



Hunter residents campaign against proposed quarries as demand for raw materials soars

ABC Newcastle / By [Romy Stephens](#)

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Amanda Albury says quarries near her property impact wildlife and throw dust into the air. (ABC Newcastle: Romy Stephens)

There is growing anger over proposals to create several more quarries in the New South Wales Hunter region as demand for raw materials to build roads and infrastructure increases.

Four major quarries already operate north of Raymond Terrace, extracting rock to develop products such as concrete and asphalt.

Three more have been proposed for the area, all of which have been declared state significant developments under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

Amanda Albury's 10-hectare Limeburners Creek property is surrounded by operating or proposed quarries.

She is concerned about the industry's potential environmental and health impacts.

Key points:

- Residents are concerned about air and water quality as well as impacts on native wildlife
- One of the proposed quarries would fall within the bounds of a koala habitat in a state forest
- A development group says there is no avoiding the use of materials extracted from quarries

"The wildlife is fingerprinted to a particular area and these developments keep corralling anything that does survive," Ms Albury said.

"When we have people stay, we have to tell them to keep their windows closed because the dust comes through the screens."



The proposed Stone Ridge Quarry would be located in the Wallaroo State Forest. (ABC Newcastle: Romy Stephens)

Dust, water and wildlife

There has been community backlash over the proposed Stone Ridge Quarry in Wallaroo State Forest, north of Raymond Terrace.

The Australian Resource Development Group's (ARDG) proposal anticipates 1.5 million tonnes of produce to be extracted annually over the quarry's 30-year life span.

Jennifer Musicka lives on the same road as the proposed quarry and said many of her neighbours relied on water caught off their roofs.

"If they're coated with dust, it affects the quality of the water they're using," she said.

ARDG planning and development director Justin Meleo said the material sourced from quarries was in

short supply in the Hunter and on the Central Coast.

"A number of the established resources are diminishing," he said.

"There's a number of quarries that are close to closing on the Central Coast."



There are at least seven major operating or proposed quarries north of Raymond Terrace. (ABC Newcastle: Romy Stephens)

Mr Meleo said supply would decrease without new quarries.

"There would be flow-on through the broader economy in relation to cost of materials, cost of production, cost of houses, commercial developments," he said.

"It would flow all the way through and exacerbate the existing inflation issue that we've got."

Mr Meleo said the local council had deemed the Stone Ridge site as "marginal" koala habitat.

"Of all the potentially available sites with the right geology, it has the lowest potential for impact on the environment and amenity impacts on the surrounding community," he said.

"Notwithstanding that, it is koala habitat — but it's the lowest value habitat in the region."



Josephine Vaughan says the construction sector needs to rethink building designs to become more sustainable. (ABC Newcastle: Romy Stephens)

Is recycling the solution?

University of Newcastle construction management lecturer Josephine Vaughan said recycled materials could meet a high percentage of building requirements, but the industry would need to change.

"Buildings have to become designed for deconstruction, so when you think about creating the building you also think about how you're going to pull it apart," she said.

"That does mean some changes to the way we build at the moment.

"Some of the ingredients we use – some glues and things – make it really hard to fully recycle buildings."

Mr Meleo said recycled materials were not suitable for applications like high-strength concrete and road surfacing.

"Applications that require a lot of durability, so it lasts — unfortunately most recycled materials just aren't able to meet that," he said.

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