

Save Balickera Inc.



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1 March 2024

General Manager
Port Stephens Council
116 Adelaide Street
Raymond Terrace NSW 2324
By email: Developmentand.BuildingAdmin@portstephens.nsw.gov.au

Attention: Dylan Mitchell

**Submission objecting to Application by Boral Resources (NSW) Pty Ltd
Road infrastructure - upgrades to Italia Road and Pacific Highway Intersection
Combined BA/DA (7 - 1985 - 2683 - 6)**

Submission Objecting to the Proposal

1. I write on behalf of Save Balickera Inc., an incorporated association that represents residents and other concerned members of the community who wish to protect our local area from inappropriate development, including the further expansion and continuation of quarrying and its impacts on traffic conditions.

Related Applications

2. Although no related applications are listed on Council's DA Tracker, the content of the application discloses that it is related to several existing applications including Boral's application with Council to deepen its existing Seaham Quarry (DA 7 - 1985 - 2683 - 6), as well as three State Significant Development applications. These are Boral's own application to vastly expand Seaham Quarry (SSD 9254474) as well as applications by Australian Resource Development Group Pty Limited (ARDG) and Eagleton Rock Syndicate to establish two neighbouring quarries at Stone Ridge (SSD 10432) and Eagleton (SSD 7332) respectively.
3. Boral's collaboration with other quarry developers wishing to establish two new quarries in the same area by facilitating this application to upgrade road

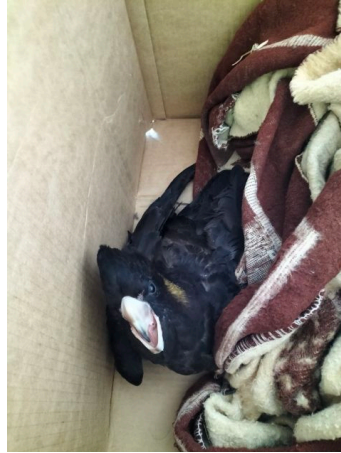


infrastructure is incompatible with its obligations to the community. Plans to grow the quarry industry demonstrate a failure to consider the cumulative impacts on the local community and environment.

4. We request that the concerns raised in our submissions lodged in response to these related applications should be considered in assessing this current application to upgrade the intersection. These submissions can all be accessed through [our website: https://balickera.com/](https://balickera.com/).

Environmental concerns

5. The proposed intersection upgrade is located within the catchment for the Hunter Water's Grahamstown Dam Drinking Water Special Area which supplies drinking water to approximately 60% of the population of the Lower Hunter. Hunter Water's Operating Licence requires compliance with the Framework for Management of Drinking Water which states that *"the most effective barrier is the protection of source water to the maximum degree practical"*. Protection of land within the Special Area is key to ensuring that this barrier is effective and all development in drinking water catchments must demonstrate a Neutral or Beneficial Effect (NorBE) on water quality.
6. The cumulative impact of expanded quarrying in the Balickera area would be devastating and must be strongly opposed by Port Stephens Council. The existing Boral Seaham Quarry pollutes land, air and water and is a hideous scar on the landscape. The continuation of this quarry will inevitably have adverse impacts by perpetuating unacceptable and unsafe heavy traffic conditions, causing ongoing contamination of drinking water and air quality, continuing the devastation of flora and fauna and irrevocably destroying local heritage, specifically Balickera house and farm.
7. The EPBC Act Protected Matters Report lists the Regent Honeyeater, Curlew Sandpiper, Swift Parrot and Eastern Curlew as all critically endangered species that are known to occur or likely to occur within the area. There are also several critically endangered plants listed including the leek-orchid, scrub turpentine and native guava. Endangered mammals in the area include the Spot-tailed Quoll, Greater Glider and Koala.
8. We will leave environmental groups to make more detailed submissions regarding these matters. Certainly, no approval should be given without appropriate investigation of the likely impacts of the upgrades to the road and associated quarry activity and traffic impacts on the already fragile and long-suffering flora and fauna.



