

Further submission to the Independent Planning Commission

Re: Glebe Island Aggregate Handling Facility and Concrete Batching Plant SSD 8544

From: Chris and Anita Levy.

Date: 3 June 2021

Your announcement on 28 May 2021 invites comments on new material provided to the Commission. In the "Letter from applicant to the Commission" which was prepared by Hanson's consultant Ethos Urban, they say on page 3: -

"All of Hanson's concrete plants in Sydney have historically operated 24 hours per day to meet market demands."

That is patently untrue. There is a large Hymix plant, 100% owned and operated by Hanson, in Bank St Pyrmont next to the Sydney Fish Market. In the five years we have lived here I have walked past that plant hundreds of times during the week and also on weekends. I have driven past it both day and night several hundred times. Not once have I seen it operating past 5 p.m. Never at night. Occasionally it operates on weekends but that is rare.

I think you should call the Operations Manager of that plant, and of other Hanson and Hymix plants in Sydney, to tell you exactly what hours they operate. Not on the odd occasion, but on average throughout the year.

That is not the only way Hanson and Ethos Urban have misled the IPC. Hanson said in its original EIS and in more recent statements that it would abide by the noise limits imposed by the NSW Port Authority's guidelines dated December 2021, and in force since January 2021.

We believe that Hanson will ignore the noise limits imposed by the Port Authority on their plant and especially on ships moored at G1 and G2. Let me prove that to you.

It is obvious to us, living as we do across Waterfront Park and about 250 metres from Glebe Island, that the Port Authority does not enforce their noise limits, and therefore Hanson Australia will, if given approval to build its concrete batching plant, allow berthed ships to make whatever level of noise they like. Here is a very current example.

On or about Monday May 31, or in the early hours of Tuesday 1 June 2021, the ship "AAL Shanghai" moored at berth G2 on Glebe Island. We had been advised a few days earlier by the N.S.W Port Authority that this would happen, and that the vessel would be unloading large pipes and other material associated with the future construction of the new Sydney Fish Market in Blackwattle Bay. The ship began unloading on the afternoon of Tuesday 1 June.

On the night of Tuesday 1 June my wife and I went to bed around 10 p.m., and as usual left our bedroom sliding glass door open. However I had to get up and close the sliding glass door, as the noise from the ship's engine was very loud, sufficient to stop us going to sleep. We had to keep our bedroom door and window closed all night. We don't like doing this as it is not as healthy as having fresh air to breathe all night. The same applies to all those we know who live here – none of us likes having to close our doors and windows all night, and that is especially so in the warmer months.

The same thing has happened each night that ship was here. We cannot sleep with our sliding glass door open because the noise is unrelenting and disturbing. That is not good for our health. The same principle

applies to all residents of Pyrmont and surrounding suburb. We should not have to sleep with windows and doors closed.

The ship's engine emits a low, steady thrum, with a vibration we can feel as we try to fall asleep with the glass door open. It is a disturbing noise, quite unpleasant. At night when road traffic noise has died away it seems to be magnified as it travels across the water to our apartment.

We did what we always do and called the complaint number provided by the Port Authority. The person who answered was polite, but did not have the faintest idea where we are located, or what the ship was doing. Those staff are provided by the Service NSW, so they do not have any understanding of ships or noise or the disturbance we must tolerate. We also wrote to them but as yet have not received a reply.

Until about two years ago the Port Authority had their own staff doing this, and then they came up with the clever idea of outsourcing all complaints to Service NSW, so now they have no direct involvement at all in complaints from residents. They just get a written report every few days and can happily distance themselves from any problems.

When we get a written reply from the Port Authority, they usually tell us they have spoken with the ship's agents, and sometimes they say they have written to the ship's owners. I have to say on some past occasions on the second night a noisy ship is here, they do tone down the noise and the lighting but that certainly has not happened in this case. The AAL Shanghai is making just as much noise every night it is berthed here. Either the agents and owners are choosing to ignore the request from the Port Authority, or they know from experience that if they do nothing there will not be any consequences, so they continue blithely on.

It is our understanding that the NSW Port Authority has not issued any prosecutions for ships exceeding the gazetted noise levels on Glebe Island for at least the past five years. Nor is there any record we can find of a ship being issued with a fine or being stopped from berthing at Glebe Island. We cannot obtain any information about this from the Port Authority, but we feel sure the IPC can require them to supply this information, which is highly relevant to the Hanson application.

If the Port Authority has a history of doing little or nothing about ship noise over the past five years, how can you expect them to do anything when ships visiting the Hanson site on Glebe Island exceed noise levels in the daytime or night-time? The Port Authority will phone them up or write them a letter, but at the end of the day Hanson will ignore them because they know the Port Authority will not do anything much about it.

The Port Authority is hopelessly conflicted here. If the Hanson proposal is approved, they will be collecting significant annual rent from Hanson, so they will be even less motivated to tell them to ensure ships at G1 or G2 stay well under the published noise limits.

We have lived here for five years. In that time, we've seen (and heard) an average of five or six vessels a year. They usually stay about a week or so. On average ships have been berthed at Glebe Island 1 or 2 for about 35 to 45 nights a year.

A few ships have been reasonably quiet, but most have created a disturbing amount of noise. Because the ship's agents and owners know the Port Authority will not do anything apart from a phone call or a letter, they continue sending noisy ships here.

You have been informed during your hearings that if Hanson is given approval, there will be ships here almost every day of the year. Let's say 50 ships for 5 nights each, total about 250 nights a year, an increase of about 400%. Instead of a few sleepless nights, we could be exposed to not being able to sleep properly for most of the year.

Is that a fair and reasonable way to treat thousands of residents who live in the Pyrmont area, and who have been attracted to live here by a succession of State Government plans announced over recent years? The State Government keeps saying they want to make the Pyrmont area a showplace for people to live and work, yet they are contemplating allowing a large, very noisy and intrusive concrete batching plant to be built within 250 metres of the most densely populated suburb in Australia.

We are asking you to do several things: -

1. Please reject the Hanson proposal. Nobody should be building a concrete plant this close to so many residences. Their existing plants in other locations have been able to supply all Sydney's needs until now and can continue to do so for a long time yet. Let them build their new plant in an industrial area which is designed to take the noise and the heavy truck traffic and will be a long way from high density residential areas.
2. Do not believe Hanson when they say they will comply with the noise limits imposed by the Port Authority. Our experience has shown that the Port Authority will do little or nothing to enforce those noise levels, and Hanson Australia is well aware of this.
3. Direct the NSW Port Authority to provide you with a list of the ships they have prosecuted for exceeding noise limits in the past five years, and the outcome of those proceedings.
4. Direct the Port Authority to provide you with a list of phone and written complaints over the past two years for vessels berthed at Glebe Island. You will be able to see for yourselves how many residents are being disturbed by excessive noise levels. Please keep in mind that few people actually get around to phoning or writing – the number who do are probably a small percentage of those who are upset by the noise. In other words, you could triple the number of phone calls and letters to estimate how many families are affected.
5. If you must approve the Hanson proposal, please impose a curfew so they cannot run the concrete plant between the hours of 9 p.m. and 7 a.m. and they must ensure all ships delivering any supplies to them also observe that curfew. Unless you do that few of us will get a good night's sleep for most of every year.

A concrete batching plant on Glebe Island was never a good idea. It is not a maritime or marine-related activity which the law envisages for the wharves on Glebe Island. It would be a major industrial and manufacturing plant which would do great damage to the quality of living for residents of all surrounding suburbs, not just Pyrmont.

Yours Sincerely,

Anita and Chris Levy

3 June 2021.