

Submission RE Development Application by Daracon to Expand Martins Creek Quarry

As a thirty year resident in the region of this quarry I strongly object to the proposed expansion of the quarry.

Local Infrastructure

The road structure in this area is totally unsuited to the proposed massive expansion of the number of permitted road movements from the currently approved 24 per day to the maximum 280 per day. Dungog Shire does not have any state funded main roads and experiences great difficulty maintaining its rural road network. Damage to roads used by Daracon during its previous unlawful operations was visible to all. The road through the Paterson township which is the route used by the loaded trucks involves a left curve leading to a rail crossing, then a 90 degree right turn and a little further along a significant dog leg set of bends going down to a section of road that has numerous times been cut by floodwater. Coupled with the increased residential traffic this is a dangerous combination. The *Traffic Impact Assessment* provided by Daracon merely suggested the right- angle bend "can be upgraded to provide a central median which will direct vehicle movements." The truck noise is exacerbated by the compression braking and gear changes to negotiate this area. Local residents and businesses have suffered great stress and loss of amenity during the previous operation of the quarry. In other areas, options to reduce the impact have involved bypass construction.

This area has a considerable number of single lane historic bridges. One of these, the Gostwyck Bridge is close to my property and all the trucks going to and leaving the quarry cross this bridge on Primary Haul Route 1. The noise of the trucks is enormously increased as they stop and start to allow traffic in the opposite direction to cross and then rattle across the long timber approach spans of the bridge. The road to the bridge from the direction of the quarry (the trucks are then full) involves a bend to the right and then a steep downward incline to the bridge. Daracon's *Gostwyck Bridge* report did not mention this approach issue. Their *Traffic Impact Assessment* stated that the road safety review identified "the potential safety concern that the one-way bridge" "could lead to head-on collisions due to drivers not giving way" and suggested upgrades of widening or providing a new wider bridge. However, the assessment concluded that "it is proposed that the increased use of this route by trucks associated with the expansion of the quarry will not have a significant impact upon the safety at this location". On two occasions I have seen trucks fail to stop until they are on the bridge and cars that had started to cross from the opposite direction before the truck was visible being obliged to reverse off the bridge to allow the truck to proceed, since there was no way that it was going to reverse off and up the incline. I have no idea on how many other occasions this dangerous situation has occurred.

The amended development application allows for 10 trucks per day to return to the quarry between 6 and 7 pm for overnight loading to leave at 7am thus adding to the morning peak congestion.

When I first moved to this area Railcorp sent out most of the ballast mined by rail. The quarry has a rail line so transport to the railway does not involve trucking. The only viable solution for this

horrendous impact must involve a return to only this method of transport. There are at least 4 rail offloading locations within the Hunter region.

Disruption

During the years of illegal operations from 2012 to 2019 I have been woken each morning, during the periods of large amounts of quarrying, by the roar and rattle of trucks. Although the hours when the quarry was open were restricted, the truck movements past my home started well before then, so that trucks could be queued before the gates opened. The proposed new conditions require no truck movements through Paterson before 6.45am. Of course, for residents further away this would happen even earlier. The noise then continues all day. Gone is my peaceful rural home.

Leaving my driveway is also often difficult. On one occasion I counted 15 trucks that had to be allowed to pass before I could do so. The bridge bottleneck also results in a convoy, rather than a more diffuse flow of traffic. The direction of Dungog Road is to the east and for a considerable part of the year, sun glare in the morning makes travelling in that direction quite dangerous.

From my home on the opposite side of the bridge from the quarry I can hear the blasts at the quarry and see the dust plume. As the quarry is located so close to the township of Martins Creek, in spite of proposed noise mitigation measures, increased extraction will be awful for residents of that town.

The *Biodiversity Assessment Report* indicated quite an intense investigation. However, I was disappointed to note that no community wildlife groups appeared to have been consulted. It has long been reported locally that people have observed spot-tailed quolls in the Martins Creek area. I have also found a dead brush-tailed phascogale on my lawn and seen another one on the roadside between the bridge and the Gresford Road corner. Neither of these species were identified in the report.

Corporate Citizens

When Daracon acquired the Martins Creek Quarry its cost reflected the licence conditions. The company then proceeded to flout and ignore these conditions to make money and in doing so to damage the lives of the citizens of this area. This was particularly so during 2014 when Daracon greatly increased production beyond the legal limits in order to supply the rail relief track construction at Hexham. This even involved bringing in a portable crushing unit that was easily heard from my house. I see no moral reason why their illegal behaviour should be rewarded and now be made legal.

Should approval for the expansion be granted I believe I will be unable to continue to live in my home of thirty years. When I try to sell, the value of my property will have decreased considerably due entirely to the expansion of this quarry. Will I be entitled to compensation?