

PUBLIC Meeting - 31 January 2017

Submission by Ron Switzer, [REDACTED]

Marulan (bordering along Ambrose / Red Hills Roads)

We are significantly adversely impacted by this proposal.

We have owned the property known as Pinelodge for 25 years that runs from the intersection of Redhills Rd and the Hume Highway for around 2KM towards Brayton Rd along Bypass Rd (now Ambrose Rd) to the culvert.

This submission is in addition to our formal objection to any increase in truck numbers along this route to the DPE dated 12 May 2016 and verbal statement to the public meeting on 30 June 2016.

Further, the recommendations by the DPE to the PAC appear to be based solely on the Gunlake (and their consultants) conclusions without any independent challenge or analysis. The 'Conditions' also fail to include specific provisions covering landowner and community concerns expressed in over 50 submissions.

I re-emphasise our clear position to the PAC in the public interest.

"There must be no increase in truck volumes on any public roads as part of any expansion approval. Any additional volumes must be transported by private haulage route to the 'Marulan' rail head."

This is a long term profitable commercial activity by Gunlake and must have a holistic long term haulage solution.

Please consider the following significant adverse impacts that far outweigh any perceived benefits for Marulan and surrounding areas, through to Sydney.

1. This now haulage route that created Bypass Rd (renamed Ambrose Rd) was not requested nor supported by the community. In my opinion it should never have been approved and a proper 'off public road' solution required at that time.
2. At that time, there was a Land & Environment Court site inspection. Whilst I understand that case was not ultimately finalised, nonetheless Commissioner Moore undertook a public site inspection and commented that the application was fairly limited in scope and unlikely to have much adverse impact on the surrounding properties along the then proposed bypass road. I can only suggest that a very different conclusion would be reached now with potentially over 900 daily vehicle movements operating 24/7. This is a blatant case of commercial opportunism, the proponent having gained an initial foothold. There is only downside for any property owners along the haulage route.
3. The community has lived with it despite concerns of illegals bypassing the RMS checking station and diverting via Red Hills Rd to / from

Wollumbi Rd to the Hume Highway; safety; noise; road kill and lots of rubbish.

4. The approval was limited to 164 truck movements per day now up to **590 (from 690 initially) truck movements per day**. A Gunlake truck every **2 minutes, day and night**. These roads also carry other heavy vehicles and local farm and private traffic. On the DPE numbers, the longer term movements potentially become 930 movements per day. Probably most of the non quarry traffic would be during the day or early evening significantly compounding the problems with daylight hour vehicles **every minute**. This defies any concept of reasonable rural road volumes.
5. It is already terrifying driving with trucks coming at speed down the hill towards you even before a kangaroo jumps across the road...and that was recently during the day!
6. This additional volume of trucks is also an environmental and road safety disaster. Surely we must do everything to reduce the number of trucks also on the Hume Highway an already over congested major corridor. The Sydney – Canberra – Melbourne route can only be expected to become worse in future, we cannot afford to compound the problem now. Quite apart from the diesel emissions, not a great contribution to cleaning up our environment.
7. The rural roads impacted are unsuitable and were never intended to, or never should become a truck super highway.
8. The hills on the haulage route (Ambrose & Red Hills Rds) are very steep, there is often fog or sun glare, distance visibility is bad, there are no breakdown lanes, there is slow moving rural traffic (tractors, smaller laden vehicles) there are significant wildlife populations (mainly Kangaroos and Wombats). Any breakdown or accident would cause chaos.
9. This proposal compromises the safety of the public and the heavy vehicle drivers. Whilst not assuming specific knowledge on WHS, it would not be unreasonable to envisage clear breaches of safety requiring drivers to work in such hazardous circumstances. Do we need to have people killed and injured so Gunlake can make a profit? This **MUST** not be allowed to happen.
10. The noise generated by the existing trucks on the hills is like being under a flight path. No sound readings were taken along any stretch of this road in the EIS. This will become a 24 hours noise corridor. The EPA has stated that increased road traffic will be felt by residents, there is

seemingly no other analysis or study to support the DPE conclusions in this regard reached by the DPE.

