

Stone Ridge Quarry Proposal

Community Consultative Committee

Draft Meeting Minutes – 4.00PM, 29 November 2023

Raymond Terrace Bowling Club

Attendees	<p>Michael Ulph (MU) – Chair Justin Meleo (JM) - Australian Resource Development Group Penny Williams (PW) - Umwelt Charlee Connor (CC) - Community Representative Bruce Lyon (BL) - Community Representative Pre McGee (PM) - Community Representative Brad Dillon (BD) - Community Representative Matthew Higgins (MH) – Circuit Italia – neighboring business Brent Cassidy (BC) - Hunter Water (expected to be a delegate of JS if required) John Simpson (JS) - Hunter Water (from approx. 4.15pm)</p>
Apologies	<p>Damon Bird (DB) - Australian Resource Development Group Boyd Taylor (BT) - Community Representative Forestry Corporation of NSW</p>
Others not present	<p>Clr Giacomo Arnott (GA) - Port Stephens Council Clr Peter Francis - Port Stephens Council</p>
Next meeting	<p>Approximately six months, TBC by MU.</p>

Agenda

1. Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country
2. Introductions / apologies
3. Safety moment
4. Acceptance of previous minutes
5. Business arising from previous minutes
6. Code of conduct & declaration of interests
7. Correspondence
8. Project - Response to submissions & project alterations
9. Q & A
10. New CCC guidelines
11. Next steps, next meeting
12. Meeting close

1. Welcome and introductions

- MU acknowledged Worimi traditional owners and welcomed all.
- Each member of the Community Consultative Committee (CCC) introduced / re-introduced themselves and provided a brief background to their involvement / interest in the Project.

2. Apologies

- Boyd Taylor
- Damon Bird
- Forestry Corporation of NSW (not part of the CCC, but may be called upon for input if required).

3. Safety Moment

MU discussed battery safety. Keep away from children and animals. Be careful when recharging.

4. Acceptance of previous minutes

- Moved by Pre McGee, seconded by Bruce Lyon.

5. Code of Conduct and Declaration of pecuniary interests

- MU checked for any members that had not signed the Code of Conduct document. This was subsequently completed by John Simpson and Brent Cassidy, both of Hunter Water.
- MU requested the declaration of any pecuniary interests of all present. MU and PW have commercial arrangements with ARDG related to their presence at the CCC.

6. Business arising from previous minutes

- No business arising.

7. Correspondence

- Previous minutes. Correspondence included emails to choose a meeting time, and invitations sent and responded to for this meeting.

8. Project - Response to submissions & project alterations

PW – We have been preparing of a Response to Submissions (RTS) document.
The EIS was exhibited.

There were 152 submissions. 130 objections. 17 in support. 5 comments (not for or against).
Also 11 submissions from government agencies.

The submissions report requires analysis of submissions and a response to each.

Location analysis showed that 13 submissions came from under 5km from the project boundary, 93 submissions from within 5 – 100km, and 24 from further than 100km away.

Key themes (most commonly mentioned) were:

- Biodiversity
- Traffic & transport
- Noise
- Cumulative impact
- Air quality impact

Key themes of support were economic impact and employment benefits.

As part of the response to submissions ARDG have made some refinements to the project.

The layout has been revised to respond to biodiversity and vegetation removal. An amendment report will describe the revised project and compare the differences.

Amendments include a change to the disturbance footprint. It has been reduced by around 10Ha or 14.5%. The North pit has been removed and the southern end has been reduced. Buffer distance to Nine Mile Creek has been increased slightly. The stockpiling area has been included within the pit area and the depth of the pit under that area has increased slightly.

This should also marginally reduce noise, air quality and blasting impacts – as residual benefits. These will be documented in an addendum report.

The BDAR, Groundwater and Surface Water reports will be revised and re-submitted in full.

The RTS timing was the standard three months, the timeframe has changed due to the above alterations. Submissions and amendment reports should be submitted prior to Christmas. The Department will then make their assessment. The project will be referred to the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) due to the number of submissions.

We expect that after the IPC process the determination will take 3-6 months, so that is expected in Q4 2024.

9. Q&A Session

BL: The submission period was extended. Did the delay in Council's submission bring about the delay in the process? Did they submit anything at all?

PW: Council was a little late but that didn't cause the delay. There were a number of people that had trouble using the online system, which is why the submission period was extended.

BL: Is there any substantial feedback from Council in relation to traffic?

JM: Yes. [Paraphrasing] Council's consultant was not across the history of previous discussions and agreements, however this was eventually resolved.

BL: Feedback from PSC should include their understanding of cumulative impacts and affects on the slip lane etc.

JM: One thing we did in response to Council [NB: JM has since advised this was actually in response to Boral's submission and not Council] was we prepared an addendum traffic report with additional modelling with the two access points being opposite each other. Council had requested that there be just one potential 'conflict point' on Italia Road. The modelling also included Boral's future potential traffic under full capacity if their future SSD is approved. The modelling showed that it didn't change operating capacity on Italia Road. The only real change was the Boral traffic having to queue internally. Italia Road itself has significant remaining capacity.

BL: Boral at one stage was talking about 24/7 operations. They indicated that due to feedback they would move back to 12-hour days, 5 days per week, possibly Saturdays. Is that the modelling you worked off?

