

Media Release

For immediate release
Friday 25 February 2022

MITCHELL SHIRE COUNCIL



Minister Pulford, please explain

Mitchell Shire Council was disappointed Minister for Resources Jaala Pulford failed to recognise community opposition and input into the proposed Beveridge North West quarry in parliament on Thursday.

Council has written to Minister Pulford asking for a response on three key points:

1. Whether the local community input and clear opposition to the quarry will be respected and considered through any future processes, irrespective of whether they are planning process under the authority of the Minister for Planning or processes under the Resources portfolio; and
2. That these processes are and will be genuine, authentic and transparent; and
3. A commitment to the community that the decision regarding whether a quarry will be approved in this location has not yet been made.

There has been an overwhelming community response to the Victorian Planning Authority's public consultation on the Beveridge North West Precinct Structure Plan.

Council understands the Ministerial Advisory Committee has received more than 1040 submissions, the majority of which, Council believes, were against the quarry.

The community's voice is very clear, they do not want this quarry.

The quarry was not included in the original Precinct Structure Plan future urban structure that went out for consultation and wasn't part of the conversation between the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) and the community at that time.

We hope the community's voice is heard through the current Precinct Structure Plan and planning permit process.

Council raised concerns with Planning Minister Richard Wynne in November 2021 that the quarry was a done deal.

A spokesperson for Minister Wynne's office denied this was the case and said: "The planning permit application will be considered on its merits by the committee having regard to the revised Beveridge North West Precinct Structure Plan and all submissions received during public consultation."

Council thoroughly disagrees with Member for Northern Victoria Tim Quilty's statement in parliament that quarries don't impact communities.

Quarries are required to have buffer zones for a reason.

This quarry will require blasting, that is not a silent activity.

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Residents have been very vocal about their concerns around traffic congestion, vibrations, noise, dust, health issues, catchment and water table pollution and environmental impacts.

In parliament Minister Pulford said: “There’s nothing quite as exciting as moving into a new home.”

But what if your new home is only 500 metres from a quarry that is doing blasting? Or you didn’t know you’d have a quarry around the corner when you bought your property?

All the things that make a new home exciting, that bring communities together, can’t happen here if there’s a quarry. Roads can’t be built; open space can’t be built, and schools can’t be built if the quarry is operating at that site.

Council has twice rejected planning permits for the proposed quarry at 175 Northern Highway, Wallan.

With more than 121,000 people likely to call the corridor from Beveridge to Wallan home in the next 20 years, good planning is essential. The proposed quarry would sterilise land that would otherwise be developed to deliver essential infrastructure and services to this growing community.

The consensus of many residents was that they could not see any benefit to the community from this quarry. Neither Minister Pulford nor Mr Quilty acknowledged the community’s concerns in their comments to the Legislative Council.

Minister Pulford said everybody loves a level crossing removal project or a freeway upgrade. Why are the people of Beveridge and Wallan providing materials for other area’s level crossing removals and freeway upgrades?

Council agrees that we need quarries, but not this one. Why impact on current and future communities in Beveridge and Wallan?

Quotes attributable to Mitchell Shire Councillor Rob Eldridge

“Council will continue to advocate for our residents to ensure that as we grow, we are developing healthy, connected and sustainable communities.

“Council is not anti-quarry, just anti-quarry in the middle of a master planned community of more than 100,000 residents.”

“This quarry will be in existence for at least thirty years, dividing this community for generations. The quarry, and its buffers, will stifle development, prevent the construction of major roads, schools and sport fields, and ultimately bring little benefit to the local community.

“We’re working really closely with the community to ensure the people most affected by this quarry can have their voices heard.

Quotes attributable to Mitchell Shire Mayor Bill Chisholm

“A quarry in this location will be a disaster for our existing and future communities if it goes ahead.

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“As a local government, we are tasked to represent and support both current and future generations of residents who will live in our municipality; their concerns and interests regarding this proposed quarry deserve an appropriate level of respect and consideration.

“We’re doing things differently at Mitchell. We’re planning for quality developments that include open spaces, world class services and healthy, connected communities. A quarry in this location will destroy this and undermine the good planning outcomes we’re trying to achieve.

“We don’t want to become a dumping ground for quarries to service Victoria’s big build when there is more than enough supply to meet demand in existing and approved quarries in Melbourne’s north.

“You can have a quarry, or you can have housing; you cannot have both.

##ENDS##