Development Application Brandy Hill Quarry Expansion

Application No SSD 5899

We strongly object to this expansion, especially the suggestion that Hanson be allowed to operate the Brandy Hill Quarry 24 hours a day. Even the expanded hours suggested in the Recommended Conditions\_May20 are unreasonable.

We live on Adelaide Street and we objected to the expansion in writing in April 2017, copy attached. Our issues were never addressed as Hanson’s seems to prefer to define those ‘impacted’ to a small area, within a few kilometres from the quarry, rather than acknowledging residences along the route in rural or urban areas.

Since our objection three (3) years ago the situation has become worse. We are subjected to excessive noise from quarry trucks moving to and from the Brandy Hill Quarry. These trucks pass our house, on Adelaide Street travelling to and from Heatherbrae often well before 6am. During the last 6 months vehicles are often noted between 4 and 5 am on their way to the quarry and as late as 10pm from the quarry.

Just this week, June 16-18, there have been multiple ‘truck and dog’ units travelling west bound, fully loaded and grinding their way up the hill after 8:30 pm on three nights. If the ‘Recommended’ hours of operations is in place, then Brandy Hill Quarry has already exceeded the allowed number of vehicles after 6pm for 2020. We are subjected to engine braking, squealing brakes, loud exhausts combined with heavy loads that vibrate the entire house frequently throughout the day and evening.

This impact occurs not just on weekdays but on weekends. Although, in the last month or two we noted that more are travelling east on Adelaide Street, between Richardson Road and William Bailey Street. We expect that traffic turning west on Adelaide Street would be contractor trucks rather than Hanson’s trucks. It is only during this recent period that we have noted Hanson trucks seem to now travel to and from Richardson Road. Prior to this, and we expect should this expansion be approved, Hanson drivers will return to choosing the route that suits them rather than the specified route.

Hanson’s appears to reinforce this expectation as there are glaring discrepancies within their own documents. Amended RTS – 4-5 – Traffic refers, in detail, to discussions with Port Stephens Council about the proposed route from William Bailey Street, turning left at Adelaide Street, turning right on to Richardson Road. This is supposedly the agreed preferred route. The Amended RTS - Appendix 3 - Social Impact Assessment includes a Driver Code of Conduct includes a map of routes (page 67) that shows the preferred Route as turning west on Adelaide, away from Richardson Road and on through Raymond Terrace to Heatherbrae.

In an attempt to mitigate the impact of quarry trucks we recently had the house releveled in the hope that we could lessen the impact of vibrations and minimize further damage to our home. We had painted the house exterior prior to the 2015 increase in traffic and had noted that the house had shifted on its stumps by well over 1 cm. The entire house still vibrates when most of the loaded quarry trucks pass by but at least the house, mid 1890s, will not shake off its stumps.

As for health impacts in addition to noise and vibrations we are now at the stage that we note diesel and dirt on the house after just a couple of weeks. With water restrictions and the time it takes to hand wash just the worst of it off the windows and siding at the front of the house we have had to leave all windows and doors at the front closed.

Trucks travelling from Heatherbrae along Adelaide Street resort to compression braking and/or brake squealing to the extent that not only is it noticeable but we are startled and alarmed while expecting to hear a crash any moment.

An important factor to consider is that due to the ‘limited’ description of the project and the minimalist view of those impacted a large percentage of the Raymond Terrace community are unaware that this project means the doubling of quarry traffic along either length of Adelaide Street, and many other areas in Port Stephens and Maitland council areas. Of four (4) close neighbours on either side of Adelaide Street, we were the only ones aware that this process was ongoing and what impacts we may expect. They thought the current level of traffic and noise, that had increased since the 2017 submission period, was ‘post-decision’. Their reaction was varied when they heard that the doubling of traffic and extension of hours had yet to take place. Shock, disbelieve, and/or defeat were expressed by our neighbours.

Reactions varied from shock at the extent of the potential impact and that it’s too late to do something in less than 48 hours to closure. Some residents fear that should they object they would be made a target. Even in this submission we have removed any specific details and complaints that might identify our home. We all feel anger that the community along proposed and possible routes would not be considered, including schools, a day care centre, a nursing home, and motels. We all feel ‘defeated’ as we expect that the process will roll on and the impact on the community along the haulage routes is considered irrelevant by Hanson and most other parties to approval of this expansion. Raymond Terrace is more than 12km from the quarry but we will be heavily impacted by the increase in truck movements and more so if hours of operation are not limited to weekday 7am to 6pm and minimal hours on Saturdays.

Maybe we should have personally done a letter drop informing those along Adelaide Street and Richardson Road of the status of the current application with a summary of impacts to the local community. We should have lodged complaints with our Port Stephens Council members and our MP. We should have sat on our front veranda and photographed the trucks over 12-plus hours a day and 6 days a week. BUT this project sat idle for years, with no updates about the status or responses from Hanson. Why should we be the ones to put our lives on hold to make up for Hanson’s myopic view of those impacted.

Brandy Hill Quarry may try to protest that we cannot be certain that these truck and dog units are not travelling to or from their location. But until the last few months many of the trucks travelling west on Adelaide from William Bailey were clearly labelled ‘Hanson’.

We hope that the Panel will consider this submission and our previous written submission when considering whether to approve the expansion of Brandy Hill Quarry. We very strongly object to the expansion of Brandy Hill Quarry, and especially any consideration of hours beyond those ‘recommended’. Even those hours are a burden as we believe should they will only comply when it suits them.

Hanson has not addressed many questions concerning the impact to the broader community. From what we can determine they have only marginally addressed their impact on those within a few kilometres of the quarry. Hanson are not behaving like a ‘good corporate citizen’ and it has gotten progressively worse over the last 3 years.