

I oppose the Martins Creek Quarry Expansion.

I live in Bolwarra Heights in a property that is about [REDACTED] I have lived here for eight years. I purchased in this area due to the semi-rural aspect, trees, wildlife and pleasant ambience of the local area facilitating a relaxed lifestyle and sense of positive well-being.

My primary objections are:

- 1 Increased traffic noise and vibrations
- 2 Increased traffic volume and congestion with increased risk to pedestrians and drivers
- 3 Negative impacts on local environment and wildlife especially koalas
- 4 Negative impacts on personal well-being, lifestyle and property values
- 5 Deterioration in local road surfaces

Unfortunately we already experience significant traffic noise from Tocal Road all day beginning early. This is primarily due to constantly rumbling trucks and at times compression braking. Sometimes it is louder than others I guess depending on the size of load and speed. This can be accompanied by vibrations throughout the house especially in windows.

Approval increasing the number of trucks would make this traffic noise incessant. Particularly at a time when we are spending more time at home due to Covid requirements the relentless truck noise will be depressing and absolutely detrimental to positive mental health. I fully understand this impact from a previous experience of living on a very busy main road where the traffic and noise were constant.

Traffic congestion is a significant worry. Bolwarra Heights only has two exit points for the whole suburb. The closest one to my home (and most homes) is at the intersection of Paterson Road and Hunterglen Drive. This is already choked at peak times, especially at morning school time when there is always a long line of traffic waiting to exit onto Paterson Road. Getting into that queue from Highland Way where I join is very time-consuming in itself before again awaiting a turn to exit onto Paterson Road. This exit can also be dangerous because that road is so busy that traffic breaks are limited and cars often take risks leading to frequent near misses and occasional collisions.

With an increase in truck movements along Paterson Road this will be an even more lengthy and hazardous process. It seems inevitable that increased car driver frustration at the even longer delays will lead to increased risk taking to enter Paterson Road and the increased chance that inevitable collisions may involve a fast moving truck. Having to sit in this traffic stream every morning and then in effect play chicken with oncoming trucks in both directions to exit will be a nightmare!!

I am also concerned about bottlenecks at the roundabout at the junction of Paterson Road and Flat Road. This is already a busy roundabout where traffic flow will be negatively impacted by the proposed increase in the number of trucks. It is a uniquely dangerous spot too as a significant population of water birds live in the adjacent wetland and they regularly wander across the road. Motorists often brake unexpectedly trying to avoid the birds which will be increasingly dangerous if you have a truck close behind you.

The other end of Flat Road where it meets Melbourne St, East Maitland is very busy most of the day in all directions and especially at the peak times before and after school and work. It already can take me three or four sets of lights to get through this intersection. It will be a total fiasco with any large increase in truck numbers using this intersection. Traffic would be backed up along Flat Road with extensive delays and there is no reasonable alternate route for local motorists.

Another very dangerous intersection would be where trucks from the Dungog and Brandy Hill quarries converge near the Service Station in Bolwarra Heights at the corner of Tocal Road and Paterson Road. Tocal Road is very narrow at this point and I go through this intersection regularly to visit an elderly relative and cars are often queued on the road to gain access to the service station.

I also see the quality of roads in our area, for which I pay taxes, being degraded by the increased truck traffic. Even with some levy on the operator, repairs take time and roads would be continuously damaged after repair. This has already occurred on the improvements along Tocal Road due to the current heavy vehicle traffic.

I am also concerned for pedestrians in particular school children who need to cross Tocal Road or Paterson Road. I drive this road every day and often see students dodging cars to race across the road to the bus stop near the Anglican Church on Paterson Road or children and parents with toddlers and prams crossing to access Bolwarra Public School. It is far from a safe road for pedestrians now and increased truck traffic suggests an increased chance of a pedestrian being struck.

As someone who is concerned about the environment and wildlife I am greatly concerned about the potential bulldozing of numerous hectares of koala habitat. Our koalas are already severely at risk across NSW with an apparent unwillingness of the NSW government to unilaterally act to protect their habitat. This is a great opportunity to be forward thinking and champion the needs of the environment and koalas. There is an active local koala community at Martin's Creek evidenced through a walk and the photos locals in that area regularly post on social media.

Dungog, Martins Creek, Bolwarra, Lorn etc. are all areas that support and promote a country lifestyle. It is why we purchased in this area. Many small businesses have been established that fit with this lifestyle and both support and service the local communities and promote tourism in the area. Those are the types of long term business which employs locals and should be encouraged and supported by NSW government - not jeopardised for one which destroys the natural environment and creates a trucking nightmare for citizens.

The expansion of the quarry and promotion of a truck corridor will not only negatively impact on my quality of life but also the property value of my home and suburb. Who will want to purchase a home on/near a noisy, highly dangerous, congested truck corridor?

I note that with few exceptions those submitting to support this proposal do not actually live in any of the areas that will be affected by the quarry expansion. That is very telling... The approval of an expansion of the Martin's Creek Quarry will severely negatively impact on the local environment and wildlife, and the well-being of residents living in townships nearby the quarry and along the truck routes. I am one of those people and I object!!