



16th September, 2019

Chris.Videroni@environment.gov.au

PAWS@environment.gov.au

Chris Videroni

Director Projects Assessments West Section, Environmental Standards Division

Department of the Environment and Energy (DoEE)

GPO Box 787

Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Mr Videroni,

Proposal for Limestone and Sand Quarry and associated infrastructure, Lot 1002 Preston Beach Road North, Preston Beach WA. Proponent: Doyle's Lime Service

We bring to your attention the proposal by Doyle's Lime Service for a Limestone and Sand quarry at Lot 1002 Preston Beach Road North, Preston Beach, WA, together with construction of associated road access and other infrastructure.

Please note that the location of this quarry is highly significant being surrounded by the 'A' class Yalgorup National Park and **Ramsar wetlands of the Peel-Yalgorup system** which are of international importance. Thus there will be very significant direct and indirect impacts on multiple **Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES)**.

We therefore recommend that the proposal, including all associated road construction and mining infrastructure be called in by your Department under the EPBC Act as a Controlled Action.

The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) recommended the proponent contact the Commonwealth DoEE to discuss further information provided during the scoping of the proposal, including a preliminary hydrogeological study, flora and vegetation survey, and a potential referral under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC). We understand verbal contact was made by the proponent to the DoEE on the 22nd August 2018 and then formally on the 14th September 2018. We also understand the proponent's consultant has been reminded of their obligation to refer and report significant impacts to MNES under the requirement of the EPBC Act 1999.

We provide the following information.

Actions consisting of vehicle movement, clearing of native vegetation and physical presence of infrastructure will have significant impacts to MNES due to -

- **loss of 15.2ha of significant fauna habitat**
- **direct loss from impacts due to vehicle movements**
- **indirect impacts to fauna habitat as a result of fragmentation, changed groundwater hydrology, degradation through spread of *Phytophthora* Dieback disease by machinery and vehicles.**

Proposed Clearing of 15.2ha for limestone mining extraction and road access, includes 11 native species occurring on the amended limestone extraction area, Lot 1002 Preston Beach Road North. (Refer Excavation – Rehabilitation Management Plan, Proposed Limestone Excavation, Lot 1002, Preston Beach Road North, Preston Beach for *Doyles Lime Service. Prepared by Landform Research*)

Acacia rostellifera

Agonis flexuosa

Banksia (Dryandra) sessilis

Dianella divaricata

***Eucalyptus gomphocephala* Tuart**

Hakea prostrata

Hibbertia subvaginata

***Melaleuca huegelii* (about 20 scattered plants)**

Melaleuca systena

Spyridium globulosum

Templetonia retusa

Clearing, mining and associated road and other infrastructure will have significant impacts on MNES as follows:

- 1. Endangered fauna:** The site provides habitat for fauna with at least 3 species protected under the EPBC Act: the endangered Western Ringtail possum, the endangered Carnaby's Cockatoo, and the vulnerable Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo. Vehicle movements and heavy haulage on roads and quarrying site operations will have significant impacts on these species.
- 2. Threatened ecological communities:** The vegetation on the eastern side of the proposed quarry site consists of Tuart Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain *critically endangered* ecological community, and Banksia woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain *endangered* ecological community. Clearing will remove some of these communities. Importantly, quarrying will significantly change the groundwater hydrology and as a consequence have very significant indirect impacts on the surrounding Tuart and Banksia woodlands in Yalgorup National Park.
- 3. Habitat loss and linkages:** The Tuart and Banksia communities of *Agonis flexuosa* and understorey of Acacia species provide breeding, nesting hollows and food source, critical habitat for Black Cockatoos and Western Ringtail Possum, plus habitat linkages to the north/west and east/west to remnant vegetation of Yalgorup 'A' Class National Park. Removal of any Tuart or Banksia and *Agonis flexuosa* woodlands would negatively impact these ecological linkages through fragmentation and significantly impacting threatened species persistence through the landscape and their recovery.

Proposal contrary to Recovery Plans: Please note that Western Ringtail Possum and Carnaby's Cockatoo currently have approved Federal Recovery Plans. Loss of habitat is contrary to Recovery Plans.

The proposal has also raised considerable public concern with regard to the use of the tourist and walk track Preston Beach Rd North. Concerns expressed are around environmental impacts, human and wildlife safety, spread of Dieback disease, and hydrological contamination to Ramsar wetlands systems.

