



19 June 2020

Tamai Davidson
Manager Planning and Development Services
Tenterfield Shire Council
PO BOX 214
TENTERFIELD NSW 2372

Originally sent by email to:
t.davidson@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au
Council@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au

Dear Tamai

Re: Dowe's Quarry Expansion Project – Response to Community Feedback to Submissions Report

Thank you for providing the feedback received by Tenterfield Shire Council (Council) from the local community following public exhibition of the Submissions Report for the Dowe's Quarry Expansion Project (the Project). There were several general emails received by Council that were provided with the feedback that are not taken to be submissions. Excluding these emails, there were 14 submissions received by Council and we note that each of the submitters has previously provided a submission or signed the group submission. One submission repeated the text of the submitters previous feedback. It is also noted that a group submission has been provided in response to the Submissions Report that contains 58 signatures (which may be compared to the original group submission that contained 79 signatures).

Many of the issues raised in the second round of submissions were addressed comprehensively in the Submissions Report with the position and response of Darryl McCarthy Constructions (DMcC) clearly presented there. To avoid duplication, this document does not respond specifically to representative comments but rather addresses the themes of the additional submissions. From review the submissions these are as follows.

- Continued concern regarding the air quality (dust) and health impacts of respirable crystalline silica (RCS) exposure continues to be the main concern in the community.
- Many submissions raise the integrity and trustworthiness of DMcC.
- Several submissions refer to the unique geology found in the site.
- Social matters such as general amenity, social licence and whether the development is fitting with the local community.

Additional matters raised in these submissions, but that have been comprehensively addressed in the Submissions Report include the following.

- Transport activities (Section 4.1.1, 4.1.6 and 4.2.12).

Brooklyn Office:

First Floor, 12 Dangar Road, PO Box 239, BROOKLYN NSW 2083
Telephone: (02) 9985 8511 Email: brooklyn@rwcorkery.com

Orange Office:

62 Hill Street, ORANGE NSW 2800
Telephone: (02) 6362 5411 Email: orange@rwcorkery.com

Brisbane Office:

Suite 5, Building 3, Pine Rivers Office Park, 205 Leitchs Road, BRENDAL QLD 4500
Telephone: (07) 3205 5400 Email: brisbane@rwcorkery.com

- Blasting and notifications (Section 4.2.4)
- Operating hours (Section 4.1.1)
- Water use and management (Section 4.2.14)
- Permissibility of the Project (zoning) (Section 4.2.10)
- Rainwater collection in water tanks (Section 4.2.14)
- Groundwater (Section 4.2.14)

We refer you to the relevant section of the Submissions Report regarding these matters. We accept that the submitters may not agree that their submission has been addressed to their liking, however the position of DMcC has not changed on these matters and further elaboration would only duplicate that report.

Air Quality and Health Matters

It is worth reiterating that the Air Quality Impact Assessment confirmed that predicted dust dispersion would remain within the relevant criteria levels at all privately-owned residences, even during adverse climate conditions. In addition, the Human Health Risk Assessment concluded that the health risks associated with environmental exposure to RCS from the Quarry are low and acceptable.

The Air Quality Impact Assessment has been subject to thorough review by the Environmental Planning Authority (EPA) including review of the technical adequacy of air quality modelling by a specialist in that field. The conclusion to the EPA feedback on the outcomes of the assessments is as follows.

.....the EPA considers that the adopted modelling scenarios have assessed the potential impacts from the largest sources for each modelling scenario and adverse air quality impacts are unlikely to occur provided all mitigation measures are effectively implemented.

Notwithstanding this conclusion, the EPA has provided General Terms of Approval (that would be reflected in the Environmental Protection Licence for the Quarry) that are stringent and require the consistent implementation of management and monitoring.

Further to this, NSW Health has provided the following comment based on the outcomes of the Human Health Risk Assessment and the criteria level currently applied in Victoria relating to silica exposure.

.....there are no health risk issues of concern in relation to community exposures to RCS in dust that may be sourced from 'The Quarry'.

No new information has come to light that changes the outcomes of the Air Quality Impact Assessment or the Human Health Risk Assessment. DMcC continues to implement stringent measures to control dust dispersion, especially on-site where exposure of Company personnel is concerned. To be clear, there have been no cases of silicosis or lung disease reported in staff in over 40 years of operations and personnel are monitored (including annual health checks) to ensure this remains the case. Being a quartzose quarry, the level of silica dust generation is known to the Mine Safety regulators who regularly visit the Quarry to cross-check management. This would continue during ongoing operations and is welcomed by DMcC.

In conclusion, the assessment of air quality and health risks has confirmed that even at peak operations community exposure would be at low risk of impacting community health. Regardless, DMcC would implement numerous stringent controls to limit dust generation and would implement continuous particulate matter monitoring. It is stressed that the operation of the Quarry is not comparable to benchtop manufacturing, tunnel construction or underground mining. It is therefore considered that the risks to the community are well understood and would be managed and regulated throughout the ongoing life of the Quarry.

