

Our Ref: AN.11.27

Phone Enquiries: (02) 4934 9700

Date 29/07/2021

James McDonough
Via Planning Portal

Dear Mr McDonough

RE: SUBMISSION ON THE MARTINS CREEK QUARRY EXTENSION PROJECT (SSD 6612)

I am writing to provide comments on behalf of Council in relation to the Environmental Impact Statement on public exhibition for Martins Creek Quarry Extension Project (SSD 6612).

Maitland City Council at its meeting of the 27th July 2021 resolved the following:

Council make a formal submission (objection) to the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. This will outline concerns over heavy vehicle movements, traffic impacts and noise as a result of the revised Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed expansion of the Martins Creek Quarry. As a result of these concerns, Council does not consider the proposal to be in the public interest.

Council acknowledges the main access route through the Maitland LGA is as follows: Martins Creek Quarry - Grace Avenue - Dungog Road - Gresford Road - Tocal Road - Paterson Road - Flat Road which then connects to the state road network Melbourne Street - New England Highway.

Since Buttai Gravel commenced operation of the Quarry in 2012, the increase in heavy truck volumes has resulted in increased complaints from residents regarding noise and road safety. Prior to the cessation of operations, it has been suggested that up to 600 truck movements in one day were occurring when the quarry was operating on its last major project. Residents complained about truck noise and road safety that stemmed from this project.

The five areas of contention were:

- the volume of trucks
- the early morning start and the continuing of the noise throughout the day
- the truck noise created by the pavement condition
- noise from empty trucks
- road safety in built up areas

Truck Volume Noise

Notwithstanding the suggested limitation of 140 one way truck movements per day for a maximum of 50 days per year, the proposed volumes of 280 truck movements per day (two-way) is still considered high and has the potential to create additional noise impacts for residents, particularly those in the residential areas along Tocal and Paterson Roads.

A Noise Impact Assessment has been undertaken by the proponent. This document largely focusses on the potential noise impacts from the quarry operations themselves but does consider an impact in noise from both road and rail movements.

In regards to noise impacts from the rail line, there is considered to be no increase in overall impacts. At a peak level of 600,000tpa of excavated materials, a total of three additional rail movements a day would be required. No modelling of these impacts has been undertaken.

In regards to noise impacts from road movements five locations were used to calculate heavy vehicle movements. Two, being Paterson Road and Flat Road were located in the Maitland LGA. The report presents a "worst case" model of impacts from the traffic movements. It finds that the modelling sites within the LGA are already exceeding the recommended maximum noise levels of 60db(A), and that the proposed truck movements would increase this by an average of 2db(A).

It is noted that the revised EIS removes the majority of heavy vehicle movements through Belmore Road and Lorn, which significantly reduces the amount of residential receivers.

Council, as part of its submission will request that:

- the vehicles be maintained on a regular basis to reduce engine and exhaust noise
- use of compression braking not be used on Paterson and Tocal Road residential areas (60kph and less speed zones).

Truck Noise created by Road pavement

Noise from existing road pavement was another issue previously raised by residents, generally caused by the road surface, but also nuisance truck engine noise associated with early morning operating hours and continuing during the day when operating at increased haulage rates. Noise has been reduced by the resurfacing and reconstruction of the pavement wearing course by Council. This will need to be strictly monitored to maintain the current pavement noise levels and may require more regular resurfacing treatments, should the pavement deteriorate and noise levels increase.

Council, with a suitable contribution from Buttai Gravel, should be able to provide a reasonable road surface over the life of the quarry to reduce road pavement noise.

Noise from Empty Trucks

The road pavement improvements and maintenance will go a long way to improve this however vehicle maintenance should also be extended to the trailer, bogey and tailgate to be possibly fitted with dampeners to reduce noise generated by empty trailers.

Road Safety

Issues have been raised about road safety and the number of heavy vehicles and speed in the narrow section of Tocal Road north of the Paterson Road intersection.

Council has previously undertaken the following:

- resurfaced this section of the road
- relocated the school / public bus stop
- constructed additional footpath paving
- delineating the travel lanes with pavement markings
- raised pavement markers
- implemented a restriction of no parking on the shoulders through this section which has widened the travel width of the pavement to 9 metres.

Martins Creek Quarry have:

- introduced a self-imposed speed restriction in reaction to community concerns to address the perceived road safety issue at choke points at Paterson and Bolwarra Heights.
- prepared a code of conduct for drivers
- indicated that the road width is diminished at Paterson Road and may be a safety issue for their trucks.
- acknowledged that parking restrictions and works undertaken by Council have improved the safety in this narrow section of the haulage route.

Traffic Congestion

The operators have indicated that their normal truck movements will be restricted to 280 two-way movements a day for a maximum of 50 days, decreasing to 200 movements two way movements for the remaining 200 days. A maximum of 40 two way movements are proposed. It is acknowledged that this is a reduction from previous proposed traffic movements from the proposal, however, the overall traffic network has become more congested. As a result, there is concern over the resulting hourly volume and its implications on the queuing of commuter traffic at the intersection of Pitnacree Road and Melbourne Street, East Maitland.

Road Maintenance

The heavy vehicle traffic will have an impact on Council roads and the annual contribution to the maintenance of Maitland Council sections along the haulage route. The defect report shows isolated pavement defects that will require monitoring and maintenance intervention. The maintenance value determined by Council is through the current Extractive Industries Contribution Plan.

Conclusion

As a result of the above, Council resolved that the revised EIS for the Martins Creek Quarry operations were not in the public interest and should therefore not be supported by Council. If the proposal is supported, then the following mitigation measures should be implemented:

- Monetary Contributions as per the 2016 Citywide Contributions Plan are to be imposed.

Reason: Council's apply a road maintenance contribution to quarry operators that generate heavy vehicle traffic on Council's local road network.

- Limit heavy vehicle travel speed during early hours through built area of Bolwarra and Bolwarra Heights.

Reasons: (a) Heavy vehicle traffic associated with the quarry travelling at early hours through built up areas such as Bolwarra, Bolwarra Heights where dwelling setbacks from the main road are 15m to 20m. (b) Empty trucks travelling to the quarry are more likely to cause higher traffic noise at higher speeds, (c) Heavy vehicle especially laden vehicles may cause excessive vibration on nearby dwellings.

- Travel conditions such as limiting travel speed by agreement with local Council's where issues are raised through government agencies associated with school traffic, and child care centres and aged care centres and the like along the identified access routes.

Reason: To ensure road safety around school, and ensure that environmental amenity is maintained

- Limit heavy vehicle volumes to specific periods of the day to minimise impact on residents and road traffic levels.

Reason: Peak heavy vehicle traffic generation associated with the quarry may occur for extended periods during major projects may cause noise above statutory thresholds (e.g. Bolwarra, Bolwarra Heights) and may impact on the service levels of part of the road network (Melbourne Street East Maitland signals at Pitnacree Road and at New England Highway).

- Heavy vehicle operators that provide services to the quarry maintain their vehicle fleet on a regular basis, and the use of compression braking not be used in the Paterson and Tocal Road residential areas (60kph and less speed zones).

Reason: To reduce engine and exhaust noise.

Please note that Martins Creek Quarry Action Group has made representation to Maitland City Council regarding the subject quarry development proposal.

Should you wish to discuss the matter further please contact Andrew Neil, Manager Strategic Planning on 02 4934 9821.

Yours sincerely



David Evans, PSM
General Manager