

Thank you commissioners for the time afforded me today to discuss the proposed Martins Creek Quarry as lodged by Daracon.

I'm here today, and also attended yesterday as this is very important to me. By contrast, I can only assume that it mustn't be too important to the Directors and shareholders of Daracon, as only one of them is here...

Spending 10 minutes and \$27 at ASIC tells me that retired or not, David Mingay is still very much involved via his role as Director (together with son Jon and son-in law Adam who is with us today) Further, following the corporate trail, it is plainly evident that David Mingay is one of the ultimate Beneficial shareholders along with other members of the Mingay family. Buttai Gravel, is owned by Daromin Engineering which in turn is owned by Daromin Holdings. So I ask the commissioners, why should one family benefit from a socially devastating and unwanted enterprise at the expense of so many other good families in the community?

I'm an accountant by trade, and I'd love nothing more than to show you endless spreadsheets and talk data and numbers all day... but I understand that not everyone likes numbers as much as I do... that is what's called empathy – empathy for those in my area and for those I'd like to interact with... so I won't do that today.

However, to assist the commissioners, I'd like to give a bit of context as to why I believe I am well qualified to speak here today.

I find my self in somewhat of a unique position in that I seem to be able to tick just about all of the IPC respondent Public Forum bingo...

- I grew up on the proposed haulage route at Tocal Rd Mindaribba
- The later stages of my primary and high school years were from the family home in Bolwarra
- The family moved to ██████████ Woodville where I commuted to both work in Maitland and University in Newcastle for several years
- Like a lot of young fellas in my cohort, I followed love, learning and sport and moved to Newcastle
- Following love worked out... We got married in Paterson's Tucker Park, had our reception in the Woodville School of Arts Hall and we stayed at the CBC (now Paterson Lodge)
- Over two years ago, and now married with 3 kids, we moved back into the area for the better life – a very picturesque 12 riverside acres at 150 Gresford Rd – 1.5km on the northern side of the Paterson township.
- I worked for Daracon as the Chief Financial Officer for a period of 2 years between Dec 2012 and December 2014; I've been on the inside... I know first hand the ruthlessness and focus on profitability at all costs by the Directors and Management team
- I currently work in Beresfield; travelling the full extent of the Haulage route on a daily basis
- My wife, Heidi, is a teacher at Dungog High and commutes the opposite direction to me, but again, along the haulage route

- My eldest is in year 8 at Dungog High and travels by bus to and from our home, ever the entrepreneur he also runs an egg business – “Bonfield Bumnuts” selling dozens of eggs per week from the roadside
- My other two attend Paterson Primary (years 4 and 6), taking the provided bus to and from our driveway.
- We are community minded people involved in the Paterson School P&C, Gresford Billy Cart Darby Committee, we coach and manage sports teams, we ferry kids to and from school events, friends houses and like a lot of people you’ve heard from and will hear from take an active part in the many community fund raising events our community enjoys.

And yet, at no time has anyone knocked on my door to consult with me, to ask about how this may affect me and my family, or what may be done to mitigate the impacts that have now already been well documented and spoken about by others. I’ll say that again... not one person has consulted with me.

I understand the representatives of the Commission stayed in Maitland last night, I feel it was a real missed opportunity to stay in Paterson and be exposed to the current lived experience of our tranquil lifestyle.

Daracon talked yesterday about the calculated Net Present Value being \$58m for this project. To me that doesn’t even sound like that great a number for a project that is projected to operate for 25 years. Does the NPV calculate the loss in Real estate value should this project be approved in its current form. Commissioners, as the saying goes “The Pen is mightier than the sword” – and it couldn’t be any more true in this sense. Should the IPC find in favour of the project in its current form, before the ink is even dry on the proclamation, the value of my house will halve... as will just about every other house on the Haul route; who compensates me for that? Does that value reduction factor in the NPV calcs? I suspect not.

In contrast, I have a recently approved DA for substantial renovations to our home and outbuildings with works in the order of \$1m – is that factored in? Are all the other proposed renovations, subdivisions, tourism events, weddings, and other community events factored in? My construction works certainly won’t be getting done if the haulage route is approved – that is real local construction jobs, materials and value being lost to this community.

