



New South Wales Government
Independent Planning Commission

TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING

RE: SANCROX QUARRY EXPANSION PROJECT (SSD-7293)

DEPARTMENT MEETING

PANEL: JANETT MILLIGAN (CHAIR)
MICHAEL CHILCOTT
TERRY BAILEY

OFFICE OF THE IPC: BRAD JAMES
CALLUM FIRTH

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING,
HOUSING AND
INFRASTRUCTURE: JESSIE EVANS
JARROD BLANE

LOCATION: ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE

DATE: 12:30PM – 1:30PM
TUESDAY, 20TH AUGUST 2024

<THE MEETING COMMENCED

5 **MS JANETT MILLIGAN:** So good morning, everybody. Before we begin, I'd like to acknowledge that I'm speaking to you from Gadigal land and I acknowledge the traditional owners of all the country from which we virtually meet today and I pay my respects to their elders past and present.

10 Welcome to the meeting today to discuss the Sancrox Quarry Expansion Project, currently before the Commission for determination. Sancrox Quarry is an existing hard rock quarry, located in the Port Macquarie-Hastings local government area and the quarry has been owned and operated by Hanson Construction Materials Pty Ltd since 1998.

15 The application in its current form seeks approval for the consolidation of existing development consents and the expansion of the quarry into new areas to extract, process and transport up to 530,000 tonnes per annum of hard rock material over a 30 year period.

20 The application also seeks approval to construct and operate a concrete recycling and batching facility that would recycle and produce up to 20,000 tonnes per annum and an asphalt production plant that would produce up to 50,000 tonnes per annum.

25 My name's Janett Milligan. I'm the chair of this Commission panel and I'm joined by my fellow commissioners, Michael Chilcott and Terry Bailey. We're also joined by Brad James and Callum Firth from the Office of the Independent Planning Commission. In the interests of openness and transparency and to ensure the full capture of information, today's meeting is being recorded and a complete transcript will be produced and made available on the Commission's website.

30 This meeting is one part of the Commission's consideration of this matter and will form one of several sources of information upon which the Commission will base its advice. It's important for the commissioners to ask questions of attendees and to clarify issues whenever it's considered appropriate. If you're asked a question and you're not in a position to answer, please feel free to take the question on notice and provide any additional information in writing, which we will then put on our website.

40 I request that all members here today introduce themselves before speaking for the first time and for all members to ensure that they don't speak over the top of each other to ensure the accuracy of the transcript. So let's begin. So thank you very much for being here. Can I ask if you would like to begin with a presentation to us?

45 **MS JESSIE EVANS:** Yes. Yes, we've prepared some speaking notes and some slides that hopefully follow the agenda quite closely for you.

MS MILLIGAN: Good. Over to you.

5 **MS EVANS:** Thank you. Thank you, Chair. So good afternoon. My name is Jessie Evans and I'm the Director of Energy and Resource Assessments at the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure. So I would like to start by thanking the Commission for giving us the opportunity to brief you on this project.

10 I'm going to start with some introductory comments and then very briefly identify what we believe are the key issues associated with the proposal and then I'm going to hand over to my colleague, Jarrod, who's here today. Jarrod's a senior environmental assessment officer within the Energy and Resource Assessments team. So I'll also just say for now for the purposes of this presentation, when we make reference to the project, it does refer to the Sancrox Quarry Expansion Project.

15 So firstly some comments on our assessment report. As you are aware, the assessment report is really only the final piece of a very long comprehensive assessment process. All the key relevant information informing the assessment is publicly available on the Department's major projects planning portal and can be accessed if necessary.

20 Our assessment report, however, is really a distillation of this material and it is designed to give the decision maker, in this case the Commission, sufficient information to make a determination. I will say that we are confident that our report does provide a good summary of our views about the project but we also believe that this meeting and the upcoming public meeting can be really important for fleshing out key issues relating to the project from the community perspective.

30 There are a few obvious aspects of this project which I now really want to acknowledge and ensure that the Commission knows we have taken into account. They are firstly the project does propose clearing of about 30 hectares of remnant vegetation, which would impact habitat for several threatened fauna species and in particular the koala. Secondly, extractive industry proposals such as this one do typically generate dust, noise and vibration as the hard rock is extracted and processed. And lastly, this project is located adjacent to approved industrial developments that have the potential to be impacted by fly rock from blasting.

40 So with all of this in mind, the Department considers that the key assessment issues for the project related to biodiversity, noise, air quality and blasting impacts. I'd also like to mention that given this is an extractive industry proposal involving the ongoing establishment of voids in the landscape, we also consider that potential water and rehabilitation impacts are important assessment issues.

45 Next I just want to quickly set out the strategic context of the project and follow that by a very brief outline of the engagement the Department has undertaken. I will then hand over to Jarrod, who will provide an overview of the key elements of the project and he'll also provide a summary of the Department's key assessment issues and findings. So firstly, the strategic context of the project. It is important to provide some strategic context about the project in relation to the existing land use

within and surrounding the site.

5 So I just want to bring up the first slide we have here, which is a local context figure. As you're likely aware, Sancrox Quarry is an existing hard rock quarry, located about 8 kilometres west of Port Macquarie. The quarry expansion area is proposed on relatively undisturbed areas of the site containing remnant vegetation. Land to the north, east and south of the site has received Council approval for industrial developments. A number of rural residences are located along Sancrox Road to the west and Bushland Drive to the south, the closest being around 10 500 metres from the site. The site is also close to the Pacific Highway, which is around 200 metres to the east.

15 To the south of the quarry, beyond Sancrox Road, is an industrial precinct consisting of various industrial and commercial businesses. A winery, horse riding business and residential housing estate are also located further to the east of the Pacific Highway. The quarry itself would supply high quality hard rock aggregate for construction projects within both the Port Macquarie and Mid North Coast regions. The population of Port Macquarie area is expected to increase significantly in the coming decades, which will drive demand for construction materials for housing and infrastructure projects. Sancrox Quarry is the closest 20 quarry to the region's major population centre of Port Macquarie.

25 It is also located directly adjacent to the Sancrox interchange and Pacific Highway, which provides an efficient outcome in terms of transportation costs for construction materials and local developments. Competitive and reliable supplies of quarry products are critical to the New South Wales construction industry. Sancrox Quarry and other extractive resources in the area are identified as being important to local and regional economic growth in a number of regional strategy documents, as referenced in our assessment report.

