

Our ref: Sancrox Quarry Expansion Project (SSD-7293)

Andrew Mills
Chair
NSW Independent Planning Commission
GPO Box 3415
Sydney NSW 2001
9 August 2024

Subject: Sancrox Quarry Expansion Project– Referral to the NSW Independent Planning Commission

Dear Mr Mills

The Department has completed its assessment of the merits of the application for the Sancrox Quarry Expansion Project (SDD-7293; the Project). The application is referred to the NSW Independent Planning Commission (the Commission) for determination as there were more than 50 unique public submissions objecting to the proposal.

Hanson Construction Materials Pty Ltd (Hanson) proposes to develop a State significant expansion of the Sancrox hard rock quarry to extract, process and transport up to 530,000 tonnes per annum of hard rock material over a 30-year period. The Project is located in the locality of Sancrox, approximately 8 kilometres west of Port Macquarie, within the Port Macquarie-Hastings local government area.

During the public exhibition of the Project, the Department received 264 public submissions, including 259 objecting submissions of which 140 were considered unique. The Department also received advice from 7 State government agencies and Port Macquarie-Hastings Council.

The Department met with several nearby landowners, carried out a site visit and held a community information session at Rydges Hotel in Port Macquarie on 10 February 2021. The Department also undertook site visits on 15 February 2023 and 1 May 2023.

Due to the proposed clearing of remnant vegetation and the relative proximity of the Project site to existing industrial and residential land uses, the Department considers that the key assessment issues relate to biodiversity including impacts on koala habitat, air quality, noise and vibration, and blasting impacts. Given the Project is an extractive industry proposal involving the ongoing establishment of voids in the landscape, the Department considers that potential water, and rehabilitation and final landform impacts are also important assessment issues.

The Department has carried out a detailed assessment of the merits of the Project, having regard to Hanson's project documentation, advice from NSW government agencies and all public submissions. The Department has also considered the objects of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act* (EP&A Act) and relevant considerations under Section 4.15(1) of the EP&A Act.

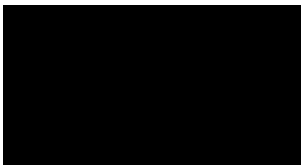
Based on this assessment, the Department considers that Hanson has designed the Project in a way that would achieve a practicable balance between maximising resource recovery and minimising associated impacts on the surrounding landholders and the environment.

The Department has carefully weighed the environmental impacts of the Project against the significance of the identified hard rock resource and the wider socio-economic benefits associated with operating the quarry for 30 years under a contemporary development consent. On balance, the Department considers that the benefits of the Project outweigh its residual costs, the site is suitable, and that the Project is in the public interest and is approvable, subject to the recommended conditions of consent.

I have attached a copy of the Department's assessment report and recommended conditions of consent for the Commission's consideration.

If you have any questions, please contact me on [REDACTED] or via email at [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,



Jessie Evans

Director

Energy and Resource Assessments