



STRICT NEW CONDITIONS IMPOSED AS IPC APPROVES EXPANSION OF BRANDY HILL QUARRY

16 July 2020

The state's independent planning umpire has imposed tough new conditions to mitigate amenity and road safety impacts as part of its approval of a quarry expansion north of Newcastle.

Hanson Construction Materials Pty Ltd (the Applicant) sought approval to expand operations at its Brandy Hill Quarry, 10km northwest of Raymond Terrace, which produces construction material for major infrastructure projects across NSW.

As part of its state significant development application, Hanson sought to:

- extend the extraction area by approximately 55 hectares (ha), from 19.5 ha to 74.5 ha
- increase production from 700,000 tonnes to 1.5 million tonnes per annum
- extend product transport and operating hours into the evening and nighttime periods
- construct and operate a concrete batching and recycling facility, and
- import solid concrete waste for reprocessing and beneficial reuse.

The Department of Planning, Industry & Environment finalised its whole-of-government assessment of the application in May this year. It came to the Independent Planning Commission for determination after the Department received 169 objections from members of the public and special interest groups.

Commissioners Peter Duncan AM (Panel chair), Steve O'Connor and Annelise Tuor were appointed to consider the application and make a final decision. The Panel met with the Applicant, Department and Maitland and Port Stephens Councils to discuss the proposed quarry expansion. They also visited the project site and surrounding areas.

The Commission also hosted a successful electronic public meeting to listen to the community's concerns. Residents who participated in the public meeting via telephone and video conferencing facilities expressed concerns about potential impacts associated with a significant increase in activity at the quarry, including impacts on road safety from an increase in heavy vehicle movements, loss of local amenity and lifestyle impacts from excessive noise, dust and vibration.

After considering all the evidence, the Commission has today (Thursday 16 July 2020) determined to approve the quarry expansion, concluding that "while the project will result in social impacts, these impacts have been mitigated through the imposition of conditions and are reasonable when balanced against the benefits of the Project."

In its Statement of Reasons for Decision, the Commission noted that it "agrees with the Department's assessment and does not support the proposed hours of operation for processing and transport due to adverse impacts on local amenity through the evening and night time periods, noting the extensive rural residential development that has been established around the quarry since it was originally approved in 1983."

In addition to the restrictions recommended by the Department, the Commission found that:

- the increase in heavy vehicle traffic associated with the Quarry expansion poses a safety risk on Brandy Hill Drive. In order to mitigate this impact, the Commission has imposed a condition that requires certain road infrastructure works, namely six bus bays and a shared pathway, to be constructed in Brandy Hill Drive prior to any increase in production from the Quarry.
- truck movements in the early morning (prior to 6am) would unreasonably impact the well-being of residents living along the haulage routes. On this basis, the Commission has imposed a condition to further restrict trucks from entering the site prior to 6am and that the Applicant be required to implement management measures to prevent trucks travelling on the haulage routes before this time.

The Commission has also included a condition which requires lands in the ownership of the Applicant but outside the Approved Disturbance Area (described as “Buffer Lands”) to be retained, which will screen the Project from the surrounding residential area. This will help preserve the area’s rural character, as well as separate noise-generating activities from residential receptors and assist in maintaining vegetation and biodiversity values.

The Commission’s full Statement of Reasons for Decision is available here:

<https://www.ipcn.nsw.gov.au/projects/2020/05/brandy-hill-quarry-expansion-project-ssd-5899>

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