

Commissioner 43

Good morning panel, thank you for providing me with the opportunity to address you today on behalf of the local community. I am a Councillor on Port Stephens Council, however I note that my submission to you today is being done in my capacity as a public official and does not reflect the position of Port Stephens Council or any other organisation other than myself.

I am speaking in opposition to this DA being approved in its current form.

The reason I'm standing up today is because, unusually, this is a development application that I don't have any decision-making authority on with Council, or through the Planning Panel, of which I am a member. I'm required to view each DA with an open mind through my other roles, but when another authority is determining it, I gain the ability to be open and frank in my views on this particular DA.

And I think it's important to protect my decision-making for other DAs, by making clear that everything I have to say today relates specifically and solely to this proposal and no others. Nothing I say should be taken to be anything which can be applied to assume my views on any other DA.

Local residents have contacted me about this proposal in their droves. While the number of registrations for today don't seem to reflect that, this session is in the middle of a working day. The demographics of the Eagleton/East Seaham area is that of working families, who will no doubt be deeply disappointed that

they haven't had the chance to be here today. I am sure they will make their submissions.

---

I recognise the economic imperative for rock-related products. The State and Federal Governments are going bonkers with their housing targets and infrastructure projects, all of which needs rock-related material. What isn't clear, though, is that local residents and road users should bear the brunt of Sydney's population crisis through completely unreasonable impacts on local roads.

Locals deserve to feel safe when they drive through our suburbs, on residential roads, and onto the M1 Motorway as they travel to work, take their kids to and from school, go to do the shopping, or for leisure-related travel. This proposal will have a grave impact on road safety, both on Italia Road and on the M1 Motorway.

The latest traffic management documentation proposes that all vehicles coming from Italia Road turn left onto the M1 Motorway and enter the Motorway via an extended acceleration ramp, and then travel north to Tarean Road, then turn around in that spaghetti junction of roads, and end up coming back southbound on the M1 Motorway.

I question whether anyone who prepared this cooked plan actually ever traveled on Tarean Road and followed the path that these fully laden trucks would need to take. The local traffic to and from Karuah and Swan Bay would be put at risk every single day

from these trucks following the ridiculous proposal to go via the Tarean Road intersection.

It is well known that Karuah is the next frontier in housing in Port Stephens. Two recent planning proposals have been recommended for resubmission, which, if completed, would unlock thousands of new homes in Karuah. How will the thousands of cars generated from this future housing interact with the hundreds of trucks each day moving through a maze of on and off ramps?

I'm sure that the current residents of Karuah and Swan Bay will be sounding the alarm bells when it comes to new residential developments. This kind of outcome could have perverse outcomes on housing generation. Any future DA for housing in this area would undoubtedly need to consider the impact of hundreds of trucks per day using these on and off ramps just to turn around on the M1 Motorway.

The obvious solution is to impose a consent condition that requires the construction of a flyover over the M1 Motorway to allow the trucks to go over the Motorway and straight into the southbound lanes through a southbound acceleration lane. This Tarean Road exit proposal has clearly been thought up by a bunch of consultants who think they've hit a masterstroke to avoid paying their fair share for infrastructure that will keep several Port Stephens communities safe.

There is no way to enforce these trucks going north only, and even if they did, the impact on traffic and community safety is

impossible to support. Residents advise me that getting Planning Department enforcement action for breach of consent conditions is next to impossible. Remove the temptation, remove the problem.

If you need more convincing, every single truck wanting to travel southbound will need to travel an extra 23 km just to get back to the intersection they turn north out of. The amount of emissions that will be saved from each truck travelling 23 km less is enormous. The cost of fuel and truck repairs for the proponent, and road repairs over 23 km of road for the taxpayers of NSW, must be significant enough to justify the Panel rejecting the traffic solution proposed and imposing the only logical solution of a flyover.

---

The Department has assessed the biodiversity impacts as “acceptable”, despite the effect on our endangered koala population, native vegetation, and Southern Myotis breeding habitat. Anyone who has looked into Port Stephens would know that we really care about our koalas, with the Port Stephens Koala Hospital working desperately every day to try and preserve the species.

Projects like this that clearly haven't done everything possible to reduce the impact to local biodiversity to zero is making the job of these environment warriors significantly more difficult. All of this environmental damage just to supply some rock products to an unsustainably growing Sydney basin. The consent conditions

should reflect a zero-impact outcome on native vegetation, the Southern Myotis breeding habitat, and our endangered koala population. We cannot allow those who have no voice to be victims of this proposal when it can and should be designed in a way that has zero impact.

---

Local residents are relying on you to make the right decision. The locals in this area aren't unreasonable, and they are happy to co-exist with this quarry, but it must protect them, the safety of their families, and the local environment that they live with. You have the power to amend the conditions of consent to better reflect the needs of the community. Two of the most important ones that I think will make the biggest difference are to enforce a flyover at the Italia Road intersection, and to reduce the impact on biodiversity to zero.

I am confident that other speakers today and written submissions will propose a bunch of other amendments to the consent conditions, which I ask you to consider favourably alongside my proposed changes.

Thank you for your time - please make sure my community isn't the victim of the relentless pursuit of corporate profits. Prioritise their safety and the continued existence of the local environment.