

Our ref: Liverpool Range Quarry (SSD-68063715)

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

02 October 2025

Subject: Liverpool Range Quarry – Referral to the NSW Independent Planning Commission

Dear Mr Mills

The Department has completed its assessment of the merits of the application for the Liverpool Range Quarry (the Project). The application is being referred to the NSW Independent Planning Commission (the Commission) for determination, as there were more than 50 unique public submissions objecting to the Project.

Australian Resource Development Group Pty Limited (ARDG) proposes to develop a hard rock quarry and clay pit to extract, process and transport up to 700,000 tonnes per annum of construction material over five years. The Project is in the Upper Hunter Shire local government area, approximately 10 kilometres (km) northwest of Cassilis.

The project was determined to be a *controlled action* by a delegate of the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water on 30 August 2024 due to its potential impact on threatened species and communities and has been assessed in accordance with the Commonwealth and NSW Government Bilateral Agreement.

The Department publicly exhibited the project from 22 October until 18 November 2024. A total of 83 public submissions were received during the exhibition period, including 72 from individuals and 11 from special interest groups. The Department carried out a site visit in March 2025.

The Project would solely supply material to the approved Liverpool Range Wind Farm project (SSD-6696). As the State transitions to renewable energy, there is an increased demand for extractive industries to ensure that renewable projects have the materials required for construction.

Regarding traffic impacts the Department notes that the quarry project would shift the origin of heavy vehicle movements within the Wind Farm project boundary. The Department has analysed the framework within the Wind Farm consent and has determined that the relevant upgrades to local roads and intersections, as well as existing council contributions would accommodate this shift.

The Project would disturb 3.2 hectares (ha) of NSW Box Gum Woodland, a Critically Endangered Ecological Community (CEEC), and 15.8 ha of derived native grasslands, which does not conform with the CEEC. The project was found to be foraging habitat for one threatened species, the Barking owl.

The Department considers that the biodiversity impacts of the project have been minimised through avoidance and project design, and the impacts would be mitigated through the implementation of ecosystem and species credits, in accordance with the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme.

The Commonwealth has reviewed the relevant sections of the Department's report and the draft conditions of consent and raised no concerns. Overall, the Department considers the impacts of the project on biodiversity are acceptable, subject to the recommended conditions.

Regarding amenity impacts, the nearest non-project associated receiver is 3.1 km to the southwest. The technical assessments accompanying the development application have predicted impacts to be below the relevant guideline criteria for noise, air quality and blasting impacts.

The project is estimated to result in the following benefits: a contribution of \$17 million annually in direct and \$31 million annually in indirect economic outputs; employment of six full time equivalent workers; and the payment of a contribution of \$50,000 to Upper Hunter Shire Council to provide for improvements to the nearby town of Cassilis.

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

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 Jessie Evans, Director Resources and Energy Assessments on [REDACTED] or via email at [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Chris Ritchie.

Chris Ritchie

A/Executive Director, Energy, Resources and Industry