Integrity and Trustworthiness

Comments of the nature presented in the submissions were also included in submission concerning the Environmental Impact Statement and continue to be misleading and offensive to DMcC. It is acknowledged that an operator commenced work on Anzac Day and it should be noted that the employee in question has been reprimanded. Anzac Day fell on a Saturday in 2020 and the employee in question mistakenly believed that a public holiday would occur on the following Monday. DMcC unreservedly apologises for this oversight.

Notwithstanding the above, it is noted that the presence of a new Company in Tenterfield has been met with a level of distrust. However, the majority of existing local staff have remained in employment under the ownership of Quarry Solutions (now the owner of DMcC). A range of measures have been implemented consistent with Quarry Solutions' other operations that are considered an important benefit and reflect the professional approach of the Company. Key amongst these is the In Vehicle Monitoring System that has been implemented on all DMcC heavy vehicles. Sensors have also been included in local school buses so that drivers are aware of their presence and can take due care not to conflict with the bus operation. The In Vehicle Monitoring System uses GPS tracking to monitor vehicles and provides alerts when poor behaviour occurs.

DMcC accepts that given the level of concern expressed by the local community, consistent demonstration of environmental outcomes and performance will be needed in order to establish trust. However, it is noted that this is an ongoing goal for the operation and in the short term the community in the vicinity of the Quarry is likely to remain wary.

Geology of the Site

Submissions from the community have referred to the nature of the material within the Quarry as being of particular concern. In particular, the submission from Ben and Jessie Morrow notes the "unique geology" of the Quarry. Quartzite is not a unique or uncommon geological formation and, as a result of its high strength and durability, is a commonly extracted material within quarries in NSW, including those at Marrangaroo and Wallerawang near Lithgow. DMcC has consistently identified the material within the Quarry as almost entirely silica and assessed health risks accordingly. The Air Quality Impact Assessment assumed 100% of the dust emissions would be silica. In addition, the emissions inventory and dust dispersion modelling assumed size fractions for the emitted dust based on published literature and guidelines. That assessment determined that the relevant criteria would be satisfied for all particulate fractions, with the assessed outcomes mostly driven by the assumed background levels which are a conservative estimate of likely conditions in the vicinity of the Quarry Site.

In addition to the assessment of offsite impacts of silica dust associated with Quarry operations, DMcC is committed to ensuring the health of its workforce. As previously stated, DMcC continues to implement stringent measures to control risks associated with silicosis, including annual health checks, and there is no history of silica-related adverse health impacts for its workforce in over 40 years of operations.

Ben and Jessie Morrow note alleged inappropriate use of Quarry products on public and private land. The MSDS for the product notes the risks associated with respirable crystalline silica and classifies it as hazardous noting that high levels of exposure can be hazardous. It should be noted that the material from this Quarry has been used by for road construction and other purposes for more than 40 years, without evidence of adverse health impacts. Similarly, there is no evidence that similar materials from other Quarries have resulted in adverse health impacts. As a result, there has been no feedback from the EPA, NSW Health, the Geological Survey of NSW or Mines Safety Inspectors of the Resources Regulator indicating that the continued controlled extraction and use of this material would be contrary to public policy or would result in adverse health outcomes.

Finally, Martin and Jane Ons note in their submission that a sample tested by EAL in Lismore indicates a high proportion of angular fragments. There is no information in relation to the nature of the sample that was analysed or how or where it was collected or processed. As a result, DMcC cannot comment on the conclusions drawn in the submission, other than to refer to the historic operation of the Quarry and the Sunnyside Crushing and Screening Plant without incident.

Social Amenity

Many of the submissions express the opinion that the Quarry is not in keeping with the local area. However, this position ignores the fact that the Quarry has been operating for over 40 years in this location. It is accepted that operations have increased in recent years in response to demand, however management input has increased to match this.

The Submissions Report acknowledges that impacts to social amenity are not relative to criteria levels established in published guidelines. Therefore, social impacts from noise generation, for example, may occur regardless of whether the noise level is considered intrusive. The guidelines used for assessment are developed through stringent review of likely impacts and suitable thresholds including those relating to impacts that are generally considered to create annoyance.

DMcC has designed the ongoing operations in a manner that maintains the existing experience of the Quarry as much as possible. This applies mostly to proposed traffic levels that have been raised as a concern for the community. It is acknowledged that the inclusion of processing operations is new, however this inclusion has been the subject of thorough assessment.

As noted previously, DMcC has accepted the importance of consistent demonstration of acceptable environmental outcomes in order to develop trust with the local community. Regardless of the ongoing engagement with the community, it is anticipated that stringent conditions of consent would regulate the operation and ensure that environmental outcomes remain acceptable. The level of objection in the community is not likely to be resolved through strict conditions of consent alone but through consistent performance and engagement. DMcC reiterates that the Company intends to remain an important local source of raw materials for Council, State government and private clients as well providing ongoing employment and investment into the community. The investment that is generated through the operation is predominantly funded outside the Tenterfield Local Government Area and therefore the operation presents an important source of external investment.

Should you have any queries on the above, please feel free to contact myself or Terry Woods.

Yours sincerely



Nick Warren
Principal Environmental Consultant