Black Cockatoo found stunned on the corner of the Pacific Highway and Italia Road on 29 November 2022. It was in the centre of the Highway when rescued by a resident who picked it up and contacted WIRES who collected it.
Photo credit: Andrew Cusber

Traffic considerations

9. The local community has been showing signs of significant strain from the thunderous and unsafe truck traffic associated with current quarry operations and in recent years community members established the Italia Road Action Taskforce (IRATE) as an active Facebook group. Clearly any increase in heavy traffic on Italia Road can be expected to have an adverse impact on the community.
10. Specific traffic concerns raised by members of Save Balickera Inc are set out in dot form following:
 - The Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) does not include any of the traffic impact that will be added by the Boral Seaham Quarry Expansion. The only traffic impacts included are that of the Proposed Eagleton Quarry and the proposed Stone Ridge Quarry. Together, Eagleton and Stone Ridge Quarries will be extracting 2.1 million tonne per year. Once operating, the Boral Seaham Quarry will be extracting 2 million tonnes per year. Therefore, it would be reasonable to assume that the traffic impact of Quarry Trucks will be almost double of what is included in this Traffic Impact Assessment.
 - The Base Data to make the forecast of the 2032 figures used in the TIA is taken from 2018. It is reasonable to assume that traffic grew from 2018 - 2022, a period of 4 years, so the forecasted Traffic on Pacific Highway will also be incorrect for 2032



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- The traffic count on Italia Road was done in June 2022. This was not in school holidays when the intersection becomes much more difficult. The impact should be based on a worse case scenario which would mean the traffic count should be done in school holidays and school hours so they can be compared.
 - The traffic count for Italia Road was undertaken before the Clarence Town Bridge banned the use of articulated vehicles and Six Mile Road was given a weight limit. As both Clarence Town Bridge was a route which allowed Heavy Vehicles to travel up to Buckets Way to access Pacific Highway, and Six Mile Road was also an alternative route to Pacific Highway for Heavy Vehicles, the traffic count is most likely inaccurate for heavy vehicles.
 - Other heavy vehicles, that provide as much danger to the use of the intersection as quarry trucks, have not been taken into account in the Traffic Impact Assessment. There is also no control over whether they turn right onto Pacific Highway, or from right from Pacific Highway to Italia Road, so these heavy vehicles will continue to pose an increased risk.
 - The Road Safety Audit Findings that were submitted with the DA identified 7 findings. Four of these 7 findings stand at high risk, even if the DA was approved.
 - The Deep Creek Quarry that will use the Buckets Road and Pacific Highway has been approved by the IPC. This is not included within the DA. Therefore, there will be even more of an impact to the Road Network, already at high risk, by the cumulative effect of adding the traffic from Deep Creek Quarry and also the Boral Seaham Quarry.
 - It is worthwhile to note that there are another 8 expansions or new quarries in the pipeline (i.e preparing EIS, response to submissions, appeal) that will add even more quarry truck haulage to the high risk road network. We hope that when those quarries are considered by the state government, and the impact to Port Stephens roads, that these will be taken into account and they should also be considered now if there are to be major infrastructure undertakings.
 - There is no provision in the DA to monitor and penalize any breach of proposed heavy vehicle operational protocols that will define set heavy vehicle routes and behavioural protocols, such as -
 - Undertaking a right - turn out of Italia Road
 - Undertake a U Turn manouvre at the U - Turn facility 1.8 kms and 3.5 kms north of Italia Road
 - Elect to take an alternate route via Medowie Road,



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- Engage in 'tail gating' due to the frequency of heavy vehicle movements
 - Turn right from Pacific Highway onto Italia Road
 - There is no consideration in the DA what the impacts of the quarry trucks turning at the Raymond Terrace roundabout to return to the proposed quarries on Italia Road
 - The safety issues of turning right onto Pacific Highway, while also trying to navigate cars and trucks turning right across the highway into Italia Road, is not addressed. This is currently one of the key safety issues at the intersection so one would think that any potential upgrade of the intersection should address this. If the quarries are approved and this proposed DA is in place, this safety issue will become even more of a problem
 - The other safety issue already existing, where the existing indented southbound deceleration/right turn lane to Italia Road is insufficient is also not addressed by this DA. This lane is 115 m in length including the taper, which is not the required minimum length for a sign posted speed of 110 km/h or design speed. This safety issue should be addressed before any additional DA to add another 1000 quarry trucks daily to the intersection use is even considered.
 - SIDRA results shown in the TIA show very minimal change to the level of service of the intersection, yet the other impacts of approving the quarries will be significant to the local residents, the flora and the fauna.
 - While the DA is only to address the impact on the intersection, there is no acknowledgment or mention of the substantial impact that the approval of the DA and the Quarries will have on the usage of Italia Road as a whole. There is also no mention of the significant impact that the DA will have on the residence that is between the Seaham Quarry and Pacific Highway.

This submission has been put together in a short time frame. If any point should need clarification or expansion, please do not hesitate to contact the author on 0402 467476.



Anna Kerr
President
Save Balickera Inc