30 So I just want to quickly draw the Commission's attention to the Department's engagement on the project. The project was publicly exhibited for 42 days from 31 October to 11 December 2019 and during that exhibition the project attracted 259 unique objecting submissions. The Department also carried out three site 35 visits in 2020 and 2023 and participated in a community information sessions in 2020. All of these were informative and valuable to our assessment of the project.

40 The dominant issues raised in submissions were concerns about biodiversity impacts, particularly in relation to koalas. Closely following these were concerns about noise and vibration impacts, the need for the project and the impacts to water resources. Other issues included greenhouse gases, traffic, transport, Aboriginal heritage, air quality and blasting impacts.

45 As with all projects, the Department consulted with and received advice from key government agencies and public authorities, including Port Macquarie Council. The issues raised in submissions along with the advice we received from government agencies and public authorities has been given detailed consideration in our assessment. This also extends to our recommended conditions of consent,

which were largely developed based on feedback we received during agency consultation.

I'm now going to hand over to Jarrod to further talk you through the project and the Department's key assessment issues.

MS MILLIGAN: Thank you, Jessie.

MR JARROD BLANE: Thanks, Jessie. Good afternoon, everyone. As Jessie mentioned, my name is Jarrod Blane, I'm a senior environmental assessment officer with the Energy and Resource Assessments team at the Department. I'll provide a brief overview of the project along with a summary of the key assessment issues and the Department's findings and including touching on all the Commission's agenda items.

So firstly with regard to the project, on 10 July 2019, Hanson submitted a state significant development application and accompanying environmental impact statement or EIS for the Sancrox Quarry Expansion Project. Although the EIS was not accepted by the Department until 8 October 2019, the Department considers that the application was formally lodged in accordance with the relevant requirements in clause 50 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment regulation that were in force at the time on 10 July 2019.

The application, as the Commission has outlined, the application has got approval to expand the existing hard rock quarry into new areas to extract and process and transport up to 750,000 tonnes per annum of hard rock material over a 30 year period. This included removal of around 43 hectares of native vegetation and 24 hours a day operating hours. The application also sought the approval to construct and operate concrete recycling and batching facilities that would recycle and produce up to 20,000 tonnes per annum each and an asphalt production plant that would produce up to 50,000 tonnes per annum.

Quarrying would be undertaken using open cut extraction methods, including excavating, drilling, blasting, loading and hauling of quarry products, crushing and screening would also be undertaken on site.

Now, following exhibition of the project and subsequent consultation with government agencies and the community, Hanson scaled back several aspects of the proposal in its response to submissions report. This included reducing the proposed annual production limit from 750,000 tonnes per annum to 530,000 tonnes per annum. It also included reducing the proposed hours of operation from 24 hours a day to 5 am to 10 pm with evening hours of 6 pm to 10 pm utilised in response to market demand on up to 20 times per year.

The development footprint was also reduced from 60 hectares to around 58 hectares. The footprint was then further reduced in response to requests for information from the Department to avoid a total of 13 hectares of native vegetation clearing. The Department considered that these changes represented

reductions in the scale of the proposal to reduce the potential impacts that generally fit within the parameters of the original application.

5 I'll just now show a few features of the project. So as you can see, the quarry is divided into two main areas, the processing and infrastructure area to the east and the quarry pit to the west. There are also several existing and new sediment dams that would contain dirty water run-off and meet water demands for the project.

10 Now, road haulage of quarry products would involve trucks travelling from the site via the Sancrox Road interchange with the Pacific Highway, which is in close proximity to the quarry access. Trucks travelling to markets to the east or west would use the Oxley Highway interchange with the Pacific Highway further to the south, which you can see there.

15 I'll now provide a summary of the key assessment issues listed in the Commission's agenda, namely biodiversity, amenity impacts, water resources, rehabilitation and final landform, traffic and transport and Aboriginal cultural heritage. I think it's also important to note at this point that we've undertaken a comprehensive assessment of other environmental matters, all of which are
20 documented in our report.

So regarding biodiversity impacts, I'd just like to first discuss the timing of the biodiversity, given it was prepared under the provisions of the now repealed
25 Threatened Species Conservation Act. The Department considered this question in detail during the assessment of the project. Firstly, s 7.92 of the Biodiversity Conservation Act generally requires that all state significant development applications are accompanied by a biodiversity development assessment report. Over clause 28(1) of the Biodiversity Conservation (Savings and Transitional)
30 Regulation provides that the former planning provisions continue to apply to the determination of a pending or interim planning application.

Clause 27(1) of this regulation includes a number of definitions for pending or interim planning application and of relevance to this application is the definition in
35 27(1)(d) which provides that an application for which the Secretary determines in writing that the proponent had undertaken substantial environmental assessment before the commencement of the BC Act, if the application is made within 18 months after that determination, is a pending or interim planning application.

40 So in that regard, on 4 May 2018, the Department wrote to Hanson confirming that substantial environmental assessment had been undertaken prior to commencement of the BC Act and that therefore the project is considered a pending or interim planning application. The SSD application was then made on 10 July 2019, which was within 18 months of this determination.

45 So as a result, although the Threatened Species Conservation Act has since been revealed by the Biodiversity Conservation Act, some provisions of the Threatened Species Conservation Act that would be in force if it had not been revealed, such as the assessment guidelines, continue to apply to this project.

5 So for this reason the application was accompanied by a biodiversity assessment report and biodiversity offset strategy prepared in accordance with the 2014 Framework for Biodiversity Assessment and the New South Wales Biodiversity Offsets Policy for Major Projects, which I might refer to as the FBA going forward rather than a biodiversity development assessment report.

10 So I'll move on to the Department's assessment of the biodiversity impacts for the project. So the key impacts to biodiversity from the project are associated with the disturbance of about 30 hectares of native vegetation. Two plant community types occur within the disturbance area, neither of which are threatened ecological communities.

15 No threatened flora species were detected during surveys, however eight threatened fauna species were recorded on the site. Seven of these are bat species that utilise the site as foraging habitat and therefore generate ecosystem credits. One species that generates species credits, the koala, was recorded on site. Both impacted plant community types do contain koala feed trees and are considered habitat for this species.

20 To offset the residual biodiversity impacts of the project, Hanson proposes to implement a biodiversity offset strategy, which includes the retirement of 1,732 ecosystem credits for clearing of the two native plant community types and 777 species credits for impacts on koala habitat.