JM: It works off peak hour traffic in the AM and PM. Boral supplied their traffic modelling and estimate of peak numbers. It was modelled using a SIDRA model. A numerical model that models traffic through intersections and compares with Australian standards.

Charlee: When did you do the modelling because things has changed on Italia Rd. There is now a weight limit on Six Mile Road and they've also closed the bridge at Clarence Town for articulated vehicles. So there is more truck traffic on Italia Rd.

JM: Traffic tubes were put out this time last year (possibly) and then they add a growth factor to account for the next 10 years. At the moment Italia Rd being a two-lane rural road, under the Austroad Guidelines has a capacity for 1800 vehicles an hour.

The modelling of the two Intersections opposite each other was done 6-8 weeks ago.

PW: The addendum report has details.

JS: Bats. After the remedial work that Hunter Water did last year in Balickera tunnel, we have to monitor the bats. Bat numbers have returned in the last 12 months. Our interim report can't be provided until finalised. We may be able to provide it within a month or so.

MU: It was mentioned earlier that the submissions report is planned to be submitted by Christmas.

PW: Do you know if BCS have seen the report?

JS: Not to my knowledge.

PW: We would probably reference that the report has been done in the BDAR (biodiversity assessment report) if we can't append it. Eventually BCS will see it. It's more about the blasting impacts.

JS: That (blasting) is still an issue that Hunter Water would like more information about.

PW: We have a resolution on that. We are aware that the bats are there and should be able to address concerns there.

JS: The other issue for Hunter Water was the geotechnical integrity of Balickera tunnel. We have discussed that in the past. I think it is unresolved?

JM: Did you have issues with the blasting report?

JS: There are some differences of opinion. Our civil engineers are not sure of the appropriate limits for the assessment of the tunnel. It will depend on what charge masses are used. We have an open mind about it.

JM: The charge masses can be altered to reduce peak particle velocity at certain locations. In order to maintain it below a certain threshold, as you get closer (to the tunnel) you adjust the charge masses accordingly, and measure as you go, to collect data and ensure you stay within those safe limits. That's the same methodology that would apply for the bats. The blasting assessment addendum report references studies that were done in WA on bats roosting near mining sites, looks at the results of that and then looks at the modelling for the blasting here, and says that as you get closer you measure and then adjust accordingly.

Going through that process we had some discussions with Transport for NSW, the people that design road bridges across the state, and they have to actually design bridges to include habitat for bats. The discussion was that there is significant vibration (from trucks driving over them) a lot of the time, compared to a blast lasting half a second once a week or so with this quarry.

The way we have tried to address it is to look at the literature and then design the blasts accordingly to keep below the limits.

JS: Depending on how the blasts are adjusted, there may be an economic impact on the quarry.

JM: Yes. This would be late stage quarry anyway, Stage 6 and beyond, so year 20 onwards and can afford a bit more for blasting.

BL: Given the amount of public works around such as the bypasses etc, is there enough rock around at the moment?

JM: Material being delivered to the Hexham works is coming from Taree. I was taking calls 4 years ago from contractors wanting to know when the quarry was going to be open. The talk is that there is not enough material. In Sydney all the asphalt aggregate is going to Badgery's Creek airport.

MH & BD confirm that demand is currently exceeding supply.

CC: Concerns from the community are mainly around cumulative impacts. There are many quarries in the local area.

JM: It's a function of the geology. The Sydney basin is surrounded on several sides by good rock, but the basin itself doesn't have a lot.

CC: It would be good to have some state-wide planning by government.

JM: There hasn't been any planning done around this. In QLD there have been areas identified that are of strategic resource importance.

BL: I raised this with the local member but was advised to speak with TfNSW.

CC: Also what is happening at the end of Italia RD.

JM: Boral, ARDG and Eagleton quarry agreed on the process, to be led by Boral, who put in their D.A. for the intersection upgrade and the vegetation in the road reserve had to be surveyed in a particular season – which is now. We understand that the final D.A. is going in about now, and some additional survey is being done in January. That information will go back to Council when ready. The design and engineering will be accepted by Council as long as TfNSW is happy with it. We expect that the D.A. will be placed on public exhibition by Council.

BD: Boral have banned all trucks from entering and exiting and heading westbound. Some drivers have been banned from the site. It has fully stopped in the last 3 months or so.

CC: There is cumulative traffic because of all of the quarries. Also they shouldn't turn right onto the Pacific Highway.

JM: That's what has started all of the intersection works. I understand that they are planning on an interchange somewhere.

PW: Once the documentation is out you'll have a chance to review it all.

JM: Thanks for coming and for your interest and feedback. We need to hear from you. We are always open if you want to talk to us.

10. New CCC Guidance

MU provided hard copies of and described the new guidelines and that we would be complying with if the project is approved. He asked all to take a look at the new guidelines.

11. Next steps, next meeting date

Next meeting (MU).

- A tentative date is to be set for next meeting prior to the IPC hearing / meeting. At that time the submissions report and amendment report will have been on display. This is likely to be mid-2024. MU will liaise with all to determine the best date.
- MU to advise CCC when the reports are lodged and available.
- Agreed by all that this should be the venue for the next meeting.

12. Meeting close

- MU called the meeting closed at 5.20pm.