

Conondale Range Committee

PO Box 150
KENILWORTH 4574

Objection to Material Change of Use- Extractive Industry,
Part of Lot 5 on RP 165610, Moy Pocket.
DA 10181

Cooloola Shire Council
PO Box 155
GYMPIE 4570

The Conondale Range Committee objects to the proposed expansion on a number of grounds.

1. Vegetation.

Much of the area proposed for quarrying on Lot 5 is an “Of Concern” ecosystem. While the application mentions this, it fails to provide a map as to the location and extent of this ecosystem type.

This information should have been included with the application.

It is readily available from the EPA website and shows the location of the “of concern” E. crebra, E. tereticornis grassy woodland. This ecosystem is not well represented in Reserves. The notophyll vine forest, although not classified as “of concern”, is, in fact, lowland rainforest which is not well represented in the area.

The area has been identified as a wildlife corridor being one of a few places where the forests of the Conondales are in corridor contact with the Mary River.

2. Retrospective approval.

In mid 2004, the quarry operators illegally cleared and commenced quarrying some of this area. This was an infringement not only in terms of its zoning, but also in breach of state government’s vegetation management laws.

It is understood that the quarry was ordered to pay a substantial fine for this activity.

We are concerned that councillors may feel more inclined to grant approval since the operation has already commenced and a substantial area of the “of concern” ecosystem has been removed.

3. Visual Effect of proposed expansion.

The Kenilworth Bluff has been nominated as an Inspirational Landscape on the National Heritage List. It is an impressive regional landform towering grandly over the Mary Valley. While quarrying activities were visible from some points to the north, the presence of the ridge running through the centre of Lot 5 acted as a visual buffer to the south and east.

The statement in the application that **“it is proposed to retain existing forest trees around the perimeter of the workings to reduce visual access”** is totally inadequate to reflect the adverse visual impact the proposed work will have.

The plan is to lower the Knob from a height of 174 metres to about 134 metres and to continue cutting benches further up the ridge with clearing above to a height of around 190 metres.

The visual scar would be considerable, reaching much further up the Kenilworth Bluff than previously and should have been properly modelled in the application and in response to Council's question.

4. Revegetation Plans.

The application is very vague about revegetation suggesting in places it be ongoing and in others that it be carried out at the cessation of quarrying.

We have had considerable experience with the abandoned gold mine in the Conondales.

Revegetation left until after the income-generating life of a mine or quarry is unlikely to be carried out properly if at all. In the case of the Conondales, the company declared bankrupt and the clean-up and revegetation was eventually carried out by the state government at a cost well in excess of one million dollars.

An ongoing Revegetation Plan needs to be undertaken and it needs to be one that reflects the biodiversity of the surrounding area rather than simply stabilization with grasses. Furthermore it is reported that topsoil from the quarry, rather than being used for rehabilitation purposes, has, at times, been sold.

5. Buffer Area.

We understand that Lot 5 was originally purchased by the quarry to act as a buffer. Recent declaration of the quarry as a Key Resource Area (KRA 89) show that the onus of providing a buffer seems to fall principally on the surrounding residents, especially to the south. The astute purchase of Lot 5 had provided several hundred metres of buffer but this expansion would see it reduced to just under sixty.

The description of KRA 89 points out that

“a ridgeline southeast of the quarry will be retained as a visual buffer to the Mary River valley....”
(Page 103 State Planning Policy for Protection of Extractive Resources).

This application exceeds this.

It proposes to remove much of the ridgeline (the Knob), and to extend considerably beyond it. This removes much of the effect of the visual and acoustic barrier.

6. Better Use of Land Presently Zoned for Quarrying.

The KRA map of the resource shows that it underlies much of the area currently zoned for quarrying. The application has failed to demonstrate why this existing area is avoided in favour of clearing and opening up adjoining land of considerable environmental and visual aesthetic significance.

Cheryl Seabrook
Secretary

September 24 2005