

**SUBMISSION**  
**MARTINS CREEK QUARRY PROJECT**

Application No SSD-6612

Location: Station Street Martins Creek

**References:**

- A. Planning, Industry & Environment, Letter, Notice to Landholder Resident of Martins Creek Quarry Project SSD-6612 at 43 Woodglen Close Paterson NSW 2421- Dated 03 June 2021
- B. DARACON Information Sheet 3 Amended Development Application and Response to Submission Summary.

**SUBJECT:**

This Submission is to notify NSW Government – PI&E -Major Projects that I **object to** and **oppose** the resumption of works at Martins Creek Quarry Project in its entirety.

My objections are outlined below it has left me with dirty drinking water, dust, noise, anger and worry for our future the increasing loss of biodiversity / extinction and level of destruction that is not reparable for generations to come. I strongly suggest not dismissing any of our community submissions as all of them have validity. I encourage you to please read the whole document.

**Introduction**

I am a resident of Martins Creek NSW 2421 and live at Woodglen Close (postal Paterson NSW 2421) 2.5 km from the quarry gate and have lived and experienced our Paterson valley and surrounding region, land and its residents for more than 22 years. I knew the quarry was here but unfortunately it turned into an ugly beast.

Our region with all its beauty has lived through many seasons over the years and I have been part of this journey all the way. It has beautiful rivers, creeks, flora and fauna unique to the region and extensive 'first settlers' human history of its own. Fresh air, quiet natural sounds, a healthy lifestyle brought me here from a noisy BHP polluted Newcastle.

I myself, in our region, have lived through several droughts, many floods, natural disasters such as fires, severe storms and recently even registering the highest temperatures over our summers in all of NSW.

The significant strain on our region since the arrival of Daracon Group has been very evident in many ways, which I will go into more detail below.

Sadly, our Council, Local and State government with its political dealings with Daracon Group and the said groups posturing and bullying have not shown any regard to our community in the past, now for its future. They have been selfserving and shown us the ugliest side of greed and conscious destruction of our environment and its people. The blatant disregard of these groups for our concerns resonates loud and clear.

Our community is resilient and will stick together, however we know that emotional sentiments are not highly regarded but we do know votes are.

2012 onwards - Daracon's illegal profiteering with its invasion of trucks, machinery, explosives, personnel (full-time, part-time and contractor many not from our region thus no regard for our community) are not what our community asked for and we certainly were not agreeing to the now historical irreparable damage, destruction and legacy of carnage they left behind. This is stemming back from 2012 to date. There are many other quarries that can be used to support the ever-increasing appetite for road construction. Martins Creek Quarry is not one of them.

The below points will use the headings in reference B to cover reasons for objecting to the said SSD-6612 per reference A. The project overview claims to have consulted and considered concerns raised previously by residents of Paterson community. I will offer my lived experience as I had not been consulted and we know recent local elections has shown us that even our state leaders do not care for regional NSW.

### **Stakeholder Engagement**

Daracon has not made any concerted effort to gain local community trust or respect and this will continue to be the case in the future. Indeed, the engagement summary per Ref. B (first one I have seen am sure the letter drop was only targeted at select few previously – a biased approach) may outline number of engagements, interestingly I have not heard nor seen anyone from Umwelt or from local council showing interest in how Daracon has affected my neighborhood.

### **Truck Movements**

The new plan is asking to reinstate the “trucking horror” attempting to set the illegal operation between 2012-2018 as a baseline norm. A dangerous thought! Does the Department of PI&E have short term memory loss? What ever happened to the data collected when Tocal road was surveyed for how much traffic movement it had?

The data and related calculations offered up in Ref. B may address the ‘Sales’ however does not show the true impact using the road has had and will have with another volley of Daracon’s rock extraction plan request if it is approved. Rigid trucks with or without dog – trailers that moved to and from the quarry were in convoy of six to ten or more every three to five minutes from 2012 onwards.

I travel to work every day on Tocal road from 6 am onwards, for over 20 years and had to factor in a longer trip into Maitland Hospital by the time 2013 rolled around, sometimes an extra 20 minutes. Initially only one or two trucks would be around I would overtake the truck (there were usually only two or three cars on the road at that time a safe option) on a ‘country road’. Later on, one truck would turn into six or more and they stuck together like a train set this both ways. As time went on the haulage became earlier from 4.30 am onwards trucks in the fog and mist humming, waiting to get into the quarry, parked wherever they could, initially only Monday to Friday then Saturdays as well. Our council turning a blind eye.

My routine health and fitness regime consisted of a few times per week jog or cycle along Martins Creek road, or even completing a cycle loop through Martins Creek and Paterson village was once a quiet, safe, beautiful trip filled with nature sounds but then it became hazardous. However, heading towards Black Rock Road became a life or death experience. Wearing a high viz vest did not make trucks slow down some even appeared to drive straight at you. The children and other walkers I used to pass slowly disappeared. I once witnessed the local school bus having to slow down and literally stop in its tracks a few times to let a truck pass. The school bus had a set route and turn around area on the road at the Martins Creek school this was at times hazardous. Speed limits were ignored by the truck drivers.

I remember overtaking a truck in the early morning and it attempting to race me towards Tocal just for fun. The truck with dog trailer in speeds excess of 110km/hr. A cat and mouse game.

I lost three windscreens had broken headlights and had the equivalent of sandblasting experiences to my car with oncoming trucks. An expensive scary and dangerous experience.

