

## SUBMISSION ON THE PROPOSED EXPANSION OF THE MARTINS CREEK QUARRY PROJECT

SSD-6612

EPBC ID Number 2016/7725

I oppose this project.

This application, proposed by Daracon, is for the expansion of the existing quarry with production to increase from the approved rate to 1.1 million tonnes per year. I oppose any expansion over and above the limits and conditions of the existing approval for the quarry.

My reasons for opposing the expansion, as proposed by Daracon, are: -

1. The expansion cannot be justified
2. My expectation of 'quiet enjoyment' at my home in my retirement will be shattered.
3. The expectation of a continuing rural outlook by many existing residents of Martins Creek will be lost.
4. Unacceptable impact on fauna depending on mature flora and bushland.
5. The village atmosphere of my suburb will be destroyed.
6. Local cafes and restaurants will suffer loss of trade.
7. The safety of pedestrians in my shopping precinct will be at risk.
8. The safety of local and visiting motorists will be compromised.
9. Increase in localised air pollution from carcinogenic diesel particulates, dust and CO2 through built-up areas, school and child care localities.
10. Considerably more diesel exhaust pollution from road haul trucks compared to rail movements.
11. Cumulative impact of damage to rural roads, not designed nor suited to the expected truck volume and loads.
12. Excessive haul distance along rural roads before accessing highways.
13. Seriously increased congestion at Pitnacree Rd. / Melbourne St. intersection.

1. It appears the various attachments and resources provided for Daracon on the State Government's Major Projects website fail to provide justification for the expansion. There are numerous existing quarries servicing the NSW market including the Martins Creek quarry contributing up to 330 000 tonnes of product per year. Although Daracon may argue it is providing extra employment opportunities, the reality is any extra employment with the quarry expansion would be at the expense of jobs at other quarries. This proposal could lead to an over-supply of product, benefiting no-one.

To justify an approval of this expansion, Daracon should be required to make a case that, without this particular expansion, the area currently serviced by the quarry would suffer a shortage of quarry product. Daracon should also be required to show how its proposed expansion benefits a) Dungog Shire b) Maitland LGA c) the Hunter Valley d) the Sydney/Newcastle/Mid North Coast areas.

2. I live in Lorn and just a few houses back from Belmore Road. During the years when Daracon was operating at well above the approved extraction rate we were constantly impacted by truck and dog trailer combinations rumbling and rattling along Belmore Road as they headed out to the quarry, empty and at any time after 6am, to get an early start to their day. I don't need to be woken from sleep at this hour! But this constantly happened.

Although Daracon states that Lorn is considered to be an area that can be avoided *if required*, there is no guarantee that Lorn would be avoided by heavily loaded truck and dog trailer combinations on their outward journey and the probability Lorn would be used by returning trucks, just as they have done.

3.Many residents of Martins Creek would have assumed the disturbance to the local environment would have continued at a rate not exceeding the rate granted in the original quarry approval. The expansion as proposed by Daracon would severely impact the quality of life of the Martins Creek residents.

4.Daracon's proposed development would see hectares of mature bushland being removed with associated impact on fauna depending on it. Not only is it mature vegetation in the Martins Creek area being destroyed but the unacceptable cumulative impact of further destruction of a mature ecosystem environment.

5.Just as my quiet enjoyment will be shattered if this proposal is approved, so too will the village atmospheres of Lorn and Paterson be destroyed. Trucks delivering Martins Creek products often use noisy compression braking within school and shopping areas.

6.Local cafes, patisseries and restaurants, both in Lorn and Paterson, have developed an enviable reputation as 'destinations' for locals and travellers from further afield. A considerable downturn in trade is likely should this development as proposed by Daracon be approved.

7.Pedestrian safety in shopping precincts and along the various haul routes would be seriously impacted. Although there is a 50kmh speed limit and 40kmh limit in school hours and there are two pedestrian crossings in the shopping and school precincts in Lorn, an obviously heavily laden truck approaching a pedestrian is a daunting prospect.

