

MARTINS CREEK QUARRY PROJECT

APPLICATION NO. SSD-6612

I am opposed to the Martins Creek Quarry expansion.

My family has owned rural property in Webbers Creek (8 kms west of Paterson) since 1964. In October 1993, my husband and I made the decision to move from the city of Newcastle to the family property, and have lived here ever since, during which time we have raised 4 children. We love the peaceful, rural lifestyle, only 10 minutes from the quaint and historic village of Paterson.

My husband and I attended the public meeting on 24th June, along with 200 other concerned residents, all of whom are opposed to the expansion of the quarry, reasons voiced include:

- Perceived impacts to rural amenity
- Concerns over air quality and health
- The affects of industrial noise and blasting vibrations.
- Possible damage and devaluation of properties around the quarry site and along the haulage route.

The main concern of most, however, including my husband and I, is the forecasted increase in daily truck movements through our village, and surrounds.

The Martins Creek Quarry has a long history in the district as a small railway ballast quarry, with blasting only one day a week and minimal truck movements, as most of the material was transported by train, and the community was happy to live with this. This all changed when Daracon took over the operation in 2012 and operated unlawfully until 2019, at which time the extraction rate from the quarry was reduced substantially, after losing several court cases to Dungog Shire Council. With the current approval of 300,000 tons p.a. and a maximum of 24 truck movements per day, Paterson is back to being the quiet, relaxed village that it was before Daracon took over, at which time truck movements increased enormously, up to 500-600 movements daily. Even though we don't live on the haulage route, we were certainly impacted by the increased truck movements, as we travel the same route between Paterson and Maitland regularly and shop, socialise and collect our mail in Paterson daily. Often, with a convoy of trucks rumbling past, it was impossible to carry on a conversation anyway outside, and even inside the shops.

The road system through Paterson was developed in the 1900s, passing right through the township, past shops, service stations, Churches and halls, as well as residences, and crosses the main northern railway line. There are sharp turns, especially the 90 degrees turn, corner of Prince and Duke Streets, where it is impossible for trucks not to cross over the centre line to negotiate; a particularly dangerous situation for other traffic and pedestrians, as well as seriously damaging the road surface.

Conclusion

As residents, we have lived through the years between 2012 and 2019 and suffered the impacts that the increase in quarry operations, and especially the increased truck movements, had on our lifestyle. Not only did it impact on the serenity of our historic village, but also impacted on the safety on our roads, as drivers were regularly speeding, travelling in convoys, tailgating, and crossing over centre lines around sweeping beds and tight turns.

Daracon has had total disregard of the lawful operations of the quarry, and treated the community with contempt, as they have blatantly ignored the community's concerns. My husband and I attended the public meeting in Paterson in July 2014, along with more than 300 other concerned residents. The solution stated at this meeting by David Mingay, Daracon owner, was to "move somewhere else, away from the Paterson area." Such arrogance was very poorly received by the meeting attendees.

We strongly believe that the only solution is for the material to be taken out mostly by rail, or a haulage route to be constructed, avoiding the small villages, school bus stops and built up residential areas along the existing road network, which is inadequate to carry the proposed increase in heavy vehicles.