

Stone Ridge Quarry Community Consultative Committee

Meeting Minutes – 4.00PM, 13 July 2023

Raymond Terrace Bowling Club

Attendees	Michael Ulph (MU) – Chair Justin Meleo (JM) - Australian Resource Development Group Damon Bird (DB) - Australian Resource Development Group Penny Williams (PW) - Umwelt Charlee Connor (CC) - Community Representative Boyd Taylor (BT) - Community Representative Bruce Lyon (BL) - Community Representative Pre McGee (PM) - Community Representative Brad Dillon (BD) - Community Representative Matthew Higgins (MH) – Circuit Italia – neighboring business Kate Drinan (KD) – Port Stephens Council (delegated for Clr Arnott) Chris Brown (CB) - NSW Forestry Corporation John Simpson (JS) - Hunter Water (from approx. 4.15pm) Clr Giacomo Arnott (GA) - Port Stephens Council (from approx. 4.35pm)
Apologies	Clr Peter Francis - Port Stephens Council
Next meeting	Approximately three months from 13/7/23, TBC by MU

Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Apologies
3. Declaration of pecuniary interests
4. Acceptance of previous minutes
5. Business arising from previous minutes
6. Correspondence
7. New CCC guidelines
8. EIS Exhibition process
9. EIS Q&A Session
10. Community feedback via the CCC members
11. General business
12. Next meeting date
13. Meeting close

1. Welcome and introductions

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

2. Apologies

- Cllr Peter Francis was noted as an apology, Cllr Arnott will attend a little later. Kate Drinan attending to represent Council in the interim.

3. Declaration of pecuniary interests

- MU requested declaration of any pecuniary interests of all present. MU and PW declared commercial arrangements with ARDG related to their presence at the CCC. There were no additional declarations.

4. Acceptance of previous minutes

- Moved by Pre McGee, seconded by Charlee Connor.

5. Business arising from previous minutes

- No business arising.

6. Correspondence

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

7. CCC Guidelines

MU advised that new 2023 guidelines were being released. MU will share the new guidelines in due course.

8. EIS Exhibition

- PW described the EIS process. It is currently on exhibition. Department will compile submissions and provide to ARDG for analysis and preparation of a Response to Submissions (RTS) document. The timeframe for this is usually around 3 months.
- The Department then assesses the submissions against the RTS. If there are more than 50 objections or if local council objects, the proposal goes to the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) for determination.

- MU checked that the difference between a proposal that Council might assess compared to a State Significant Development was the size and scope of the proposal.
- KD – Council has input into the Secretary’s Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) and will also provide a submission.
- JM – Council has also had input during the development of the proposal through various meetings between the proponent and the relevant departments.
- MU - when were the SEARs issued? JM – March 2020. MU – that’s how long it takes to put an EIS together?
- Q – Penelope - what’s the difference between an objection and a submission. PW – a submission can be a comment, a submission of support or an objection.
- Q – So if there were 100 submissions and 51 were in favour or just comments, and 49 were objections, the proposal doesn’t have to go to the IPC?
- A - PW – Correct.
- MU summarized the timeframes. EIS on exhibition until next week. If approved the Consent Conditions usually reflect the concerns highlighted in the submissions.
- MH – In my experience, where Council is the consent authority, they go through and filter out the “nuisance objections”, and the factual, genuine objections. PW – and objections must be unique, and not form-letter style objections.
- JM – Is there a requirement that the objection is based on fact? MH – no but you can disprove comments. PW – Yes you have the opportunity to respond.
- Discussion around project changes during their development. Changes can be made prior to submissions. PW - As part of the submissions report the proponent is required to write an amendment report – like a mini EIS - that outlines any changes to the project and the reasons why – such as a result of the submissions.
- MU – in assembling the scoping study to request SEARs it is wise of a proponent to adjust the project proposal to reduce impacts and take community concerns into account. Consultation leads to improved outcomes.
- PW – quite often a proposal will change during the development of the EIS.
- CC – Can we find out what Council said during preparation of the SEARs?
- KD – available through the portal. At the bottom of the page under Agency Advice.

9. EIS Q&A Session

Q: Traffic – How did you calculate the truck movements?

A: Truck numbers are based on maximum annual production of 1.5MTPA and is conservative using 30 tonne trucks. Usually truck and dog trucks are used that are around 32 tonnes. So this is conservative in that it increases the number of trucks. Also we haven't calculated using B-doubles. Italia Rd is a B-double route and it is likely that some would be used. This would mean the number of truck movements would be less. So the calculation is conservative in that the number of trucks in the EIS is on the high side.

