

## **Objection to Martins Creek Quarry - VOWW**

Submission re: Martins Creek Quarry SSD-6612

My name is Margarete Ritchie, president of VOWW (Voice of Wallalong and Woodville and surrounding localities). I make this submission on behalf of this community with particular attention to the area, and residents, that stand to be most impacted should haulage route 2 be used by Daracon.

**We strongly oppose the expansion of this quarry and in particular the use of the rural road network.**

**Lived experience should be included in the criteria for any development that has a major impact on residents, as this expansion of Martins Creek quarry has. This is not taken into consideration by the proponent nor indeed by the DPE. The DPE states that this kind of study cannot be done for Paterson as there are no guidelines for such studies.**

**As president of VOWW I will outline some of the everyday activities that are already being impacted upon by the quarry. Each aspect on its own may seem minor or even trivial, but, put them all together and liveability changes, the ambience of our area changes and our health and wellbeing is at risk of harm.**

The reason for this submission is to bring to your attention, yet again, the decision made by Daracon and approved by the DPE to allow "local" deliveries to use haulage route 2. And that the term "local" can be used so loosely and imply any contract that makes it shorter for the quarry to access contracts, not just in the Port Stephens area, but beyond.

Firstly, I would like to draw your attention to the recent submission made by Port Stephens council dated 15/11/22. PSC references in their submission a comment made by Umwelt and Daracon that *each of the local projects would identify where resources would be sourced from and would gain approval for the increased truck movements on the local road network through PSC LGA as part of that development consent.*

This response from Umwelt and Daracon is incorrect and misleading. My understanding is a project approval for say an airport runway or a subdivision, does not consider the source of imported construction material and the impacts associated with transport of that product. It may consider the traffic impacts as it relates directly at the construction site, but it never considers, as is in this case, the preceding 27km of haul route impacts along local roads.

This was also confirmed to James Ashton, MCQAG, by ARTC during the 2014 road haulage nightmare, where the ARTC staff confirmed that "the product transport impacts" and what was allowed to be transported (how much and what routes) was a matter for each quarry to deal with under their extractive industry consents.

Daracon is a company that is not dependent on its own gravel. For many years it has sourced gravel from other quarries and can do so again. It just makes it more profitable for them to have their own quarry product at hand and if transportation of that product is on local roads with no levies applied, as is the case for haulage route 2, then that makes their profits and their ability to undercut any other infrastructure companies, greater. And this is of course to the detriment to the residents who live along this local rural road network.

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Once again, the communities and the environment, are sacrificed for the profits of one company!

It is our understanding that Port Stephens Council's previous submissions have not been taken into consideration with reference to upgrades that would have to be made to the rural roads to make them compliant for haulage trucks. (Submissions made 2016 and 2021.) The DPE has not referenced any road levies or road/intersection upgrades in their draft conditions. The extra costs for reconstruction and maintenance of these roads would have to be passed on to local Port Stephens residents through the annual rates they pay. We are talking about millions of dollars! This would be a financial imposition for us with any benefits going to Daracon.

Haulage route 2 extends from the Dunmore Bridge crossing the Paterson River, 1 km south of Paterson, along Paterson Road turning left onto Duns Creek Road and then making a right hand turn onto Butterwick Road. Further along there is a left hand turn onto Clarence Town Road and then a right hand turn onto Brandy Hill Drive. After 4 kilometres this then leads onto Seaham Road which leads to Raymond Terrace and the broader Port Stephens area and the Pacific Highway. Both Clarence Town Road and Brandy Hill Drive are routes used by Hanson's Brandy Hill Quarry.

None of these intersections area suitable for quarry haulage vehicles.

- The turn onto Dunmore Bridge is too sharp meaning that haulage trucks must use the oncoming lane to make the turn onto the bridge thus impeding any other traffic.
- The turns onto Duns Creek Road and into Butterwick Road do not meet any road standards as they are narrow with no shoulders. Again, other traffic is severely impeded by trucks using both lanes of the road to make the turns.
- The alignment of the intersection of Butterwick Road and Clarence Town Road is poor, and vision of oncoming traffic is impaired by stands of mature eucalypts in a farm paddock on the right.
- The intersection of Clarence Town Road and Brandy Hill Drive poses problems of congestion as this is the intersection with the haulage truck movements from Hanson Brandy Hill Quarry. There is no turning lane leading onto Brandy Hill Drive with trucks needing to wait for oncoming traffic thus blocking through traffic.
- The intersection with Seaham Road is a T- intersection with trucks needing to come to a complete stop with houses on either side and, historically, this has been, a major problem to residents because of the noise of compression braking.

Port Stephens Council have advised that, apart from Brandy Hill Drive, the rural road network was constructed in the early 1950s and no major upgrades have been made since, in particular Butterwick Road. This road has a poor surface, has no shoulders, has many crests that make it difficult for residents to turn in or out of their driveways, has stands of mature eucalypts which form a corridor for native wildlife including koalas.

The road services many small acreage properties. Problems facing these residents with more haulage truck movements include:

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1. Children wait on the verges to catch school buses. Those buses have no designated bus stops and no safe shoulders to pull off the road completely. Trucks often pass unsafely over double white lines thus being a hazard to oncoming traffic and school children alike.
2. The mail is delivered by a contractor who must drive in and reverse out of each driveway.
3. Residents find it difficult to enter or exit their driveways with the danger of not being seen.
4. Being a rural area, there are some people who have horses who might wish to ride on the road edge, wherever possible. This is now not such a common sight since trucks have been using this as a haulage route.
5. Cyclists use this route as part of wider excursions into the Dungog area that now promotes itself as a cycling destination. Cyclists have no option but to use the road lanes as the edges are poor and unsafe.
6. Walking along this road is dangerous as the best of times but especially with extra truck traffic.