25 The biodiversity offset strategy would be further developed in consultation with BCS, the Biodiversity Conservation Science group in the Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water, I hope I'm getting that right, the Biodiversity Conservation Trust and the Department and is proposed to reflect the combination of a land based offset through establishing a biodiversity stewardship site, purchasing credits from the market and potentially paying into the biodiversity conservation fund. The Department considers that the proposed offset approach is acceptable as long as all the credits associated with vegetation removal are retired prior to actual disturbance.

35 Specifically on impacts to koala and koala habitat, which was a key issue for this project, the project would remove around 30 hectares of koala habitat. The biodiversity assessment report identified that this would reduce the availability of foraging and breeding habitat for the local koala population and increase barriers to movement and dispersal of koalas in the locality. Following its review of the EIS, BSC advised that with regard to the originally proposed project, which would've removed around 43 hectares of koala habitat, Hanson had not sufficiently demonstrated avoidance of impacts to koala habitat.

45 Hanson reduced the footprint of the proposed extraction area to avoid a total of 13.21 hectares of koala habitat compared to the originally proposed project. However, BCS maintain that despite the reduction in project disturbance footprint, it did not support the magnitude of impacts to koala habitat and advised that in its

view the project would significantly impact the Port Macquarie koala population and particular, given the impact of the 2019-2020 bushfires on koala habitat in the area.

5 So for these reasons, BCS considered that the proposed quarry expansion should be substantially reduced to only impact areas of degraded vegetation with limited or no koala food trees present, which in practical terms would equate to negligible clearing. So in response to these comments from BCS, Hanson provided further expert assessment of the impacts of the project on the koala habitat, sorry, on the
10 koala population. This was undertaken by Biolink ecological consultants.

This assessment found that while the koala food trees present within the disturbance area are considered important high use food trees, they are primarily categorised as secondary koala food trees and this indicates that the project would
15 likely result in displacement of one to two individual koalas to nearby habitat as a worst case scenario. The Department also engaged Alex Cockerill of WSP to undertake an independent peer review of the biodiversity assessment. This review found that the proportion of habitat that would be impacted by the project is small compared to the extent of available habitat within the locality.

20 And additionally, the impacts would be staged over the life of the project, which would mitigate the direct loss of the unburnt habitat on the project site against the regeneration of areas of available habitat that were impacted by the 2019-2020 bushfires. This review also ultimately concluded that the project is not likely to
25 significantly reduce the viability of the local koala population and therefore the Framework for Biodiversity Assessment provides that the impacts of the project must be offset and that the consent authority is not required to consider refusal or modification of the project on these grounds.

30 So Hanson have committed to implementing a range of measures to mitigate the project's impacts on the koala and to improve the quality and quantity of habitat available to the local koala population. This includes as part of their offset strategy establishing a biodiversity stewardship site in the north of the project site. This
35 will ensure a local land based offset that protects existing local koala habitat.

They've also committed to implementing a revegetation strategy for the project sites in addition to offsetting requirements, which I'll just show a slide of that. So
40 this will provide an additional 25.6 hectares of koala habitat within the existing cleared areas of the site. And they've also committed to delaying clearing in areas where significant koala activity has been identified until appropriate benchmarks are met in these revegetation areas.

So BCS raised some concerns about the methodology and effectiveness of some of these proposed mitigation measures, which the Department acknowledges.
45 However, given that these measures represent commitments to improve the quality and quantity of koala habitat on the site that are in addition to the offsetting measures required under the FBA, the Department is satisfied that they would provide for suitable additional mitigation for the project's impacts on koala

habitat.

5 The Department recommended conditions requiring Hanson to implement these commitments and also to delay clearing beyond 12 hectares of the site until appropriate benchmarks are met in the revegetation areas. The Department's also recommended a condition requiring Hanson to prepare and implement a biodiversity rehabilitation management plan in consultation with BCS. Overall, the Department considers that the various impacts on the koala are acceptable subject to the recommended management mitigation and offset requirements.

10 Further on the impacts to koala habitat and regarding the applicable koala habitat State Environmental Planning Policy that applies to this project, so at the time the EIS was finalised, State Environmental Planning Policy 44 (Koala Habitat Protection), which I'll refer to as SEPP 44, was in effect.

15 So despite this SEPP's replacement since 2019 by a series of SEPPs directed towards koala habitat protection, the provisions of SEPP 44 continue to apply to the project because clause 4.16 of the current State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021 provides that a development application made but not finally determined before the commencement of this policy in relation to land to which this policy applies must be determined as if the policy had not commenced. Consequently, the Department's considered the provisions of SEPP 44 in relation to this project.

20 So the biodiversity assessment report summarises a number of koala studies that have been undertaken on the site over the past 15 years. A number of these studies concluded that the site was core koala habitat, as defined in SEPP 44. The biodiversity assessment report, however, does argue that based on more recent surveys, the site would not currently meet this definition. It would rather be defined as potential koala habitat. Nevertheless, SEPP 44 provides that a council may not grant consent to a development application on land that is core koala habitat unless a koala plan of management is prepared and the development is consistent with that plan.

25 So the Department undertook detailed considerations of the impacts of the project on the local koala population and although there is some disagreement between the various studies that have been undertaken as to whether the site constitutes core koala habitat under SEPP 44, the Department has recommended conditions requiring Hanson to prepare a biodiversity and rehabilitation management plan, which includes koala population management measures. This plan would be prepared in consultation with BCS and must be approved by the Secretary prior to commencement of the development. So overall, the Department is satisfied that the project is generally consistent with the aims, objectives and requirements of SEPP 44.

40 I'll now move on to the connectivity and biodiversity corridor issue. So removal of vegetation for the project would reduce the width of a subregional biodiversity corridor that is mapped in the greater Sancrox structure plan 2015, which traverses

north-south through the site, which you can see on that figure. The original disturbance footprint proposed in the EIS would have resulted in the removal of all remnant vegetation from this corridor in the northwestern portion of the site. Following advice from BCS and WSP, the Department requested that a greater proportion of remnant vegetation be retained to improve the viability of this corridor.

So in response, Hanson revised the extraction area footprint to retain a north-south remnant vegetation corridor of around 100 metres width. Hanson also committed to revegetating the cleared area in the northwestern portion of the site, which would then provide a corridor width of greater than 300 metres following the completion of rehabilitation.

So in the independent peer review, WSP advised that this width is considered acceptable for this type of secondary wildlife corridor. WSP also recommended that Hanson stage its proposed clearing to maintain a minimum remnant vegetation corridor of 250 metre width for the first 10 years of the project and a minimum corridor of 200 metres for at least 15 years to allow adequate growth of rehabilitation plantings and the Department has recommended conditions requiring this, which are displayed on that figure there, the corridor widths that must be maintained. So yes, the Department considers that the project's impacts on habitat connectivity are acceptable subject to these recommended conditions.