Q: When there are floods Italia Rd is the only way out for thousands of people – during the last flood it was a nightmare.

A: We have not specifically looked at that because we weren't asked to, but if we were asked to curtail truck movements we would comply with that. Brandy Hill has two approved haulage routes, but they are not approved to use Italia Rd. We have committed to only using the last 1.4km of Italia Rd (not East Seaham etc). This was agreed with Council in 2018. We understand there is a DA going to council shortly (with Boral and Eagleton quarries) for the upgrade of the intersection to allow the three quarries to access the highway heading north only. We won't be able to have a truck leave the quarry until that is built. There will be no right turn out of Italia Rd for trucks for the quarries. We did look to build a flyover but that was deemed too difficult due to the land ownership.

Chris – If you wish to complain about trucks you can lodge a complaint on the Major Projects portal. Also – when it is raining/flooding – truck numbers reduce significantly. A lot of construction work doesn't occur, concrete plants etc. don't operate.

Clr Giacomo Arnott arrived at 4.35pm

Charlee – you can't get the rego number. It's difficult.

Q: How are truck movements going to be policed? What forces them to use the 1.4km and not go the other way?

A: Boral has lead the DA process (with input from us) for the new intersection. Once approved we assume they will lodge a modification to source more rock.

Q: How will the new acceleration lane affect residents on the Nine Mile Creek turnoff?

A: It's back to two lanes around one kilometre before Nine Mile Creek rd.

Q: Is the access to the quarry still designed so that trucks can only turn left out?

A: Yes. For this quarry project, light vehicles can turn in from either direction, but not heavy vehicles. There will be protocols put in place by ARDG.

Q: Does the Section 7.11 (were Section 94) contribution money from quarries along the road go towards fixing Italia Road only, or further afield? Kate Drinan from Port Stephens Council will check and provide this detail to the Chair to distribute. [NB: Kate has confirmed and “the 7.11 contributions can only be spent on the approved haulage route.”]

Q: Can the facility be run using electric power rather than diesel?

A: We will be starting the project with diesel, but our equipment will be the latest tech modular gear and it can be plugged in, so in the long term we are hoping to electrify. Taking power from Nine Mile Road.

Q: In 30 years’ time is there another plan for the mine? What is the post-mine plan? Can there be a ‘future fund’ for something?

A: We have done a lot of work to identify the resource. There is around 130 million tonnes. The approval is for 30 years and has a rehab plan for the end of life at that time. We will prepare a rehab plan for the site in the event that this is required at that time. It is possible that in future this mine life may be extended due to the demand for the resource. That could occur within the existing development footprint.

CB: On other CCCs the committee has input into the end of life of the project.

Q: How many tonnes will be extracted during the life of the quarry (if approved).

A: A maximum of 1.5 million tonnes per annum, so a maximum of 45 million tonnes over 30 years.

Q: Does Forestry receive a payment from the site?

A: There is a ‘lease payment’ to Forestry and they also receive a Resource Acquisition Fee (per tonne) when rock is extracted.

Q: Does money to Forestry from this project benefit forestry in this area?

A: Fees collected from all forestry agreements across NSW are an income source to forestry. Forestry’s budgets are allocated separately to this (variable) income stream.

Q: Blasting/noise – how is it measured and managed?

A: There has been a detailed blasting assessment. The results show that the project is within the criteria. Modern blasting is tightly controlled with monitoring for noise etc. It generally doesn’t generate a lot of issues. Vibration is potentially an issue, though the way we designed the

quarry is so that the ridge protects residents behind. We have done a lot of work in relation to the Balickera tunnel, and we have worked out that you can blast quite safely quite closely to it.

Q: What is the blast frequency likely to be?

A: It depend on the rate of production. At full production, one every 14 to 20 days. The blast hole rig works daily drilling blast holes.

Q: Is there a requirement to notify the community?

A: It will depend on the community. We think the best way might be to have residents opt-in to a SMS notification, where we send SMSs to provide the day and time of the proposed blast.

Chair: Generally at CCC's the proponent will provide results of measurement of noise, dust etc.

Q: How do you compensate neighbours (who are an unsafe distance from the blasts) for the loss of peace and enjoyment?

A: There are no exceedances modelled for residents.

Q: How do you intend to protect residents from dust diseases?