All of the above apply to the other roads mentioned. They have not been designed with haulage truck movement in mind even though the standard of road maintenance is better.

**No intersections comply with road standards for haulage trucks.**

In addition to that they all become affected by extra haulage trucks from the Brandy Hill quarry. The cumulative impact is unacceptable by any standards.

The cumulative impact of haulage truck traffic on residents of Brandy Hill and Nelsons Plains was not taken into consideration for the expansion of the Brandy Hill quarry. Daracon did not give answers on traffic volumes when requested. Therefore, Hanson has been given the consent to make up to 600 truck movements per day at peak. It is our understanding that there was no correspondence from Daracon with Hanson nor with PSC during the planning phase for the upgrade of Martins Creek quarry. Residents now have the possibility of cumulative impact of the 2 quarries after all. And all because of the interpretation of the word "local".

Brandy Hill Drive is made up of small acreage properties with much of the native bushland retained. This makes it ideal habitat for animals including koalas and birds. There are regular sightings of koalas in trees and backyards and unfortunately also koalas which have been killed along this section of road. Wallabies, possums and phascogales regularly move through this area and roadkill was certainly more prevalent during the time when both quarries were using this rural road network. This was noted by the commissioners at the Brandy Hill quarry IPC hearing and subsequently made a condition of consent that no trucks would be on the roads before 6 am or after 6pm to give the koalas a chance of being seen more easily as they move around. This is obviously also in the best interests of the residents who deserve to have quieter times in the early hours of the morning and during the evening and night.

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This is also a farming area. There is a cattle farmer who moves his herd from the lower part of his farm along the river flats of the Williams River to his high ground on the opposite side of Seaham Rd. This entails blocking this road. This has posed a danger to him and his herd with the increase in quarry truck traffic, again with the lived experience of the awful year of 2014.

Farm machinery is often driven between farm lots along the entire rural road network. There are 3 chicken farms that have access onto Seaham Road, Nelsons Plains. It becomes more difficult for trucks servicing these businesses to enter and exit.

As mentioned earlier, Hanson, under its conditions of consent can have 600 truck movements each day. This is already a concern for residents and another 280 from Daracon, Martins Creek would be an intolerable situation for their health and wellbeing. **I speak from the lived experience of having up to 1200 trucks a day cumulatively from these quarries.** Reports of sleep disturbance, anxiety and depression and concerns when not being able to enter or exit driveways safely were common. The character and in particular the ambience changed dramatically as there were no longer walkers or cyclists using Brandy Hill Drive or Seaham Roads. Residents felt socially isolated as the option to walk to chat to a neighbour or for children to play with friends down the road was no longer an option unless you drove. It was common to see horses being ridden along the verges but that is no longer the case.

With 2 quarries using these roads it becomes difficult to distinguish which quarry the trucks are hauling from and to whom you should complain regarding unsafe driving behaviour. This was the case before and would be so again should Daracon be allowed to use these roads. Compliance becomes an impossible issue. Daracon in the past has had a poor record regarding compliance of road use as was witnessed by residents from Paterson to Brandy Hill and beyond.

**I urge commissioners to take these concerns on board when making final decisions. "Local" must be clearly defined with minimal trucks per day. These roads area already in poor condition with Port Stephens Council finding it difficult to fund any upgrades.**

**We are not an industrial area. We do not live on main roads or highways. We have the lived experience of having to endure the constant noise and disruption to our lives caused by heavy haulage truck movements. The constant braking of fully laden trucks, the rattling of empty trucks on poorly maintained roads and the danger of unsafe driving practices by some truck drivers.**

- **Please take the quality of the liveability of our area into consideration. Our health and wellbeing are important, the character and ambience of the rural area is something we cherish. The wildlife deserves a chance to survive. We love to be amongst it, and we care for it. Any extra haulage truck traffic from Martins Creek would make a huge difference to the many residents along this road system.**

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**If you decide to grant a consent for road haulage, please take into consideration the following conditions we would like to see imposed.**

1. That all destinations accessible via the highway network must use route 1. Shortcuts resulting in crossing or joining the highway network elsewhere are prohibited E.g., to Raymond Terrace via Butterwick Road.
2. Any destination closer to the highway network than the quarry must also use route 1.
3. "Local Deliveries" must mean destinations that are located on and accessible only via council roads
4. All and any road haulage on local roads must require those roads to be first upgraded at proponent's costs to appropriate Austroads standards. Clearly, Butterwick Road and ALL the intersections along that route to Brandy Hill Drive currently do not meet even council standards let alone Austroads standards.
5. If the previous condition is subsequently met on routes other than Route-1, then PSC's haulage levy will then apply to all loads using the new route(s) in PSC LGA.
6. Before approving any additional route that is also an approved route for Brandy Hill Quarry, the cumulative impact of both quarries using that route must be assessed for both traffic volumes and social impacts. Please note that the cumulative impact on residents of Brandy Hill and Nelsons Plains will be unacceptable as it would bring the allowed daily truck movements to almost 900 trucks/day
7. Any conditions applying to outbound loaded trucks must also apply to inbound empty trucks. Other council road routes are neither safe nor suitable for large quarry vehicles.

**Ultimately, we request that commissioners, if you grant a consent for road haulage, you specifically write into the conditions of consent that the rural road network that is named as haulage route 2 be excluded for all the above reasons.**

Margarete Ritchie.

Brandy Hill.

President VOWW.