So I'll now move on to air quality impacts.

MS MILLIGAN: Jarrod, what I might do, we're about halfway through our agenda.

MR BLANE: Yes.

MS MILLIGAN: So in the interests of time, I'd like to sort of have some discussion about the first half of the agenda and then we'll let you move on to the second half.

MR BLANE: Sure.

MS MILLIGAN: So thank you, you've confirmed the date of the application as being July 2019 and then what we heard you say is that changes to the project were accepted by the Department because they were changes in scale rather than any fundamental change to the project. Is that correct?

MS EVANS: That's correct.

MR BLANE: Yes, generally, yes, that's correct.

MS MILLIGAN: And did they seek sort of formal approval of those changes or just talk us through that process.

MS EVANS: I'm happy to start, Jarrod, if you want and then if anything's wrong, jump in.

MR BLANE: Sure.

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MS EVANS: So most of the changes came through the response to submissions and they weren't part of a formal amendment process. They were purely just those reductions in tonnage, a scaling back of extraction size and they were proposed in response to agency concerns raised during the exhibition period, agency and community.

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MS MILLIGAN: So you're saying – I'm sorry, go ahead.

MS EVANS: Yes, I was just going to say, sorry, in response to agency and community concerns.

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MS MILLIGAN: So you're saying that you consider that the application wasn't actually amended?

MS EVANS: That's correct. Not through the formal amendment process, no.

20

MR BLANE: Yes.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. Good. I'm just saying to the other commissioners, any questions, please just jump in. So the question of biodiversity, which has some detail, maybe I can ask Michael just to start to help us clarify the information we've heard.

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MR MICHAEL CHILCOTT: Yes. Thanks, Jessie and thanks, Jarrod. Michael Chilcott. Just a question, Jarrod, I think just touching on your assessment that SEPP 44 applies. That's what I understood you to [correct(?) 00:33:36] in the Department's assessment, the front end of the assessment points you to appendix E of the document and I could invite you to go to p 79 and 80 of the assessment report, which is where that appendix E goes to the matter of koalas.

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MR BLANE: Yes.

MR CHILCOTT: And you'll see if you go down towards the top of p 80, there's a paragraph which I think might be either the penultimate or the ultimate one in that section, just before the map, which says that the project has been assessed as having – well, the area's been assessed as having core koala habitat.

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MR BLANE: Yes.

MR CHILCOTT: And I heard you during your presentation say that there's more recent material which says that it's potential koala habitat. We've been trying to identify where in the assessment documentation the assessment of potential and core koala habitat is located and you may not have it available at the moment but

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that would be of assistance.

MR BLANE: Yes.

5 **MR CHILCOTT:** But given – and perhaps you could note that if you don't have
it available immediately and get back to us. But you also will see there that the
Department's assessment says that it's core koala habitat and then it talks through
the application of SEPP 44 and then it reaches certain conclusions that you
mentioned to do with general consistency and recommends conditions. Can you
10 just take us through the thought process that the Department has gone through in
relation to the application of SEPP 44, noting that in the assessment document at
least it says it's core koala habitat.

15 **MR BLANE:** Yes. Well, if you're happy for me to do that, Jessie?

MS EVANS: Yes, go for it.

20 **MR BLANE:** Yes, so in the assessment report, I'd say we've taken a somewhat
precautionary approach, given – sorry, just step back once to the initial comment
about discussion of potential versus core koala habitat. I don't have it in front of
me at the moment but there is some discussion of it in the biodiversity assessment
report, which I can point you or Brad to.

25 **MR CHILCOTT:** That would be helpful. Thank you.

MR BLANE: And I would say that the section in the assessment report is fairly
high level and as I describe, there has been a series of surveys on this site for the
last I think up to about 15 years that have found differing levels of koala
occupancy on the site and these are summarised in the BAR and have essentially
30 come to different conclusions as to the definition of the site with regards to SEPP
44 and core koala habitat.

In the assessment report, I suppose whilst it hasn't been elaborated in detail in the
assessment report, taking a somewhat precautionary approach that assumes it is
35 core koala habitat, noting the discrepancies in some of those surveys and noting
the provisions of SEPP 44 seem to apply to Council's granting of development
consents and the requirements for koala management plans.

40 Our view is that given our conditions require a management plan with koala
mitigation management measures, that the development would be consistent
generally with the aims and provisions of the SEPP, noting that the SEPP strictly
applies to Council developments and the I suppose precautionary view of whether
or not the definition of core koala habitat has been met. Sorry, I hope that helps. I
can provide a more thorough answer in writing.

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MR CHILCOTT: Look, if you would. Just trying to tease through the application
of SEPP 44 and how you've treated it in relation to the various assessments that
have been taken and also the requirements of the SEPP. If you're able to give us a

more considered assessment of that, that would be helpful, given the prominence I guess of this issue. Just trying to be clear on how you've treated it.

MS EVANS: Yes.

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MS MILLIGAN: Jessie, you had something?

MS EVANS: Yes, I was just going to add, so under the EP&A Act, we're required to consider all relevant EPIs and SEPPs and guidelines and policies and this is one of those SEPPs that obviously when you've got an area that has koala habitat, SEPP 44 comes into – well, at the time came into play. And we've treated it how we do for other EPIs. We've considered it, we've looked at its aims, objectives and principles and in this particular case, while the studies and surveys of the site over the many years that have ensued are not crystal clear as to whether it's core or potential koala habitat, we've taken the conservative view that it's core koala habitat.

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The SEPP is very direct in its language that it refers to Council, but noting that and in considering the aims and objectives of it, we've looked at it, basically the SEPP requires Council to require a koala plan of management prior to determination. We're requiring a biodiversity management plan with koala mitigation measures included prior to any impact occurring. So the aims and principles are generally consistent.

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MR CHILCOTT: Thanks.

MS MILLIGAN: Did you have a follow up question?

MR CHILCOTT: I do but it's a question of how far we push it.

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MR TERRY BAILEY: I'd just like to suggest, Jessie and Jarrod, Terry Bailey, there's an inconsistency though in the language that you're using between your assessment report and the way that you've just described what's intended and I'm referring, as Michael's already point to, at the top of p 80 where you're referencing a koala management plan and what we're hearing today is that there's a biodiversity and rehabilitation plan, which will have koala mitigation measures in it, which I think is an inconsistency in language that would be worth clarifying for us in text, which – and what you directly mean.