A: There are no exceedances modelled for nearby residents. It's an absolute priority for us. We have a duty of care for our staff. The resources regulator is cracking down in relation to dust. Dust will be monitored to ensure that results are under the threshold set by the EPA. Results of a previous test are in the blast report in the EIS.

Q: Will this dust information be passed back to the community through the CCC?

A: Yes. We will also need to publish the results on our website and provide it to the Department of Planning. The dust deposition gauges (DDGs) will be permanent and checked regularly.

Q: Is it in the EIS where the DDGs will be?

A: The location will be determined when if/when we develop the Dust Management Plan. We will suggest where they go, and if the EPA signs off on that, it will become part of the licence to operate the site.

Q: To NSW Forestry. Re Forestry Act. Can the deed for the Forest Materials Licence be made public, or requested through the GIPA Act [Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009].

A: To be taken on notice. Chris will respond through the Chair. Expected to have to be GIPA'd, and then that request will be assessed on a legal basis.

Q: To FCNSW: Section 41 of the Forestry Act says that such a licence can only be held for 5 years. How do you get past the hard limit of 20 years set out in section 42 of the Forestry Act.

A: We have had Ministerial sign off for a Forest Materials Licence. It has been granted for 20 years. Towards the end of that period, Forestry would then start negotiation for an additional Licence period. The 30 years in the EIS is the Planning Approval Permit.

Chair: Q: Are you happy for me to collate future Q&As from community members?

A: Yes.

Chair: And I'll then pass them back to the CCC members.

Q: Who do we talk to about approved haulage roads?

A: KD: Come to me in the first instance.

Chair: The proponent will also have a Water Management Plan, including management of any water discharged from the site. Look at the turbidity in the water etc.

JM: We've had long discussions directly with Hunter Water.

JS: Yes, we've been meeting over the past few years. The key issues for HWC are water quality and quantity, blasting and vibration, and dust. The water request is 'Neutral of Beneficial Effects' NOBE. If the EIS suggests that there NOBE can be met, then Hunter Water won't have any issues.

Q: Why do you ignore the existence of an operating beef cattle farm in close proximity to the site?

and

Q: BD: In the blast impact statement it says there is no nearby livestock breeding business (or similar). We have 20 cows and 30 goats and that is our business. What happens if we are negatively impacted by blasting?

A: We can take that on notice. Not sure how the blast impact statement is addressing that, so we can address it in our Response to Submissions. The assessment indicates that the vibrations and overpressures meet the Australian Standards, but I think it will be a matter of communicating with you about blasts and finding out any impacts.

Q: Is there a possibility of having a blast-free period when the animals are heavily pregnant?

A: If it could be shown there is a potential risk, yes. We do work on properties with rural landowners to gain material to support renewables projects. We usually just move livestock back to where we are to watch a blast. That's about 400 metres away, with no detrimental impacts. We can certainly talk about it but it's very unlikely.

Q: Do you know that they were pregnant? Can you work with the farmers and have a three week no-blast period?

A: I think that rather than committing for a firm three-week hiatus, we work with the farmers to make sure they are comfortable, and they may even want to participate in some early blasts. It sounds terrible, but it is very controlled these days. We are happy to work together. That is how we've approached everything.

Q: Do you have some videos?

A: We've had 15 approvals, and about twelve quarries, all with stock around them. We have some videos. Safety is the highest importance, for people and livestock of course. But it is all pretty tightly controlled.

CB: I've worked on some blasts and we did some monitoring (of livestock) and there was no effect.

A: The blasts are monitored at multiple points. We could put a monitor at your place (BD) and see what the results are.

Q: JS: Biodiversity issues. Hunter water has some specific issues, such as the endangered bat colonies in the Balickera tunnel. I understand that some people are concerned about biodiversity loss associated with the quarry, but it's not a core issues for Hunter Water. During recent work on the tunnel by Hunter Water the bats were removed and are now being attracted back. We are monitoring their return.

A: The BDAR has addressed the biodiversity in detail. The detail is there and is also summarised. Impacts are addressed and this will be offset through the establishment of a stewardship site within the same general area.

10. General business

- No general business was raised.

11. Next meeting date

Next meeting (MU).

- A tentative date is to be set for next meeting after ARDG has prepared the Response to Submissions and that can then be discussed.
- ARDG to advise MU of timeframes as this date becomes clearer, though estimated at this stage to be around mid-September 2023.
- Agreed by all that this should be the venue for the next meeting.

12. Meeting close

- MU called the meeting closed at 6.05pm.