Similarly, pedestrians going about their business in Paterson would be impacted by up to 280 truck movements per day and up to 40 truck movements per hour.

8. The tight "T" intersection of Duke St and Gresford Rd Paterson is still just as big a problem as ever for cars and other vehicles negotiating the corner while truck and trailer combinations are entering the corner from the opposite direction. The proposed increase in truck movements would create this corner as a 'black spot'.

With increasing residential development in the Maitland LGA the road network through Bolwarra Heights, Bolwarra, East Maitland and Lorn is becoming very busy at times. A further 280 truck movements per day would create havoc leading onto the Belmore bridge and Melbourne Street East Maitland.

Drivers attempting to park in the shopping areas would likely be intimidated by the frequency of the trucks also using the roads.

9.The State Government provides air quality alerts for NSW and the Lower Hunter Valley often receives alerts advising of poor air quality, especially in dry weather. Of particular concern are airborne particulates in the PM10 and PM2.5 ranges. An air quality alert was issued for the Lower Hunter on Saturday 03/07/2021 stating 'Air quality category has reached Poor or worse due to PM2.5.' These particles include dust and diesel exhaust. Diesel exhaust particles are considered carcinogenic. Increased dust from both empty and laden trucks plus carcinogenic diesel exhaust particles increases the health risk for pedestrians and also for children in schools and childcare centres along the haul routes. The risk of increased lung disease from dust and diesel emissions in children in nearby schools and child care centres would be a real concern.

10.The diesel emissions on a tonne-for-tonne quarried product basis would be much greater from road haulage compared to rail haulage. The Lower Hunter and the entire ecosystem need to drastically reduce diesel emissions and 600 000 tonnes of product per year hauled by road would have a considerable negative environmental impact.

11.The cumulative impact on rural roads from the recently expanded Brandy Hill quarry and an expanded Martins Creek quarry must be considered. It is expected that approximately 25% of all product from the Brandy Hill quarry will travel by road through Bolwarra Heights into the Paterson Road/Flat Road network.

Daracon's reports state there is little difference in road surface conditions between haul roads and non-haul roads and the average pothole depth being, in their thinking, of little consequence. Despite this there have been and will continue to be occasional suspension busting potholes, especially in wet weather, in roads not designed for the tonnage likely to be trucked under Daracon's proposal.

12.Even if road haulage was the only option for haulage from Martins Creek, which it is not, the haulage distance along rural roads before accessing highways is far in excess of reasonable. The existing Martins Creek quarry approval is for transportation of 70% of product by rail via an existing and operating dedicated rail siding within the quarry. Although the balance of product has approval for transport by road, the quarry is not located near a major road or highway but some 28 kilometres distance from Maitland and the New England Highway. Road transport to the highway is therefore via rural roads and passing through historic Paterson township and past the Tocal College, schools and a child care centre.

There are many existing quarries serving the same customers as the Martins Creek quarry. However, these other quarries are adjacent to or close to highways. Road haulage from the Martins Creek quarry should be restricted to no more than the existing approval rate.

13.The intersection between Pitnacree Road and Melbourne Street East Maitland is a very busy intersection with many vehicles using the Pitnacree Road – Flat Road route to avoid the Maitland railway station roundabout on the New England Highway. Although the Flat Road/Melbourne Street route has been assigned as a haul route to bypass Lorn Village, laden truck/trailer units, having been stopped on the incline of Pitnacree Road at the Melbourne Street traffic lights would cause considerable traffic flow problems in starting from stationary and turning into Melbourne Street.

I am convinced Daracon cannot justify its proposed expansion. However, despite the negative societal and environmental impact such an expansion of the quarry would have and, despite the considerable opposition of the communities that would be affected by a such a major increase in output, this application may still prevail. Should the proposal be approved, there should be strict conditions applied and enforced. A most important condition should be no increase in product being transported by road. Any increased product should be transported by rail only.