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OBJECT

Submission ID: 211618

Organisation: <i>Hunter Environment Lobby Inc</i>	Key issues: <i>Biodiversity, Water resources, Traffic, Air quality, Noise</i>
Location: <i>New South Wales</i>	
Attachment: <i>Attached overleaf</i>	

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Please advise receipt of submission



Hunter Environment Lobby Inc.

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5th November 2024

The Seaham (Stone Ridge) Quarry Project - Object

Hunter Environment Lobby Inc. (HEL) is a regional community-based environmental organization that has been active for over 30 years on the issues of cumulative impacts of environmental degradation involving species and habitat loss, climate change and effects on ground water and rivers.

HEL lodged an objection to this expansion development in May this year and would like to reiterate our objection to it again on the same grounds – environmental and social.

As we stated in May, this Quarry Project is within the Greater Hunter River catchment and as such is a concern to HEL, as are the five other quarry projects either partially commenced or on the planning drawing board. We object to quarry expansion mainly due to their impacts on local Hunter biodiversity.

We also have concerns about the method of transporting the product, as we have stated before. The only quarries that have a legitimate claim for social licence we believe, are ones situated on a rail line, as long as there is no increase in footprint or precious biodiverse bushland is not impacted on, we have not found issues with this type of quarry in the past.

So transportation of product by rail, not road is the only way we believe sustainability can be partially achieved for quarries. However we believe that the development industry which drives the push for quarries must take some responsibility for sourcing sustainable product.

We have seen many places in the world where there is recycling of building waste so that gravel and rock may be reused many times over – it is the way to go preserve precious biodiversity in bushlands within the Hunter. This area has been used badly up to now by developers who are looking for short term gains in the land development industry. HEL wants this to end – development of Greenfield sites must end if we want to preserve what is left of our precious biodiversity.

We find that this Project cannot establish the social license to operate when so many social and environmental issues remain unresolved. The successive number of quarry development proposals pose an unfair burden on their communities and Councils - with little or no effective public consultation or examination of alternatives.

This Stone Ridge Quarry Project will impact an area of known koala and other threatened species habitat and threaten the efforts of Hunter Water to protect the two threatened microbat species Southern Myotis and Eastern Cave Bat.

As we stated previously, twenty four hour operations will intensify impacts on the Balickera community and the wildlife through airborne pollution, increased frequency of blasting, artificial lighting, vibrations and noise from haulage vehicles.

It is not acceptable for uncertainty to remain about changed groundwater flows and surface water interaction resulting from the Project. Watercourses in the Grahamstown catchment must remain unpolluted. This catchment is one of the major water sources for the Greater Newcastle Water Supply.

Presently, we believe the danger of PFOS and PFOA will be ongoing issues for generations, and we believe that the pool of underground polluted aquifers heading towards Grahamstown Dam will be unstoppable eventually. We do hope not.

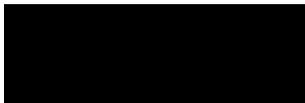
If this is an ongoing risk, it makes sense to ensure that our water courses coming from Gloucester and beyond are kept unpolluted

Traffic impacts will be felt far and wide and the Italia Road Upgrade proposal will only exacerbate the unsafe traffic conditions at the Bucketts Way and Medowie Road intersections to the Pacific Highway.

Greenhouse gas emissions will not be reduced, when haulage vehicles are directed to take a longer route to reach their market. Those trucks will inevitably endanger the wider public who use the Pacific Highway.

We find that it is not responsible to approve the Stone Ridge Quarry as the risks it poses to the community are too high and unfairly placed not only on today's community, but our future communities.

Yours in trust,



Jan Davis
President Hunter Environment Lobby Inc.