

Stuart Fullerton

4 Wesley Street,

Bolwarra Heights. 2320

Proposal Martins Creek Quarry Project (SSD-6612)

Statement I Object to the Proposal.

Reasons I object because I believe it to be a massive overdevelopment because of;
the unsuitability of quarry location for massive extraction volume increases,
the unsuitability of proposed product delivery and distribution methods,
the unsuitability of proposed operational hours,
the truck noise, numbers and the disturbance they create as well as other key safety concerns.

We live nearby the proposed haulage route along Tocal Road through Bolwarra Heights and have done so for more than 20 years. Maitland is a rapidly growing region and a major NSW growth area. This growth places great strain on existing infrastructure and road networks and sees quite significant and lengthy delays for pedestrians and commercial and passenger vehicles alike at key intersections along the proposed haulage corridor without any additional numbers of quarry trucks. Commuters already face excruciating delays behind more than enough heavy vehicles, traffic jams and roads well over their designed capacity. There are already significant pedestrian and road user safety issues and productivity delays with increasing population and traffic congestion along the proposed haulage corridor.

Recent decisions by Federal Ministers on, most notably, the Hanson Quarry at Brandy Hill will see upwards of 600 daily truck movements 24/7 through Maitland and Port Stephens LGA. The Hunter Region and our LGA's already bear a heavy industrial burden with our coal mines. Our LGA's are designated state growth areas with entire new suburbs emerging from green fields and along transport corridors. I believe that this approval should not be a political decision but based on merit. This particular quarry is just not in an area which could easily accommodate their expansion plans.

It appears Daracon has finally accepted and acknowledged that their previous proposals for massive increases in tonnage output, from what was a minor rail ballast quarry in Martins Creeks, were never realistic given the strong opposition and for all the reasons that still remain. This latest application, to increase tonnage output by more than 350%, remains as it was, an unacceptable land use development in my opinion.

We have a lived experience of just how intolerable life becomes, living with anything like these additional numbers of quarry truck movements during the many years of Daracon's unlawful operations at Martins Creek. Their trucks generated significant noise and disturbance over and over again starting from 5.30 a.m. and continuing all day. Assessment of these noise levels would find that they are significant, unreasonable and unacceptable. Our home is approximately 100 metres from Tocal Road and shakes a bit and the vibrations can be felt. Our section of Tocal Road was renovated/upgraded which for a time reduced some of the noise impacts but potholes soon reappeared along with the truck noise.

We found our neighbours also suffered serious disruptions with sleep deprivation and the inability to escape the constant noise and vibrations. We could spend no time in our gardens as they were too noisy to have a conversation or a phone call let alone enjoy some amenity. The cumulative impact of these disruptions and the constant and almost continuous nature of them became quite significant.

People living under Sydney's flight path face similar disturbances. All NSW residents have the right to the peaceful enjoyment of their home and property without the intrusion of excessive or offending noise. Persistent noise has an impact on every facet of daily life while you are in your own home and has a debilitating effect on a person's mental state of mind and ultimately physical health. No one should have the right to impact people's lives in such an intrusive manner.

Tocal Road is one of Maitland's only streets with no on-street parking already reducing the available roadway. Through Bolwarra Heights the road is quite sloped and windy with telegraph poles inches from the road and no shoulder or verge and double yellow lines. Vehicles often speed through here at dangerous speeds. Police advised they had stepped up patrols but were hampered in their ability to effectively monitor speed limits due to the narrow road and many bends. Dangerous situations are common with sharp braking as vehicles enter or leave, the road wear pattern shows where vehicles are over the lines, busses turn off from the wrong side of the road, and people overtake the resource recovery vehicles emptying bins as well as speed.

Twice daily we walk along Tocal and Paterson Road as well as daily drives to and from work, etc, so are well familiar with these roads. We already have major safety concerns walking these streets due to their narrowness, lack of shoulder and proximity to footpaths and fence lines. Tocal Road, especially, narrows just before it meets Paterson Road at a service station and now has a concrete centre line divider, metal post and sign in the middle of the road narrowing it even more and a blind exit from the service station! This intersection is where the other major quarry expansion project from Hanson at Brandy Hill and Martins Creek Quarry will meet. This is a natural pinch point in the haulage routes of the two quarries. From here to New England Highway their combined truck numbers would be massive.

Quarry operations throughout the area need to be viewed and considered with regard to their cumulative impacts. Brandy Hill quarry expansion (application #5899) also seeks planning approval to increase production to 1.5 million tonnes p.a. with 600 + daily truck movements and extend their hours of operations to 24/7. Any increase in tonnage from one quarry adds to already unacceptable numbers of heavy vehicles throughout the area. The productivity losses suffered by the entire community along the designated routes and their interfaces with Melbourne Street, New England Highway would be appalling. How many trucks would end up stacked nose to tail as only one or two at a time can progress through a light change? That there have been no serious crashes or fatalities has been as a result of sheer good luck and should not be allowed to substitute for good management practises, effective supervision and suitable distribution methods for product delivery.

