

Our ref: Eagleton Quarry (SSD-7332)

Andrew Mills
Chair
NSW Independent Planning Commission
GPO Box 3415
Sydney NSW 2001

26 April 2024

Subject: Eagleton Quarry – Referral to the NSW Independent Planning Commission

Dear Mr Mills

The Department has completed its assessment of the merits of the application for the Eagleton Quarry (SDD-7332; the Project). The application is referred to the NSW Independent Planning Commission (the Commission) for determination as there were more than 50 unique public submissions objecting to the proposal.

Eagleton Rock Syndicate Pty Ltd (Eagleton Rock Syndicate) proposes to develop a new State significant hard rock quarry to extract, process and transport up to 600,000 tonnes per annum of hard rock material over a 30-year period. The Project is located in the locality of Eagleton, approximately 12 kilometres north of Raymond Terrace, within the Port Stephens local government area.

The Department publicly exhibited the Project from 3 February to 2 March 2017. Eagleton Rock Syndicate provided a submissions report on 13 October 2017. Then, on 11 September 2023, in response to further agency feedback on the submissions report, Eagleton Rock Syndicate lodged an amended development application that proposed a revised site access and road haulage route for the Project. All other aspects of the Project remained consistent with the original application. The amended Project was also publicly exhibited from 10 October to 6 November 2023.

During the two public exhibitions, the Department received 70 public submissions, including 67 objecting submissions of which 63 were considered unique. The Department also received advice from 10 State government agencies and Port Stephens Council.

The Department carried out site visits in 2017 and 2023.

Owing to the Project's potential for amenity impacts on nearby residents, noise and air quality were key assessment issues for the Department. Due to the proposed road haulage of quarry products and concerns over the use of the Italia Road intersection with the Pacific Highway, impacts on the safety and efficiency of the road network was another focus of the Department's assessment.

Lastly, given that the Project proposes the clearing of remnant vegetation within the Grahamstown Dam drinking water catchment, impacts to biodiversity and water resources were also key assessment issues for the Department.

The Department has carried out a detailed assessment of the merits of the Project, having regard to Eagleton Rock Syndicate's project documentation, advice from NSW government agencies and all public submissions. The Department has also considered the objects of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act* (EP&A Act) and relevant considerations under Section 4.15(1) of the EP&A Act.

Based on this assessment, the Department considers that Eagleton Rock Syndicate has designed the Project in a way that would achieve a practicable balance between maximising resource recovery and minimising associated impacts on the surrounding landholders and the environment.

The Department has carefully weighed the environmental impacts of the Project against the significance of the identified hard rock resource and the wider socio-economic benefits associated with operating the quarry for 30 years under a contemporary development consent. On balance, the Department considers that the benefits of the Project outweigh its residual costs, the site is suitable, and that the Project is in the public interest and is approvable, subject to the recommended conditions of consent.

I have attached a copy of the Department's assessment report and recommended conditions of consent for the Commission's consideration.

If you have any questions, please contact me on [REDACTED] or via email at [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

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Jessie Evans

Director

Energy and Resource Assessments