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MR BLANE: Yes, I think you're probably right that that's probably the wrong term to have used in the assessment report. The way the conditions – recommended conditions have been drafted –

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MS EVANS: The language of the condition is different.

MR BLANE: – it's part of an overall biodiversity management plan.

MS EVANS: We can clarify that.

5 **MS MILLIGAN:** All right. So we'll write to you, seeking clarification on those points, particularly the logic you used and the decisions you came to in thinking about applying SEPP 44 because you've talked to us about the aims, objectives and principles rather than the letter of the SEPP. So we'll ask you for some information about that and also the issue that Terry's just raised about clarity about your intent in the assessment report about koala mitigation measures.

10 **MS EVANS:** Yes.

15 **MR CHILCOTT:** And also if you could just clarify the matter that you've raised in relation to how it applies to this project. You've indicated I think in the assessment report that SEPP 44 is applicable but then seem to go into territory that qualifies the applicability in some form. And perhaps if you could tease that out for us, that would be of assistance.

MS MILLIGAN: Is there anything you wanted to say about that now, Jessie, or would you just like to take that on notice and come back to us?

20 **MS EVANS:** I'll take it on notice and come back with a comprehensive written response. I think that's going to be the best approach.

MS MILLIGAN: All right. Thank you very much for that.

25 **MR CHILCOTT:** Thank you.

MS MILLIGAN: So are we okay to the end of the biodiversity cue on our agenda?

30 **MR CHILCOTT:** I'm satisfied and we're looking forward to getting your response. Thank you.

MS MILLIGAN: All right. Jarrod, sorry, back to you.

35 **MR BLANE:** Yes.

MS MILLIGAN: You were just about to talk to us about amenity issues, air quality, noise, blasting.

40 **MR BLANE:** Yes. All right. So on to air quality impacts. So the air quality assessment for the project indicated that quarrying activities and operation of the batching plants would be the main sources of dust emissions from the project. This would include drilling and blasting, product handling, rock processing, concrete crushing and wheel generated dust from truck loading. On screen now is a figure
45 showing the location of sensitive receivers around the quarry.

So the air quality assessment used dispersion modelling to predict worst case concentrations of particulate matter and deposited dust from identified emissions

sources at sensitive receivers around the quarry site. The air quality modelling predicted no exceedance of the applicable total suspended particulates, deposited dust and particulate matter less than 2.5 microns or PM2.5 impacts assessment criteria for incremental, which is project only emissions and cumulative emissions at all receptor locations.

In terms of particulate matter up to 10 microns or PM10 emissions, the project would comply with the applicable impact assessment criteria for incremental and cumulative emissions at the majority of sensitive receiver locations. However, exceedances of the 24 hour PM10 criteria were predicted at all sensitive receiver locations when the quarry's operating at maximum daily throughput. So a worst case scenario.

So of these four receiver locations, three of them represent the future industrial developments located on currently vacant land adjacent to the northern and eastern boundaries of the site. The fourth of these locations was a residential property located to the south, it's receiver 13 you can see there on the figure, that has since been purchased by Hanson and Hanson has advised it will not remain as a residential receiver going forward.

So the EPA were satisfied that these predicted exceedances at the future industrial developments could be prevented by implementing proactive and reactive air quality management system that would use meteorological monitoring and real time PM10 monitoring to reduce dust emissions before an exceedance occurs.

So in this regard, the Department has recommended conditions requiring Hanson to implement a trigger action response plan, which would require operations to be modified or stopped in response to predefined meteorological or air quality conditions to prevent exceedances of the air quality criteria at these or any other receptors. So subject to these recommended conditions, the Department considers that the air quality impacts of the project are acceptable.

In relation to noise impacts, we're aware that noise was a key issue raised in public submissions. There's two key elements of the project that have the greatest potential for noise impacts. So number one is noise from plant and equipment during extraction, processing and truck loading and secondly, there is noise from falling of quarry products. So the existing noise environment at the site is typical of a rural residential land use setting. Traffic noise influenced from the Pacific Highway is the dominant background noise source.

The majority of residential receivers are located to the south of the quarry, along Bushland Drive and to the west along Sancrox Road. The closest being located approximately 500 metres from the site. The noise assessment also included the locations representative of the future industrial developments that I've discussed previously and also for future residential developments that will be potentially impacted by noise from the project.

The project design includes an earth bund along the southern edge of the quarry to

shield sensitive receivers from noise emissions. Hanson have also committed to a range of operational mitigation measures reflective of current best practice, which are detailed in our report.

5 In terms of the predicted impacts, the noise assessment indicates that operational noise levels would be below the adopted assessment criteria at all receiver locations. Noise from haulage of quarry products would also remain below applicable road noise criteria at all receiver locations.

10 During construction, noise levels would exceed noise management levels that are established under the interim construction noise guideline at several residences to the south of the quarry by up to 9 decibels. Hanson have committed to implementing reasonable and feasible mitigation measures in accordance with the interim construction noise guideline to minimise noise impacts and the
15 Department's recommended conditions require that all construction activities are undertaken during standard construction hours.

The construction noise impacts would be temporary and once completed would reduce the project's ongoing operational noise impacts. The Department's
20 recommended noise limits, which are consistent with the EPA's recommendations, have been set based on the most conservative default criteria set out in the industrial noise policy. The Department's also recommended a range of other conditions that would require Hanson to operate a comprehensive noise management system to minimise the noise impacts of the project.

25 The Department considers that the recommended conditions strike a fair balance between protecting the amenity of the local community and providing for the operation of the project. Subject to these conditions, the Department considers the noise impacts of the project are acceptable.

30 I'll now move on to blasting impacts. The Department considers that the key issues relating to blasting are potential blast vibration impacts on residences and other buildings and potential fly rock impacts on the adjoining properties. The noise and vibration assessment predicted that for the blast design proposed to be used at the quarry, the air blast overpressure and ground vibration levels would
35 comply with the relevant criteria at the nearest sensitive receiver.

40 With regard to fly rock impacts, the proposed extraction area extends to the northern boundary of the site, which adjoins the site of an approved industrial development. At the Department's request, Hanson commissioned a fly rock assessment that calculated the required exclusion zones and blast design parameters to prevent fly rock impacts to this property. Hanson also reached an agreement with the landowner to establish a blast exclusion zone of 90 metres on
45 that property for up to 10 years.

