



MEDIA STATEMENT

28 May 2019

Proposed Dunmore modification to continue existing operations

A planning modification lodged by Boral with the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) for its Dunmore Sand and Soil (DSS) operations seeks only a continuation of its existing 20-year-old practices.

The public exhibition of the modification by the DPE closed on 23 May after Boral's submission of extensive technical documentation at the end of February. The proposal seeks to extend the existing operations into a new 'stage' on private land to the south between the Princes Highway and Riverside Drive.

While sand extraction has taken place around Swamp and Tabbitta Roads, Dunmore since the late 1990s, Boral has operated the originally family-run DSS business since its acquisition in 2005 to a planning consent issued by the DPE during 2004.

The current Tabbitta Road operations consist of one of only two 'fine' sand resources Boral quarries for the production of materials such as concrete and asphalt used in building and construction across Sydney, the Illawarra and the Hunter.

A critical regional resource

A study commissioned by the DPE on demand for and supply of construction materials into the greater Sydney region concluded there are insufficient reserves of natural sand to meet demand to 2036.

The study further noted there are, however, sufficient potential resources that could be developed adjacent to or within existing quarries such as DSS to meet the cumulative demand for natural sand products.

Although 'manufactured sand' products made from other materials are being developed as alternatives, none has yet been produced that can fully replace natural sand while still maintaining the quality and integrity required for products such as structural concretes.

Boral has opted to maximise resources in locations where sand extraction is already taking place, making use of existing processing facilities and amenities, and minimising environmental impact. The approved resources at DSS are expected to be exhausted within the next six months, triggering the modification.

Communicating the proposal

Since February, Boral has been openly engaging and providing information to local residents and groups about the proposal.

Although the land is under the private ownership of a local family, this engagement has included on-site inspections which have involved neighbours, community and environment group representatives, and officers from both Shellharbour and Kiama Council.

Throughout this communication, Boral has made it clear the proposed operations do not involve extracting sand directly from the Minnamurra River or its immediate surrounds.

The DPE exhibited the proposal between 25 April and 23 May. Boral is aware that two local groups and an individual resident were granted an extension to provide their comments. Statements that Boral actively campaigned against a general extension of the deadline are entirely false.



Relationship with Minnamurra River and connecting waterways

The proposed extraction area was reduced significantly from the original plan to ensure sufficient buffering from significant vegetation, the river and its corridor.

This reduction now sees the Stage 5A extraction area located at 180 metres from the river, with Riverside Drive acting as a barrier to any interaction. For Stage 5B, the operations will be a minimum of 370 metres from the river.

As with the Tabbitta Road operations, the proposed extraction pond system and activities will remain disconnected from the river and surrounding waterways.

Through feedback received from the community, Boral reviewed concerns that Stage 5A might interact with potential leachate at Kiama Council's Minnamurra Waste and Recycling Centre.

Hydrological investigations included in the modification show that the Centre's location is part of a separate aquifer to the proposed sand extraction area and is not interconnected.

Local ecology

Boral developed the proposal to ensure nearby vegetation is minimally affected by future operations. As a result of community concern about the possibility of sea eagles nesting within the proposed Stage 5B, Boral arranged for an additional ecological review which has concluded there is no sea eagle nesting within the proposed extraction area.

Traffic

Quarried sand will be delivered to the existing Tabbitta Road site via pipeline rather than heavy vehicles.

The only additional traffic associated with Boral's proposal will be the heavy vehicles carrying 'clean fill' into the Stage 5A extraction pond for rehabilitation activities, requiring use of approximately 400 metres of Riverside Drive only.

Conclusion

Boral's modification seeks only to continue the existing operation of Dunmore Sand and Soil, and support its 11 employees and local contractors, as has been the case for the past 20 years.

In securing further sand resources, the site will consequently also continue its key role in helping to provide the public and private infrastructure we all use every day, both regionally and further afield.

For more information:

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