

SUBMISSION

*Taggart Earthmoving
joint hearing
Wed 5 May 2021*

Before Independent Hearing Commissioners

Appointed by Canterbury Regional Council (ECAN)

and the Waimakariri District Council (WDC)

In the Matter of: The Resource Management Act 1991

And

In the Matter of: Taggart Earthmoving Limited's application
For resource consents to establish a new
aggregate quarry at the Rangiora
Racecourse

Statement and Evidence of: Nicki McKay

Introduction:

My name is Nicki McKay and I live in Nth West Rangiora at 21 Oakwood Drive.

I am now retired from being a contract gardener

On a personal note I am an insulin dependent diabetic and have been for the last 45 years. Because of this have had to deal with many health issues and take great care to reduce health risks from my life.

My garden is my "happy place" and after my husband died I went to my garden when I was feeling down. During lockdown last year when I was alone in my 'bubble, I got out into my garden to be in my "happy place" as much and as often as I could.

If this quarry was to proceed it will take away my "happy place" as I would not feel confident or relaxed in the garden from the threat of silica dust on a windy day (or any day) as I certainly DO NOT want to expose myself to any potential health risks.

I am totally opposed to this proposal. If it is approved it would have an impact on my wellbeing and an impact on my neighbourhood in North West Rangiora. I seek a decision from you to decline the application.

In my hearing submission I was concerned with way the application was written and claimed it was not "fit for purpose."

My reading of the application found it overly repetitive and disjointed. I can assure you that I am not alone when I described it as being neither concise nor precise. Now I am finding the process itself disjointed and confusing. I do, however, have a greater appreciation of why the current Resource Management Act is going to be changed.

The Assessment of Environmental Effects from the application and the various responses in the large number of follow-up reports that are now available only serve to make an overly repetitive and disjointed process more complex.

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I have always believed that simplicity lies on the far side of complexity and in my hearing presentation today I am going to report on a conversation I had with a neighbour who asked me to tell her about this racecourse quarry proposal that was causing me so much anxiety. It was through this process that I discovered the essence of my concerns and how simple the conclusion is.

I have recorded this as a conversation

Why are you so upset and what is this quarry proposal, what can you tell me?

The quarry is only a proposal at the moment – it is about establishing a quarry to extract greywacke gravel from the racecourse – both around and inside the track, convey it off site and backfill where they have extracted from.

So, what are the issues?

The land proposed for this quarry has a very longstanding recreational amenity on it.

Has there been any analysis about the compatibility of the proposed quarry with the recreational activity?

No – they have said in places they are compatible but there is no analysis, evidence or data. Just saying the two core purposes are compatible doesn't make it so.

What do others think about this?

Well, from what I can see and have heard there aren't many in favour – nearly 5,000 people signed a petition against it.

Anything else?

Yes, the land proposed for the quarry is adjacent to our established subdivision to the south, small rural sections to the west and an eco-park with 100 + permanent residents to the west.

Are any of these people happy with this proposal?

No

Is there buffer zone proposed to protect the noxious nature of the quarry from its neighbours?

No

What are the major concerns of the neighbours?

Pollution of the emergency water supply for Rangiora; additional noise from the quarry activities in this quiet neighbourhood; additional heavy traffic on a road that isn't really designed for this level of traffic; and, dust, including dangerous respirable crystalline silica.

Are all these issues sorted or covered off?

No, but there is ongoing discussion and debate about each of these issues because they will exceed the allowable levels or limits.

What do you mean?

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Well this is what it is all about - because the most of the above issues will exceed the allowable levels or limits they need a resource consent. Now the debate is about how to mitigate the effects and show that the level of the effects are reasonable.

Has this been achieved?

No, we are going to the hearing to ensure our view about what is reasonable is carefully considered and taken into account.

Why is there no agreement?

Well without the quarry operating we don't actually know if the theoretical models and analysis in the application will be proven to be correct.

Surely they will get this correct?

We hope so as well but there are so many variables and issues that haven't been taken into account yet.

What do you mean?

Well take dust and noise as examples – the effects of these will be influenced by wind and the weather station they use for analysis is 5 km away and influenced by tall poplar trees to the North and West so its wind data is not reliable. However, it has been used in the application and subsequent reports without questioning. As far as I can understand, if you base arguments on data that is not reliable it will mean any conclusions will be equally unreliable. For water contamination there is fluctuation in the water table and no agreement about the high level to determine the depth to mine. At the same time there is debate about how to absolutely ensure the fill will not have any contaminants.

Has there been any analysis about how the fill will respond in a high water table area in an earthquake?

No

I noticed an article in the local paper that said the racing clubs did not have the authority to put an encumbrance on their land.

Yes, that is correct, but don't go there – we have been told it isn't an environmental impact even although one the reasons for establishing the quarry was to support the racing clubs who own the land.

So when and how will this be sorted?

I heard that this is matter for the applicant to sort out. One thing for sure, however, the Racing Clubs won't be able to go against their Racing Industry Act

Thanks for the explanation. How are you feeling now?

Thanks for listening. It has been good to get it all off my chest – what do you think?

Well, I think you have simplified the issue and have a good grasp of its "nuts and bolts" as well as the big picture.

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Yes, I heard the Captain of the Chiefs say the other day about the simple game plan they had before they beat the Crusaders. He said “complexity is the enemy of execution.” And I know you have heard me say something similar when faced with a challenge .

I also know that “vision drift” is the scourge of good planning but I am confident that the “big picture” will emerge through this process you have described.

Finally, thanks for listening to my presentation and evidence. I trust you will see a big and positive picture of the future of North West Rangiora that doesn't involve a quarry in the middle of our community racecourse.

Nicki McKay