In EPA correspondence 20th August, it is stated *the proponent intends to use the tourist track, Preston Beach Road North, as a transport route for heavy haulage transportation of limestone and sand.*

A technical road report provided for the Proponent and the Shire of Waroona has identified areas for clearing. The intersection requiring clearing, referred to in the report, states - *If the road is to accommodate trucks and light traffic, then the intersection should be improved by either road widening to accommodate two-way traffic or undertaking such clearing works as are required to provide clear visibility and safe waiting bays for vehicles exiting Preston Beach Road North.* (Ref: Greenfields Technical Report)

4. Impact on critical habitat for Western Ringtail Possum and Carnabys' Cockatoo: The intersection of Preston Beach Road (sealed road) and entry to Preston Beach Road north (unsealed) displays mature Tuart Woodlands/*Agonis flexuosa* over low shrubs. This dense vegetation displays moderate Western Ringtail Possum and Brush Tail Possum activity (from survey scat count and observation). The intersection is dominated by mature Tuart with large hollows on both sides of the tourist track entry. Any clearing or modification to this intersection **will significantly impact critical habitat for Western Ringtail Possum and Carnabys' cockatoo.**

5. Phytophthora is a key threatening process under the EPBC Act. The movement of construction and heavy haulage mine vehicles along the access road which goes through Yalgorup National Park will inevitably increase the risk of spread of Phytophthora Dieback disease in the adjacent Banksia and Tuart woodlands which are highly susceptible to this disease. This has the potential to kill extensive areas of Black Cockatoo habitat species such as Banksias and other fauna habitat.

6. Impact on ecological character of Ramsar wetlands of the Peel Yalgorup system:

Groundwater contamination and changed groundwater hydrology will significantly impact the surrounding Ramsar wetlands.

The use of the unsealed tourist track for heavy haulage poses the significant risk of hydrocarbons, chemicals or other contaminants being accidentally spilled into groundwater of the Peel-Yalgorup System Ramsar Wetlands.

The proponent's intention to store fuels, lubricants or other toxic or hazardous chemicals on the floor of the site, is a major risk to groundwater quality and will significantly impact the Peel-Yalgorup system.

7. Site Operations: - Stormwater discharge during mining operations at the mine site will significantly impact Ramsar Wetlands of the Peel-Yalgorup System (MNES).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

We (the community conservation groups listed below) request the proposal be called in and assessed as a Controlled Action under the EPBC Act, as the action will have very significant impacts on MNES as follows.

- **Ramsar wetlands of international importance:** JAMBA, CAMBA, (EPBC Act Sections 16 and 17A). Notably the hydrological changes to these wetlands will likely be very significant with potentially catastrophic impacts.
- **EPBC Act listed threatened species and communities** (Sections 18 and 18A): Carnaby's

Cockatoo, Forest Red-Tailed Black Cockatoo, Western Ringtail Possum, Brush-Tail Phascogale, Banksia woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain endangered ecological community, Tuart Forests and Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain critically endangered ecological community, and the Sedgeland in Holocene Dune Swales of the southern Swan Coastal Plain.

- **Listed Migratory and Resident Shorebird Species** (Section 20 and 20A): Great Egret, Little Egret.
- **Spread of Phytophthora Dieback disease** – a threatening process under the EPBC Act.

The site location for this proposed mine is unacceptable due to the multiple and severe impacts which would occur on the surrounding Yalgorup 'A' Class National Park, Ramsar wetlands, Migratory Birds, Federally and State listed Fauna, Federally and State Listed Flora, Banksia Woodlands, Tuart Woodlands and Holocene Dune Sedgeland.

For your information we attach the Environmental Scoping Document (ESD) submission to the WA Environment Protection Authority (EPA), and the response from the EPA. This submission is supported by **twelve** community and conservation Groups.

Your timely response to our request will be greatly appreciated.

Supporting Groups:

FRAGYLE (Friends of the Action Group for the Yalgorup Lakes Environment)
Preston Beach Progress Association (representing 146 community members)
Birdlife WA
Urban Bushland Council WA Inc.
Peel Preservation Group
Conservation Council of WA Citizen Science Volunteers
Wetlands Conservation Society
Waterbird Conservation Group Inc.
Friends of Brixton Street Wetlands
Friends of Forrestdale Inc.
Friends of Queens Park Bushland
Uta Wicke (founder of the Possum Centre, Busselton)

Attachments:

Submission to the WA EPA Chairman on the Environmental Scoping Document 26th July 2019
Response from the WA EPA Chairman on the Environmental Scoping Document 20th August 2019

cc Assessment Manager WA, Rod.Whyte@environment.gov.au