For those who haven’t lived in a tight knit community... you just may not get it. This community have been through a bit of late. The decade of drought, the fires, the past few years of La Nina with flood after flood in the past 2 years, Daracon (phase 1), Covid, Varroa Mite (bee industry) extermination... and now this shit show – Daracon phase 2. And yet, we’ve gotten through it all together, shoulder to shoulder because we act as a true community. We don’t get to leave at the end of the day. Unlike all three Daracon reps here today, we don’t get to leave for Newcastle... and we don’t want to... we live and breathe our community... we know our neighbours, we check in on them, we help out, we care...

As you look out over the crowds in attendance yesterday and today, without causing any disrespect to my fellow community members, the grey hair is a somewhat prominent feature. And I'm certainly heading that way myself... It could be easily construed as a bunch of older folk trying to hold on to a past era... of times gone. However, I assure the commission that the younger people in our community are just as outraged as what we all are. I'm able to get this time from my employer, but not everyone has that luxury.

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They are running their businesses, they are at work, they are juggling the kids and their sporting commitments. I feel like I am having my very own "Dale Kerrigan" moment... the fight for the little man. I only get 10 minutes to defend my patch, to defend my community. I don't have the millions of dollars to spend on consultants who'll give me the answers to officially rebuke daracon's puppet contractors. Its just little old me and my camera phone.

Indeed, holding this public forum at relatively short notice and on a Monday and Tuesday during the day does make everyone's ability to speak somewhat limiting. I just hope that I am doing my generation justice with the words I speak today. With due respect, I suggest the IPC hold a subsequent forum on a Saturday morning or even mid week and night and witness the community turn out.

I also propose that Martin's Creek Quarry is not truly needed due to the recent approvals of the Brandy Hill Quarry (owned by Hanson) and the recent establishment of the Karuah East Quarry (owned by Hunter Quarries). These two quarries when combined with other active and better placed quarries, have the capacity and longevity to support current and future demand of the Hunter and wider NSW requirements. Further, the Martins Creek quarry was originally utilised with 30% distribution of its output via its dedicated train line. It was not distributed through small village roads and did not destroy the amenity and community of its neighbours.

The quarry's proposal to use the local roads and infrastructure is disruptive and damaging to the local community of which we are proud members of. The tight Paterson community and its surrounding communities of Vacy, Gresford, Dungog, Martins Creek, Duns Creek, Woodville, Hinton, Largs, Bolwarra, Lorn and East Maitland will all be impacted from the increase in traffic from the excessive truck movements both to and from the proposed Quarry. The roads in all of these areas will become inherently more dangerous with the additional traffic and are themselves not designed to take the volume of traffic that this proposal will add. This additional wear and tear on the road infrastructure will not be able to be maintained, again, making the road even more dangerous.

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My house is on Gresford Road, only 1.5km from the Paterson township and the movement of trucks on this road (as it is the proposed main haul route) is already incredibly busy and not well regulated for its current speed zone. My house is very close to the roadway (20m from my front door to the painted white line on the roadside) and the constant noise and rattling of the home with more heavily loaded trucks would be truly devastating. The noise from the unladen trucks as they make their way back to the quarry to get further loads would be even worse.

We already have trouble sleeping due to the road noise that starts anywhere from about 4.30am onwards. The hours of operation for this applicant will increase road noise at a time when the traffic is already increasing to a very high level from people starting their work day, children going to school and childcare. We will have trouble both leaving (left turn on to Gresford Rd) and entering our own driveway (right turn from Gresford Rd across traffic). this will directly impact my farming business and the amenity of a rural lifestyle.

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Our children currently catch the bus from in front of our house. The increase in traffic makes this very dangerous and haulage trucks especially increase the risk of our children being injured or killed due to their size, reduced visibility (especially where children are concerned) and inability to stop at the speed limit.

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Our eldest goes to Dungog High School and needs to cross the road in the morning to catch the only available bus.

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Our youngest two, get off the only available bus in the afternoon from Paterson Public Primary School and need to cross the busy road (at times unsupervised) to get in our front door. when it is envisaged that 40 trucks per hour will be using this haulage route, the only logical and rational outcome is tragedy.

The peaceful and quiet township of Paterson has several businesses that we regularly frequent (Cafes, Garage, Local Hall, Chemist, Barber, Hairdresser, Tavern, Butcher, IGA Food Market and Post Office). These may very well become impossible to continue any viable patronage. Just being able to cross the road to get into the required store will be a nightmare due to not being able to cross the road from where the car may be parked. The increase to damage to our vehicles from being collided with due to the narrow streets of the town is also exponentially higher especially when the weight and length of the haulage trucks are taken into account when passing each other to and from the quarry. The 90 degree turn at the junction of Duke and King Streets is not feasibly usable at the volumes of traffic being proposed.