The fly rock assessment found that for blasts within 295 metres of this 90 metre exclusion zone boundary, specific blast design parameters would be required to ensure that fly rock is contained within the exclusion zone. So Hanson have

committed to implementing these blast design measures and the Department's recommended conditions would require Hanson to develop a strategy to manage fly rock risks in consultation with the owner of any land within 300 metres of a blast. All other privately owned residences would be more than 300 metres from blasting activities and so therefore are unlikely to be impacted by fly rock.

The Department considers that with the implementation of Hanson's proposed blast design measures and the recommended conditions, fly rock impacts from the project can be managed appropriately.

So next I'll provide a summary of the Department's consideration to surface water, impacts to surface water and groundwater resources. So the Department considers that the key issues related to water resources are associated with the discharge of site water and potential impacts to the water quality and hydrology of Fernbank Creek, which is the receiving water course. Also water licensing, groundwater inflows and drawdown potentially impacting other water users.

So the project has been designed to maximise the reuse of water onsite and minimise the take of clean water from the catchment and minimise discharges to Fernbank Creek. The site water management system comprises a dirty water system, which includes sediment dams, in pit water storage dams, catch drains to intercept sediment laden runoff from disturbed areas and direct them to the sediment dams and a clean water system, which includes diversion drains to divert runoff from undisturbed upslope catchment areas around the site.

Captured water from within the sediment basins would be discharged via the existing licensed discharge point into Fernbank Creek. This discharge point would continue to be regulated by the EPA under the site's environment protection licence. The Department considers that the proposed water management system has been suitably designed to manage the risks to hydrology and water quality and that there are measures available to manage any water shortfalls or surpluses without adversely impacting the receiving environment.

Regarding groundwater, excavation of the quarry would result in some inflow of groundwater into the quarry pit, although this is expected to be relatively minor considering the low porosity of the strata within the extraction area. Impacts would be relatively localised and limited to a less productive aquifer. A maximum groundwater drawdown of greater than 2 metres under a worst case modelling scenario is predicted at two licensed groundwater bores.

Drawdown of 2 metres exceeds the New South Wales Aquifer Interference Policy's level 2 minimal impact considerations for less productive groundwater sources. And in these circumstances, the Aquifer Interference Policy requires that appropriate studies to demonstrate the decline would not prevent the long-term viability of the affected water supply unless make good provisions apply.

So Hanson have committed to undertaking groundwater monitoring at the impacted licensed bores and implementing make good provisions if required. So

5 the Department's recommended conditions include a requirement for Hanson to provide a compensatory water supply to any landowner of privately owned land whose right for water supply is adversely affected and directly impacted by the project. Hanson's also demonstrated that it can obtain sufficient entitlement under its harvestable rights and water access licences to account for the quarry's water take.

10 The Department's also recommended that Hanson be required to prepare and implement a water management plan in consultation with the [DCCEEW(?) 00:57:24] water group and the EPA. The Department considers that the risks of impact to surface water and groundwater resources are low and that the project could be suitably managed in accordance with the recommended conditions to avoid any unacceptable impacts.

15 So next I'll talk about rehabilitation and final landform. So the proposed rehabilitation strategy seeks to progressively rehabilitate the site to create a safe, stable and non-polluting landform. The conceptual final landform would primarily consist of benched quarry walls and a quarry floor at minus 40 metres AHD. The void would eventually fill with water from surface and groundwater inflows.

20 The benches would be revegetated with native endemic species and would drain to either stabilised areas or the quarry void, depending on the topography. The void would take approximately 82 years to fill after closure before spilling to the receiving environment. The final void water quality is expected to be similar to that of runoff from the surrounding catchment and discharges from the void are expected to be representative of regional hydrological functioning.

25 The processing and stockpile areas are expected to be suitable for future industrial use, which is consistent with the planned land use for the surrounding area. Quarry infrastructure and stockpiles would be removed and the area regraded and revegetated in a manner suitable for its determined end use. The identified preferred final land use for the extraction area is passive biodiversity conservation, including maintenance of an established vegetated buffer and amenity barrier to shield views of the final landform.

30 Hanson has commenced rehabilitation in several areas of the existing site and would continue to undertake progressive rehabilitation throughout the life of the project with completed benches revegetated to ensure a stable landform and to minimise soil erosion.

35 So the Department's recommended conditions require Hanson to prepare a biodiversity rehabilitation management plan in consultation with BCS and Council that considers the hydrological and hydraulic impacts of the final void and detail specific rehabilitation performance and completion criteria. The Department's also recommended a condition requiring Hanson to lodge a rehabilitation bond to ensure that accumulated and anticipated costs of rehabilitation are available until all rehabilitation has been completed to the satisfaction of the Secretary.

It's worth noting that even if the project did not proceed, several changes to the landscape would remain as a result of the existing operations, including a final void, although the project would increase the size and depth of the remaining void.

5 A new state significant development consent would provide greater certainty for final land use planning and apply contemporary rehabilitation performance standards and management practices, rather than the limited rehabilitation conditions included in the existing development consents. Subject to the recommended conditions, the Department considers that the project area could be
10 rehabilitated to achieve a sustainable landform and appropriate rehabilitation outcomes. In relation to traffic impacts.

MS MILLIGAN: Sorry, we have a question.

15 **MR BAILEY:** Sorry, Jarrod. Just as you were referring to the progressive rehabilitation, what I particularly – and I think there was a mention there of some contemporary standards that are set. I'm wondering if you have any guidance material in terms of the progressive rehabilitation?

20 **MR BLANE:** That has been undertaken or that would be required?

MR BAILEY: Well, guidance material that would give guidance to the project proponent on what progressive rehabilitation looks like and how that would work. I'm just – just a question of do you have some guidance material in terms of that
25 would be provided that gives an understanding of what progressive rehabilitation is and how it would work? So you're talking about lifting it to contemporary standards, so it's just [cross-talk 01:02:26] guidance material that's provided.

MR BLANE: Yes, sure. I might have to – unless Jessie, you have a response, might have to take that on notice for specifics of guidelines and the like.
30

MR BAILEY: Thank you.

MS EVANS: Yes, we can provide some further information. But just a like really high level – while most of the – well, not all quarries but some quarries don't fall
35 within a scheduled resource. So some quarries have a mining licence over their land and others don't. Sancrox is one that doesn't. But the ones that do, there is guidelines that they are required to follow under the mining leases and licences that they currently have as well.

40 And particularly for rehabilitation bonds, the Department uses the guidance that would be applicable to those ones that do have a mining lease, a licence, for the quarries that don't. So there is guidance that is developed through Resources Regulator for rehabilitation and we do look at that for quarries that don't have the
45 mining lease, so that they're consistent across the state. But we're happy to provide the specifics of that.

