

Cabbage Tree Road Sand Quarry. 14th March, 2018.

Objection to Approval of this Quarry

I ask that you take the precautionary approach and not approve this Sand Mine. I say precautionary as too little is known with the regard to the PFAS chemicals.

The WWG (working water party) a sub group of the Williamtown Expert Panel stated in their assessment report it “considered air-borne PFAS a low risk and therefore air quality monitoring for PFAS would not be required”. However the EPA advised in the assessment “that there is no accredited method for air borne sampling for PFAS chemicals available in Australia or Overseas”. If PFAS cannot be monitored you cannot say with all certainty that the PFAS will not affect the residents through disturbance of the land from quarrying. The PFAS is known to be spreading and is still coming off the RAAF Base. There are people who have had previous nil detects that now have had detectable readings. The area of contamination has been expanding over the last 2 years since testing has been undertaken. We in the “Red Zone” are not permitted to remove soil from our properties without taking it to an approved waste facility. It was said in the assessment by A/Prof William Glamore that “PFAS does not adhere to sand as easily as soil”. This still means that it will be transported to other areas with some PFAS attached. This risk is too great to take this chemical in the sand where as we know that it does not break down and are persistent in the environment.

Assessment states that there is a “positive socio economic benefit” but with regard to employment there will only be 6 permanent positions. Yes the Port Stephens Council will benefit financially but the cost of road repairs from extra truck movements and the possible extra health expenses to the residents from possible health issues do not in my opinion fit the criteria as being of a positive socio economic benefit. Residents in this area will have their properties further devalued. We are not in a position to just move away as the contamination has made our properties next to worthless. The adding of the Sand Mine can only exacerbate the position that we residents find ourselves in through no fault of our own.

This Quarry is in a residential area even if it is considered to have a rural outlook. The Quarry should not be permitted in a residential area.

No amount of PM 2.5 should be permitted when it causes reduced visibility and inhalations by humans and animals have known health effects of lung irritations, aggravation to lung disease, release of chemicals in the body thus causing impact to the heart and also increased susceptibility to viral and bacterial pathogens.

Health risks are not unknown. Stated in assessment by NSW Health that “there are no conclusive evidence that PFAS causes any specific illnesses” is untrue. The US Department of Health and Human Services under took a Peer Reviewed Report by the National Toxicology Program dated 19 July 2016 which found moderate to high health issues to PFAS in animals and humans of several health effects due to the presence of these chemicals. It is not the only report into studies of these chemicals but since they were done overseas and not in Australia does not mean that there is no evidence of harm from these chemicals.

Even if mining does not go any closer to the predicted water table than 0.7 metre in times of heavy rainfall and should there be a 1 in 20 or 1 in 100 year flood there would be no guarantee that the PFAS in the water table and disturbed sand would not then enter other properties.

I dispute the RMS vehicle movements as it does not take into account of peak times of traffic going and coming from RAAF Base, airport or those travelling for work and education that all cause peak conditions of heavy road use at specific times. Over the 17 years that we have lived here the traffic has increased to a stage where it is difficult to enter or exit our property. There have been numerous accidents where residents turning into their own properties have hit by other vehicles. The extra truck movements will only cause traffic problems for those that use these roads. There will be more vehicle movements in the near future with the Airport becoming an International Airport and the RAAF having extra staff on the base to staff the arrival and training for the new Stealth Planes that Defence has ordered and hence there has been massive upgrades to the RAAF Base.

There appears to have been no testing of the chemicals in the proposed area to be mined in the assessment report and this area is designated as acid sulphate land. In the late 1990's RZM Sand mine at Tomago had to advise residents to stop using their bores as there was a high concentration of arsenic in the ground water. Both Tomago and Williamtown are on the same Tomago Sand Beds that is used for approx 20% of the Hunter Water Boards drinking supply. It is also noted that around 26 years ago the previous sand mining company in the area buried trenches of Monazite. Please take into account that WSS has never had any previous experience in Sand Mining.

To agree to this sand mine in an area that has 8 threatened fauna species such as Koalas, Wullan Froglet and the newly discovered Mahony's toadlet (endangered species) and flora such as the Earp's Gum, Camfield's Stringybark and to state that the footprint would have a negligible impact would be in my opinion to be irresponsible.

Personally I object to this Sand Mine being approved as there are too many unknowns with regard to our health from the PFAS and other chemicals on the site and many known things like the devaluations to our properties, more vehicle movements on a best described as a rural road, loss of fauna and flora, and to me an insult to call this proposed sand mine as state significant. There are other areas that can be mined for sand outside of a residential area that are not affected by contamination of PFAS. Please keep in mind that the Epidemiology Study will not be completed until 2020. To approve this Sand Mine before then would be unconscionable.

This Sand Quarry in my opinion is not "in the public interest and approvable" and I ask that you take the precautionary approach and not approve it.

Yours faithfully,

J Robinson

■ Cabbage Tree Road,

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