11. The proposed 100Km/H acceleration lane onto the Hume Highway is right outside our gate (and that of another property). This will deny access to our main entrance – it will simply be far too dangerous to cross Red Hills Rd from the Hume Highway. Similarly access to our other entry points along Red Hills and Ambrose Roads will also be compromised and unsafe.
12. This expansion will significantly adversely impact on property values along the entire haulage routes. This has clearly not been addressed by the proponent or the DPE. As citizens, we have the same rights to protect, maintain and enhance our property interests. This proposal shows a complete and unacceptable contempt for this and essentially denies us any future potential.
13. There are no safeguards, conditions or guarantees in any of the documentation to protect the local landowners interests, public safety or the environment.
14. It is generally beyond the capabilities of most residents to have the time, technical knowledge and expertise to properly analyse and respond to the voluminous EIS and subsequent consultants analysis.
15. The recommendations by the DPE appear to accept the Gunlake submission and consultants reports without any independent expert support or conditions addressing the community's significant issues concerning the haulage route.
16. As an aside, the pristine farmland photograph on the DPE report front page seems totally inappropriate for a proposal which will do anything but maintain such a landscape.
17. The DPE makes a number of questionable assertions which should be challenged.
 - a. An apparent net benefit to NSW of 'between \$15 & \$27 million over some 30 years (until 2056) on a project of such size is totally insignificant to justify any expansion likely to be completely mitigated by the detrimental community impacts.
 - b. The transport assessment by Lyle Marshall & Partners in section 4.1.2 needs to be critically reassessed by an independent expert. A reasonable person could not conclude these roads are suitable.
 - c. Section 5.1.3 - the RMS and Police comments are correct, quite apart from the dangers posed at our entrance gate, the access to

the Hume Highway is totally inadequate currently and cannot be put down to only 'poor driving practices and inadequate oversight', such a simplistic statement does little to add to safety.

- d. Sections 5.1.4 to 5.1.6 cover the assessment of potential alternative haulage options including rail. A major failure of the DPE response is not apparently having any independent expert assessment and providing the community with a properly computed consolidated, whole of project life financial analysis supporting the conclusions. Most of these sections are essentially providing the same information from the Gunlake consultants without any critical questioning of assumptions or further analysis.
- e. Even a superficial review could reasonably question such areas as-
 - i. Clearance of several hectares of 'endangered native forest' seems inconsequential in the overall destruction to the overall community, and most likely could be mitigated by other strategic plantings.
 - ii. The Marulan Interchange is now a public RMS facility, has an assessment of any legal requirements to compensate Holcim been undertaken and, if so, is the estimate reasonable?
 - iii. Similarly the various Gillespie numbers have seemingly been accepted without analysis or independent challenge. These are critical in the overall conclusions.
 - iv. The expectation is that the DPE would have critically analysed and presented the project profitability taking into account estimated profitability to Gunlake over the project life, all costs and savings of an alternative haul route to the rail head, reduction in S94 contributions, amortisation of the various costs, all externalities, taxation deductions etc. and applying appropriate discount rates. It is doubtful that a rail alternative will make to project unviable.
- f. The Transport Operating Conditions (Sections 23-27 of Appendix H) provides for a 'Traffic Management Plan', acceleration lane 'when additional production commences' and a Camera on the Hume Highway intersection. There is nothing specific covering issues such as-

- i. Enforceable compensation for decline in property values as a result of the expansion
- ii. Immediate compensation for any access modifications to existing properties and ongoing associated costs
- iii. Allowance for tree plantings along the route as sight and noise screens
- iv. Speed limits
- v. Other safety cameras along the route
- vi. Rubbish removal
- vii. Appropriate rural fencing
- viii. Clear avoidance mechanisms to detect and prosecute 'illegal' truck traffic by-passing the RMS truck checking station

To summarise:

- 1. The key issue is one of 'public interest' which must always override a specific private commercial motivation. Allowing the expansion on the basis proposed would show a total disregard for the community interest and given the safety implications potentially negligent and environmentally irresponsible.**
- 2. The Gunlake expansion is a very long-term development generating significant revenue and presumably profits. Gunlake can always maintain their existing approval and withdraw the expansion application if they cannot generate sufficient return on capital. It seems other operators in the area can do so. Perhaps Gunlake should sell out to an existing local operator who can integrate this properly?**
- 3. This long-term development requires a long-term solution.**
- 4. Local residents must not be adversely impacted (whether property values, safety, noise and pollution).**
- 5. The DPE should be required to substantiate it's conclusions by independent analysis and fully disclosed financial analysis.**
- 6. The only long term solution is a dedicated haul road from the quarry to the Marulan railhead and / or the existing South Marulan Overpass.**
- 7. It is totally unacceptable for any more trucks to be allowed on these rural public roads and there are already more than enough on the Hume Highway.**
- 8. No dedicated private haulage route and utilisation of rail transport - NO APPROVAL**

Thank you for your consideration.

Ron Switzer

Director MG&R Switzer Pty Ltd owner of the property.

23 January 2017

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