Traffic Impact Assessment prepared by Daracon claim the road traffic impacts of the revised project would be minimal upon the operation of the key intersections along the primary haul route and is not expected to have any adverse impacts on the safety of the road network. If this were even possible perhaps Daracon could send these trucks to Sydney to help them clean up their traffic and safety issues? Along the proposed route there will be drastic and competing usage needs. Trucks use the road network as an industrial corridor or conveyor with time pressure to haul just one more load, whilst we merely wish to get on with our lives in safety and with some amenity.

A Moratorium on all quarry tonnage increases until an enquiry is completed to reduce the social and environmental impacts of transporting these products needs to be imposed till a fully funded plan is implemented to transport the products sustainably, effectively and equitably with due regard for residents' concerns.

Daracon is seeking an over 366% increase to their existing DA and yet the latest version of Daracon's Martins Creek Quarry Update Information Sheet 3 has their marketing department saying reductions! Yes. Minor reductions in their plans to create a super quarry from a quiet rail ballast pit. These minor reductions would, at best, be reflected in minor reductions in the environmental and social amenity impacts already identified by their own research and do little to repair the community distrust in Daracon and their ability to monitor and manage identified impacts.

We will again be directly, substantially and significantly adversely impacted by this project's approval.

The proposed haulage route through Bolwarra Heights on Tocal Road is most unsuitable.

As representatives of the Bolwarra Heights Community Group we had private meetings with the owner David Mingay and his associates to voice our concerns directly to them. We've participated in every meeting regarding this project and taken part in the farcical process of "community consultation" where the main issues could not be discussed with Daracon and all of it for no result. The proponent would not try to reach a compromise on tonnage, number of vehicles per hour, hours of operation, traffic and customer management systems and processes, methods of delivery or, in reality, address any of the residents' deep and serious concerns with the levels of noise, dust and other pollutants we're being exposed to or the increased levels of danger posed by the excessive numbers of heavy vehicles on our streets. As a consequence of our dealings with this company we express no faith in the management.

The proponent has freely expressed the fact that they have no control over the behaviour of vehicles attending their quarry other than their own Daracon trucks and drivers. The vast majority of all heavy vehicles to and from Martins Creek Quarry are not Daracon vehicles. We gained a commitment that Daracon trucks, at least, would observe the speed limit through our section of Tocal Road, 60kph, and in fact would try to travel at 40kph. This 'code of conduct' quickly fell apart and we again became familiar with aggressive and dangerous driving behaviour by other vehicles. There would need to be effective and enforceable regulations of quarry operations and truck movements throughout the life of the quarry.

This process has taken far too long. It is deeply regrettable that delays were in the proponent's interests, ensuring this process took as long as possible whilst enjoying windfall profits, flagrantly disregarding residents' concerns and the terms and conditions of their DA, with no legal basis for their levels of production.

Personally, I find it galling that Daracon is gaining itself a monopoly on regional projects with their signs on innumerable sites whilst disregarding the damage they're causing the community and the environment. Trucks from quarries, in particular, are causing significant negative impacts on quality of life and social amenity. We've witnessed the industrialising of our quiet semi-rural and suburban roads to an intolerable level that would be unacceptable in any other area or for any other product such as coal. The few jobs the proponent asserts will be created are more than offset by the loss of so many other jobs and enterprises most especially in the hospitality and tourism sectors. How can one company be allowed to take so much from so many and for so long?

I accept that a reduced haulage route does mean a reduction in costs of material but at what price to the rest of the community? I think you should leave Daracon with the tonnage levels that they originally purchased i.e., 300,000 tonnes p/a with 75% to be shipped along rail network and Monday to Friday operations 8 a.m. till 4 p.m. At the time of purchase from the SRA the proponent knew full well the tonnage and operational restrictions on this sensitive site and area. There is no doubt Daracon have enjoyed substantial windfall profits given their disregard for any restrictions on their operations or tonnage since then.

There needs to be a substantial reduction in truck numbers through greater use of the rail capacity of the quarry through the establishment of a rail distribution centre linked to major road infrastructure. Truck numbers need to reflect the actual truck numbers in and out of the quarry whether delivering material to site or moving material off site.

There needs to be a limit on the hours of operation of the quarry with regards to its transport corridor through residential areas. Quarry open at 7a.m. would see, hear and feel trucks through Bolwarra at 5.30 am.to 6 a.m.

Any and all trucks need to be suitable and fit for purpose giving due regard to the many kilometres of suburban and country roads they will traverse and suitably equipped to limit noise in residential areas and regularly checked by RMS.

Thank you for your consideration.

Declaration

I have not made any reportable political donations in the previous two years.

I have not made a reportable political donation.

Kind Regards

Stuart Fullerton