negatively impact on the local community and road safety, prompted consideration of alternative transportation methods, for transporting quarry product, such as rail transport.

The Commission finds a lack of emphasis within existing strategic policy as to the future transportation requirements to support moving large volumes of quarry product between the Southern Highlands region and the Sydney market. Given the growth of the quarrying industry in the Marulan region, any significant increase in the amount of quarry product being transported to the Sydney market requires careful long term management and the development of an integrated transport plan.


The Applicant asserts that establishing rail infrastructure to transport quarry product to the Sydney basin would be unviable. However, the Commission found that the project has the potential to significantly impact on road safety due to the increase in heavy vehicle haulage on the primary transport route. The Commission found that the scoping of the local road upgrades proposed by the Applicant to be inadequate and the measures proposed to address impacts of road safety insufficient.

The Commission found that the Applicant provided insufficient information to allow an accurate and genuine consideration of road versus rail based haulage.

The Commission is aware that other quarries in the Marulan region transport quarry product by rail into Sydney and that this provides a cheaper ongoing transport option, once initial supporting infrastructure is established.

The Commission was persuaded by the evidence presented in submissions that challenges and refutes the Applicant's conclusions concerning adverse impacts arising from the significant increase of truck movements on the local road network. On balance the Commission found the potential negative social impacts on the local community to be credible and persuasive.

The Commission found that the project as proposed will have unacceptable social impacts, and negative road safety outcomes and is not in the public interest. The NSW Planning Assessment Commission (the Commission) has, therefore, refused consent for the Gunlake Quarry Extension Project.



Ms Lynelle Briggs (Chair)
Commission Member



Mr Brian Gilligan
Commission Member



Mr Roger Fisher
Commission Member