MS MILLIGAN: So the rehabilitation plan would be assessed by the Department

against those guidance?

5 **MS EVANS:** It's not assessed against but the guidance provides us as a consideration point, yes. Because the rehabilitation management plans for quarries that don't have a mining lease sit in the development consent. For ones that do have a mining lease, it's regulated by the Resources Regulator. So we do try and ensure consistency across the state but we don't have the strict conditions like they do on the mining lease, we have the general concepts and requirements for the rehabilitation management plan. So we do consider it when we're looking at the rehabilitation management plans, but it's not a strict reference in our conditions.

MS MILLIGAN: But you approve the plan?

15 **MS EVANS:** We do for quarries that don't have mining leases, yes.

MS MILLIGAN: Yes. Okay, all right. Question.

20 **MR CHILCOTT:** Jessie, just following on from that, is your understanding or is your assessment that the plans as they come forward now from the applicant are satisfactory with respect to those guidances that you would now anticipate are being applied to such an activity?

MS EVANS: Sorry, I'm not quite sure I followed the question.

25 **MR CHILCOTT:** Sorry. You said that you give consideration to the guidance in respect of quarry activities, even though they aren't formally required under the Act, under the other Act that would apply to mining activities. So what I'm saying is in terms of the application that comes before us for determination, are you satisfied that the proponent has put forward an application which will satisfy the guidance that you're seeking to achieve in terms of [cross-talk 01:05:28]?

30 **MS EVANS:** Yes, yes. So I'm satisfied that we've assessed the proposed rehabilitation in our assessment report with what the company has put forward and where they've addressed comments raised by agencies and ourselves as well and I am comfortable with our assessment report. And then the devil will be in the detail that comes through in the rehabilitation management plan, which we have a dedicated post-approval team within the Department that does that work as their bread and butter and they've looked at rehabilitation plans across the state for quarries and coal mines as well.

35 **MR CHILCOTT:** And at what point does that plan come forward?

MS EVANS: It's specific to the timing in the consent, so –

40 **MR BLANE:** This would be prior to commencement of construction in this case.

MS EVANS: Yes.

MR CHILCOTT: Thank you.

5 **MS MILLIGAN:** And just to finish off on the rehabilitation water issues before we go to the last two issues, you talked in the water assessment that seepage in the pit is very low and then when we're thinking about rehabilitation of the site, it will fill with water very slowly. Are there any issues in your mind that are associated with the fact that that's going to be a very sort of slow fill?

10 **MS EVANS:** No that – like I'd say it's a very normal rehabilitation approach to quarries and generally speaking it's actually better if they fill more slowly than be inundated quickly. It allows settlement of material and minerals and for them to do their bench rehabilitation at a better rate. So no significant issues are jumping to mind for it filling slowly as opposed to at a different rate.

15 **MS MILLIGAN:** And the detailed plan that comes forward after consent and before construction would address the progressive nature of the rehabilitation?

MS EVANS: Yes.

20 **MS MILLIGAN:** It would sort of set stages and benchmarks and delivery?

MS EVANS: Yes. They often include completion criteria, tree species, seed species, seeding rates, like there's a lot of detail in those plans.

25 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. So we've got two issues to go. Can I just check that you're okay for time if we push on?

30 **MS EVANS:** I've just had a meeting cancelled, which was convenient. I'm good for a little bit longer, yes.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. All right, we probably need 10 minutes.

MS EVANS: Yes, that's fine.

35 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. Jarrod, can you take us to traffic and transport?

40 **MR BLANE:** Traffic. Okay, yes. Excuse me. Yes, so the Department recognises that potential traffic impacts was an issue of concern raised in public submissions. As mentioned earlier, the site is located in close proximity to the Sancrox interchange and the Pacific Highway, which trucks would use to travel to and from the site. This interchange was constructed in 2015 and Transport for New South Wales advised that the design of the upgrade had accounted for increased traffic from the future expansion of the quarry and any other – sorry, and other developments in the area.

45 The Oxley Highway interchange with the Pacific Highway further to the south would provide for east and western truck movements, for deliveries into markets in those directions, which would eliminate the need for trucks to travel on Sancrox

Road, which is the local road immediately south of the quarry or other local roads unless delivering products to those areas.

5 So projected traffic data presented in the EIS indicated that all roundabouts providing access to the Pacific Highway would remain well within their design capacity when allowing for the traffic volumes generated by the project. Transport for New South Wales did not raise any concerns with the project. Hanson estimated that local deliveries comprise less than 1% of total traffic movements and have committed to paying annual financial contributions to Council towards
10 the maintenance of any local roads used for haulage of quarry products.

The Department's recommended conditions requiring Hanson to prepare a traffic management plan prior to commencement of construction. The recommended conditions also require strict monitoring of road haulage rates and subject to these
15 conditions, the Department considers that the traffic impacts of the project are acceptable.

MS MILLIGAN: Can I ask you what assumptions were made in terms of traffic volumes from potential future urban use of the land surrounding the application?
20

MR BLANE: I'd have to take that on notice. I don't have that detail to hand. I'd have to review.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. Thank you, that's fine.
25

MS EVANS: We'd have to go back to the EIS and look at the assumptions.

MS MILLIGAN: And when you talk about local deliveries, Hanson had said less than 1% would be local deliveries. Can you just tell me what that means?
30

MR BLANE: Generally speaking, it would mean deliveries relatively sort of close proximity to the quarry that are not accessed primarily by the Pacific Highway, that have to be delivered along essentially Council owned roads.

MS MILLIGAN: So deliveries that might go west?
35

MR BLANE: Potentially, yes. Like, if there were some in that direction.

MS MILLIGAN: Or if the urban land is developed? All right, thank you.
40

MS EVANS: It's probably more likely for the development that's going on close by the site.

MS MILLIGAN: I understand. Thank you. All right. And the last item on the agenda is the Aboriginal cultural heritage.
45

MR BLANE: Yes. So the EIS included an Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment, prepared in consultation with registered Aboriginal parties. A

potential culturally modified tree was identified within the broader project sites to the west of the proposed disturbance area. While the site would not be impacted by the project, site plans would identify the location of the tree and temporary fencing would be erected to prevent accidental damage to the tree and its surrounds.