Combine the above with the increasing population as more and more estates are approved and inhabited. the volume of traffic on the main road between the valley and Maitland/Newcastle/Sydney is only growing and becoming increasingly incompatible to a development of this magnitude and Haulage expectations. When moving to our home, we were well aware of the quarry and its proposal. Daracon have been denied their previous proposal because they failed to heed the needs of the community in which they wish to operate, they illegally exceeded previous approvals granted and even expanded beyond their approved quarrying zone. The level of trust for Daracon in the community is very low because of this. We only hope the IPC sees the devastating impact that this proposal will have in its current form and that it still fails to address the needs of the community and lack of consultation and lack of adequate mitigations.

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I work in Beresfield and basically travel the proposed main Haulage route. This daily commute is already congested, with heavy traffic experienced at Tocal College, at the intersection of Hunterglenn Drive Bolwarra Heights (I'm not even sure how the residents of that estate will be able to take the right hand turn across traffic onto Paterson Rd with the increased volume of traffic expected), at the roundabout turning onto Flat Road Bolwarra and especially at the intersection of Flat Rd and Melbourne Street East Maitland. This last intersection is a single right hand turning lane onto a very congested Melbourne Street which gets residents from many locations onto the arterial route of the New England Highway. Working from home is not an option with my employer and any further increase in travel times may make the commute untenable.

We are not opposed to the quarry as a business per se, but the current proposal is staggeringly inappropriate in regard to its logistics. The quarry was initially designed to have 70% its output freighted out by rail and this is still possible with the operational rail spur that the quarry has direct access to. Daracon just haven't explored this opportunity to its full extent to freight their products by rail to a more beneficial location as a staging post for further distribution to their end markets. Daracon's ruthlessness and focus on profitability at all costs is on fine display with this quarry proposal. During the presentations and documents available for review, I keep seeing the interchanging of words **feasible** and **profitable**. For clarity, feasibility is a spectrum. Two outcomes may be feasible, but one is more profitable than the other. They are both still feasible!! I can't imagine the exorbitant amount of money that has now been expended over the years on consultants, PR, marketing, planners, reports and solicitors to get to this point. It's an all-in effort from here for Daracon and no other option will now be explored. However, there are other feasible options, maybe ones that aren't quite as profitable and possibly harder to implement...but they are still feasible.

The current state of the Roads in our area is already very poor from both a lack of Local Government funds and aging infrastructure. Combine this with the past three years of La Nina weather conditions and we are already struggling with the condition of the local roads. An audit of the potholes or temporary fixes applied to the roads of the proposed Haulage route would be near on impossible as it is continually degrading. Adding the volume of vehicles onto the road as this proposal wants will be devastating and only cost the us, local ratepayers more in the long run through increased rates and special levies. Further the Gostwyck Bridge on the main haul route is a single lane only bridge that by their own reports will cost in excess of \$9m to maintain over the 25 year proposed life span of the quarry with their requested haulage rates. Being single lane will basically mean this bridge used by a very large number of local constituents will primarily become used solely by Daracon and its Haulage contractors.

A truck every 90 seconds, slowing to let other trucks past, slowly building up speed to get up the incline on the quarry side of the bridge as well as then considering and navigating regular community traffic will become the stuff of traffic nightmares for us locals. my wife

uses this road to get to her High School teaching job at Dungog. Buses also use this route transporting children to the school. Again, tragedy will only be a matter of time as impatience leads to riskier driving behaviour and eventually vehicular accidents.

What will it take for common sense to prevail here? An injury? God forbid a death? But by then it will be too late.

We were married under the poplar trees in Tucker Park Paterson and grew up in the area. We are raising Three very fine young community members that already contribute to the very fibre of what makes our area very special. We coach/manage local junior sporting teams, we are members of the school P&C, we volunteer our time for the community (as do so many others) and we live in and for the community. We know and love the township and the people that live here. There is a very strong community that often comes together in times of need, in times of celebration and when the chips are down. That is what we are doing now and the fight to save what we have will not be extinguished easily. Daracon already know this and unfortunately have spent copious amounts of money to try and turn us away. However, we are resolute, we are connected and we won't stop the fight for what we have and love.