Thursday 18 June 2020

Office of the Independent Planning Commission NSW

Level 3, 201 Elizabeth Street

SYDNEY NSW 2000

**RE: Brandy Hill Quarry Expansion Project SSD 5899**

Dear Commissioner(s),

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission. My name is Connie Flack and I am a resident of Giles Road, Seaham. My husband, three daughters and I moved here from Sydney in 2011 and we’ve enjoyed a relatively peaceful, rural lifestyle, despite living only two kilometres away from the Brandy Hill Quarry. I am making this submission to strenuously oppose the expansion of Hanson’s Brandy Hill Quarry.

My key concerns are: air quality, loss of koala and other native wildlife habitat, increase in noise pollution, increase in truck movements on country roads, effects on tank/drinking water, the void left as a result of the extraction and the potential impacts on waterways and the loss of the rural lifestyle we know and love living here.

To begin with, I am not satisfied with Hanson’s air, noise and blast monitoring methods. Potential air quality impacts predicted would be unreliable due to the use of antiquated methods of sampling. This is a major concern considering residents of Giles Road, and other nearby areas, rely solely on tank water. Any increase in exposure to harmful PM10 and PM2.5 is not acceptable. Air pollution is, in fact, a major killer but the health and wellbeing of our families does not seem to be of concern to Hanson. I would like to urge that further independent studies be carried out before the Commission reach a decision.

Secondly, Hanson propose to destroy 45.8 hectares of undisturbed, natural koala habitat which is also home to a number of other vulnerable native wildlife. A report by Biosis Pty Ltd found this to significantly impact the koala population at a national level. Biodiversity is the foundation that supports all life and we must conserve our natural habitat especially in view of the recent catastrophic effects of bushfires and drought. Mitigation methods proposed by Hanson are inadequate and need to be reviewed. The future of our koalas is at stake.

Furthermore, the increase in truck movements on our country roads is another major concern. The proposal to limit Hanson’s truck speed limit to 60klm p/hour on Brandy Hill Drive, to reduce noise, in my opinion, would be a huge safety issue causing frustration to drivers getting stuck behind a truck doing 60 klm p/hour on an 80 klm p/hour road, there being nowhere safe for overtaking and possibly resulting in drivers taking dangerous risks by overtaking. Also, the impact of the increase in truck movements effects a lot more people than reported by Hanson’s studies. These studies do not take into account the many residents who live on Seaham Road, Clarence Town Road and Paterson Road, some of those whose homes are just metres from the road.

Also of concern is the noise produced by the crusher. Hanson propose to extend their hours of operation. How is it that we, as residents, are required to limit, for example, the use of lawn mowers etc to specified hours, yet Hanson can assume to operate 24 hours? Currently we hear the incessant crushing noise through to as late as 10pm. Crusher activities should be restricted from 6am to 8pm Monday to Friday as they are a key source of potential amenity impact on the local community.

Finally, I would like to mention my experiences with the processes involved with this proposal. Initially, Hanson came across as being willing to listen to the community and their concerns but more and more they have shown to be just ‘ticking boxes’, forming Community Consultative Committees and Have a Chat sessions, even offering residents free materials to repair driveways after the 2015 super storm. But, it is all just smoke and mirrors, which not only is affecting our physical health but also our mental health. The actual effort involved in even putting in a submission is very draining and stressful (I am at this moment writing this submission and it is 1:30am) and I know that many residents just haven’t been able to make submissions because of the anxiety it brings. And, our community is not the only one affected. Hanson are causing the same level of concern elsewhere as well. The residents of Lysterfield in Victoria are going through a similar situation with the Hanson Quarry there. These large corporations cannot be permitted to continue to ruin the lives of so many people.

In closing, we chose to live here for the peace, serenity and the vibe of a rural, country lifestyle. We tolerate the current operations of Hanson’s Brandy Hill Quarry, the frequent blasts that rattle our windows and shake our foundations, the constant sound of crushing, the plumes of dust that can be seen for miles, the trucks that thunder down our roads. To grant this expansion, as proposed, would be unbearable and have a detrimental effect on our lives. I urge the Commissioners to listen to my concerns and those of the community. They are real and they are valid.

Thank you again for the opportunity to make this submission.

Sincerely

Connie Flack

Giles Road, Seaham

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