

Independent Planning Commission

Martins Creek Quarry

Comments

Michael Stevens

- Not here as an expert
- Don't live on haul route or next to quarry but close
- Views expressed are mine & in good faith
- Focus: Assessment SSD-6612
- Particularly truck movements

Areas of Concern

- Insufficient focus on people
- Insufficient focus on the uniqueness of the haulage route
- Economic benefits of the quarry need to be better specified & quantified
- Costs need to be better specified & quantified

People: Insufficient Focus

- After the Land & Environment Court decision minimal haulage has been by truck
- Proposed 500K tpa = huge increase
- Assessment says about 500K common in past
- But objections & complaints were plentiful
- Lived experiences of affected people not meaningfully factored in
- All of these need to be accounted for prior to approval. Dept already has a lot of data

People: Insufficient Focus

- Noise is more than just “noise one off”: constant nature of that noise, including the cumulative effect
- World Health Organisation report 2011
 - Overwhelming evidence of relation between traffic noise and health
 - Higher incidence of e.g. headaches, anxiety, cardiovascular issues, children may suffer cognitive impairment
 - At least one million healthy years of life are lost each year in Europe alone due to noise pollution

People: Insufficient Focus

- Lack of meaningful action now following extensive community feedback would make this worse
- A 500K regime may well trigger “over & above responses” due to bad past experiences
- Court action was the key to stop large unlawful activity. Little trust in other options

People: Insufficient Focus

- Demographics don't seem to be accounted for
 - Particularly the young & seniors (about 40% of population in Dungog Shire)
- Assessment: benefits outweigh “residual costs”. Does this term refer to the community cost?
- Assessment: proposals deliver a balance of the impacts on the community with quarry viability

Uniqueness of Haulage Route

- No ready access to major highways like other quarries, e.g. Karuah, Allandale
- Haulage roads pass through villages and by other businesses, residential properties, recreational land, preschool, Tocal, churches, farms
- No protection offered:
 - Barriers against noise
 - Lanes for passing
 - Special pavement surfaces
 - Perimeter fencing

- Extra protection via minimal road haulage is needed
- Risk analysis is an imperative at 500K
- Involves the Likelihood of Occurrence v Likely Consequences

Economic Benefits Not Quantified

- Generalised approach taken describing potential markets & value
- No evidence as to the benefit level
- As road haulage decreased markedly following the Court decision, what happened?
 - Strong demand for construction materials was met elsewhere
 - No apparent adverse effects

Costs Not Quantified

- Community costs (incl. health issues, quality of life) have not been quantified adequately
- SIA concerns raised by Newcastle University
- How has the Department carefully weighed all benefits against all costs?
- How can decision makers know the best case, worst case or likely outcome overall?

Conclusion

- 500K tpa is well beyond an acceptable limit to be hauled by road
- Only a minor proportion of this should be considered pending acceptable total cost benefit and risk management analyses