Another time I remember driving on Martins Creek Road around 9 am heading towards Martins Creek village going to Vacy to get bread and newspaper (part of "My Local"), I just turned out of Woodglen Close and a Truck fully loaded with rocks without trailer, a young driver was accelerating and heading towards me not slowing and he then moved on to the edge of the road spraying me with huge amount of gravel and dirt, showering my car cracking my windscreen he nearly lost control, he kept going and I came to a grinding halt. The Martins Creek rail bridge had a load limit back then and this was clearly no deterrent for the truck drivers. It is now all concrete.

Not only trucks but also convoys of work Utes heading to work to the quarry increased in numbers most of them not local workers with no local economic benefits, they would speed up and down Tocal and Martins Creek road to make work in time overtaking on Martins Creek road even though the road is not designed for this (this was the shorter rout for them). A local traffic road used as a speedway.

### **Noise, Blasting and Vibration**

The noise would start at 4.30 am on a Monday and finish Saturday evening. Relentless droning noise with air breaks would echo and resonate through the valley. I am a shift worker and getting sleep during the day was becoming impossible.

I also remember one the day without warning, being home during the week, being subject to one of the largest quarry blasts occurring. I was in my lounge room with the windows being sucked in, they shook and rattled and the ground tremor was noticeable. There were no earthquakes that day. Several blast over numerous other months would follow.

I am left with a house sitting on who knows what foundations due to the tremors. Of course, this will not be believed it's in the past. I am left with fixing cracked tiles.

All the monitoring can perhaps be done however to claim per Ref. B that blast magnitudes do not cause residential property damage is not correct checking this would open up litigation.

### **Dust and Dirty Drinking Water**

The gray very fine clay rock dust that would collect on my verandahs and decks on windy days, in my fly screens and windows was quite marked it would mean having to use my precious drinking water to clean the place.

Indeed, living in a rural location means collecting drinking water into our water tanks we used to have clean safe water then the dust came needing to filter and clean our water tanks, drought does not help this situation when you have to save every little drop.

### **Biodiversity**

This was very evident every day with a minimum of 5 to 10 dead wallabies, wombats on the road even dead livestock. Heartbreaking when you see our wildlife half dead with joeys in pouch. These are the large animals, I also had to endure seeing among others dead echidnas, bandicoots, tawny frogmouths, potaroos, possums and the not seen for more than six years now missing in action sugar gliders. We even have rare sighting's of koalas but they will not stay if there are no trees.

I have yet to see our local government area demonstrate real effort in conservation acknowledging the real loss of biodiversity. I know that on my last count the small remnant bushland has to sustain over 70 species of birds all relying on their food source being the forest, further lost through fires and hot climate and clear-felling by Daracon is not sustainment.

The Daracon Biodiversity Rehabilitation Plan is an insult to our community intelligence. Once a species is wiped out it is not able to be 'rehabilitated' – it is gone forever no animal or plant can return to a whole in the ground.

Clear felling and per Ref. B 'removing' another 21 ha of land just to expose some more soil and rocks is criminal with today's climate emergency well documented to cool the climate we need trees. Our local council does not even have a clear policy on protecting our trees indeed any corridors that are left are free game. Paterson valley and its surrounding hills are remnants of Volcanic origin and there are very special pockets of flora and fauna left. Less than a kilometer behind the quarry up Vogel Road, you can still find sub-tropical forest patches with Giant Stinging Nettle trees, with lower slopes of dry sclerophyll forest.

Fauna Flora repository for local species is something that needs cherishing building on not destroying. The real loss of wildlife in our region is very obvious once upon a time, five years ago, we even had a family of Regen Honeyeaters. We have the Paterson river catchment dividing the region with very distinct types of marsupials living on either side of the river. The birdlife is extremely diverse and relies on our remaining trees and shrubs for survival. Martins Creek and its surrounding roads are all wildlife corridors linked and need protecting.

## **Historical and Cultural Heritage and Social Toll**

Our historical, cultural significant Paterson region is unique and deserves protecting. We have much to offer. Our social network is diverse. We rely on visitors coming to our region and enjoying the peace and quiet. Approval for another 25 years of Daracon horror is reckless and dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists alike, to again turn our region into an industrial highway if this quarry expansion is approved. I look at the picture on page 10 and 11 of Ref. B and sadly it is not an inviting site. Our property values have not increased as nobody would want to buy in a region that overlooks a great big hole in the ground putting up with noise and the safety of our future generation children in doubt.

## **Recommendations**

1. Put in tourist friendly infrastructure, construct a dedicated lane along roads for cyclists, walkers and joggers even horse riding to enjoy connecting /looping Tocal, Paterson, Martins Creek, Vacy and Gresford thus allowing families and cyclists alike to stop at historical sites and landmarks. We know the region is enjoyed by many even some getting married at Tocal homestead or dropping in for a beer and lunch at the Paterson Pubs.
2. Plant more trees increase our biodiversity and expand on our Flora and Fauna Repository. Educate the community and our region as an eco-tourist destination. We have Paterson river Tucker Park picnic area for example. Beautify not destroy. Look at the pocket of rainforest recovery planted tree at Webbers Creek for example it can be done.
3. Dungog Council needs to get a real environmental protection biodiversity plan in place protect our last remaining giant river gums and show the region it can be done.
4. Do not approved further quarry expansion.