5

Previous archaeological investigations reported that a ceremonial site once existed on the site of the existing quarry, although no archaeological evidence of the site has been found and the site would have been destroyed during establishment of the existing quarry. This form of ceremonial site is considered to have cultural significance and recognition of its location within the Sancrox area will be displayed in the quarry's office in consultation with the Birpai Local Aboriginal Land Council.

10

No other Aboriginal sites or potential archaeological deposits were identified within the project disturbance area and it was concluded that there was a low likelihood of impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage. Heritage New South Wales raised no concerns over impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage and supported Hanson's proposed mitigation measures, which included a protocol to manage any unexpected Aboriginal heritage finds and to undertake cultural awareness training for all workers.

15

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The Department has recommended conditions requiring Hanson to protect, monitor, record and manage identified Aboriginal heritage items and ensure that the project does not impact on any identified Aboriginal objects located outside the proposed disturbance areas.

25

The Department considers that there is low potential for adverse impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage from the project and yes, that concludes the summary of our key assessment issues for the project.

30

MS MILLIGAN: You had a question, Terry?

MR BAILEY: Yes, thanks, Jarrod. Just very quickly, on the potential scar tree, just noting that there's been a modification, that will stay in situ. Could I just get two understandings, one, the curtilage around the scar tree and get an understanding whether that curtilage is sufficient for the scar tree to remain in situ and not be damaged?

35

MR BLANE: The curtilage, as in how far the disturbance area is from it?

40

MR BAILEY: Yes.

MR BLANE: I don't have it to hand but I can certainly –

45

MS EVANS: Can map it out.

MR BLANE: Yes.

MR BAILEY: Yes, it'd be helpful to understand who gave that advice that that curtilage would be sufficient for the scar trees to remain in situ.

MR BLANE: Yes. I can take that on notice.

MR BAILEY: Thank you.

MS MILLIGAN: All right, we'll seek that information. Anything else? So Jarrod, am I thinking that you're at the end of your presentation to us?

MR BLANE: I'm at the end of the key assessment items. We did have some further concluding remarks.

MS MILLIGAN: Please.

MS EVANS: Yes, I'm happy to – if you've got the time.

MS MILLIGAN: Before you go to your concluding remarks, sorry, Jessie, before you go to your concluding remarks, Michael, you have a question?

MR CHILCOTT: Yes, just a couple of points in relation to conditions and you may want to take these away and get a written response to us. Firstly, we noted that Council, in its submission in response to the response to submissions had suggested a condition in relation to s 7.12 contributions, which didn't appear to be picked up by the Department in its conditions. Just wondering if there was a reason for that, whether [unintelligible 01:16:17] deliberate.

MR BLANE: We had pretty extensive discussions with Council about the contributions of varying types. So from memory, I remember there were some related to water supply, road contributions and some others. I know we have consulted with them. I don't have the details of all that correspondence to hand and fresh in mind but it was worked through with Council and came to an arrangement that Council were satisfied at the end. Again, can provide the further detail on that.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay, thank you. We'll ask you for that.

MR CHILCOTT: Yes, if you'd be good enough and we'll include that in our correspondence. Secondly, in the – going briefly back to the biodiversity management plan, the conditions that's drafted doesn't require that plan to be signed off by any entity. It says one will be prepared. Often there would be some consideration of a sign off process for that.

Again, could you just take that on board and reflect on that in your response again. We'll consider that in our note. And Jarrod, sorry, one other thing that occurred to me during your presentation we hadn't picked up earlier but you talked about in terms of noise, all feasible and reasonable efforts being made to deal with noise mitigation. Can you just, in your response to us, give us some narrative in terms of

how that's given effect in relation to this project?

MR BLANE: Yes.

5 **MR CHILCOTT:** Thank you. I don't want to delay it any further. We just picked that up.

MS MILLIGAN: Thanks, Jessie. Your concluding remarks.

10 **MS EVANS:** Yes. No problem. So the Department does acknowledge the public interest in this project and in particular the community's concerns regarding the potential biodiversity and amenity impacts. The Department acknowledges the concerns raised by BCS and the community regarding the impacts to the local koala population and accepts that a loss of habitat is a key threat to the species.

15 Given these threats and the community concern regarding biodiversity impacts more broadly, a key focus of our assessment was to ensure that Hanson adopted the avoid, minimise, offset hierarchy of controls into the design of the project as far as practical. We also recognise that the project's ability to avoid koala impact, koala habitat, is restricted by the location of the resource and that complete avoidance is impractical. As part of its assessment, the Department sought independent advice from a biodiversity expert, which found that the project's impacts on koala habitat are not likely to significantly reduce the viability of the species or its local population.

20
25
30 Amenity impacts, as Jarrod discussed, were another key concern for the community. This is particularly understandable given the rural residential setting of the project and the potential noise and dust emissions the extractive industry projects can generate. Notwithstanding these concerns, our assessment has concluded that the potential noise and air quality impacts from the project can be managed through the Department's recommended conditions, which we do consider strike a fair balance between protecting the amenity of the local community and providing for the continuation of an already existing quarry.

35 The Department has carefully considered all the issues raised throughout its assessment process and feedback from government agencies. We've also considered the suitability of the site and whether it is in the public interest to allow the project to proceed.

40 Our recommended conditions were provided to key New South Wales government agencies and their comments taken into account in finalising them. Hanson has also reviewed and accepted the recommended conditions. We recognise that the proposed quarry would contribute a range of high quality construction materials to local and regional markets. We accept there is a strategic need for hard rock quarry materials in the Mid North Coast region and consider the site to be well suited for the project.

45

We also recognise that the proximity of the project's hard rock resource to the

5 Pacific Highway facilitates safe and efficient distribution of products to the market. We also consider that the project would result in significant economic benefits to the region and to the state of New South Wales through the supply of materials critical to the construction industry and is therefore justified from an economics perspective.

10 Hanson has designed the project in a way that would achieve a practical balance between maximising resource recovery and minimising associated impacts on the surrounding landholders and the environment through contemporary practices and mitigation measures.

15 So on balance the Department considers that the benefits of the project outweigh its residual costs, the site is suitable for the proposed development and that the project is in the public interest and is approvable subject to the recommended conditions of the consent. I just wanted to thank you for your time.

20 **MS MILLIGAN:** Well, thank you. Thank you, Jessie. Thank you, Jarrod. Thank you both. We will now write to you to specify the additional information we've agreed that you will provide and just thank you for being here to answer our questions and to add to our understanding of the project and your assessment of it. Thank you.

MS EVANS: Thank you very much.

25 **MR BLANE:** Thank you.

MS EVANS: Bye.

>THE MEETING CONCLUDED