

28 August 2023

To the hearing panel members

REFERENCE: Taupo District Council PC 38

Introduction

1. The J Swap group operate 10 hard rock quarries throughout the Waikato and Bay of Plenty, Tauhara Quarries Limited (TQL) being one of them;
2. Within my role is to act as a project manager to obtain all authorizations, RMA and otherwise, necessary to legally operate operations and put systems and measures in place to ensure compliance;
3. In the past the (TQL) has enjoyed a remote operating environment with little to risk of other development pressures impacting on operations;
4. With the growth of the district and associated plan changes to manage this, risk is present in a changing environment that the quarry interests may be impacted upon in the future;
5. Whilst supporting the growth in the District, TQL wishes to ensure that the growth is undertaken in a way which ensures that the TQL operation is afforded appropriate provisions to continue to operate without issue into the future. This is the purpose of our involvement in the Taupo District plan review process.

Discussion

6. Increasingly the operating environment for quarries is becoming harder with resource exhaustion, property constraints limiting resource access, increased product quality requirements and compliance costs, (resource management and compliance);
7. The long term national trend is that the number of quarry operations is decreasing. Taupo District also suffers the same fate where in 1985 seven quarries were present and now only two large operations in the District remain;
8. Currently 50 million tonnes of aggregate is consumed within New Zealand, with ***no substitute product for aggregate available for use as a construction material***. Aggregate has to come from a quarry;
9. Nationally each New Zealander uses 8-9 tonnes of aggregate per head of population per year. This consumption is used across public and private buildings (eg schools and houses), roads and other infrastructure (eg dams and concrete);
10. Increased population growth equals increased demand, with New Zealand's population due to grow up to 7.9 million people by 2068;
11. 50% of quarry products are used in roads, and it costs on average \$22,000 per lane kilometer of highway to construct;
12. The cost of product effectively doubles every 30km travelled to a construction site, leading to the need to have a quarry close to demand;

13. The further a quarry is located away from demand, increased emissions from fuel burn result. Heavy transport is the hardest to decarbonize and therefore likely to be one of the last modes to transition away from combustion engines;
14. If a quarry is shut, the demand for product is still present, resulting in product being imported from other districts and regions. This is currently occurring in the Auckland market where demand is being met from supply in the Waikato. This gap / trend is set to continue;
15. Other smaller Districts may face the same issue if existing quarry operations are not afforded the necessary provisions to operate now and into the future;

16. Within the current title boundaries, the TQL quarry has a multi-decadal resource remaining, estimated as 30-40 years based on current production/demand levels;
17. The TQL site supplies NZTA M4 basecourse, being the benchmark standard of product used for all public road construction in New Zealand;
18. The operation has previously supplied largely all of the aggregate for the Taupo Bypass;
19. The operation currently supplies 4x truck and trailer loads of aggregate along the Napier – Taupo Road to the Hawkes Bay, as a part of the cyclone relief and re built effort;
20. Within the Waikato and Bay of Plenty Regions, gabion erosion protection rock viewed in water table drains, is visible and widely used throughout the road network;
21. The quarry currently enjoys a low pressure setting, surrounded by plantation forestry and dairy farms, with good transport links. I am not aware of any complaints being received about the quarry operation;

22. I understand the only other large scale commercial operation within the Taupo District, being Taupo Scoria Limited (TSL);
23. This quarry also supplies M4 basecourse but anecdotally may(?) be reaching the extent of current resources inside of property boundaries;
24. The operation also supplies scoria to the Auckland market for drainage and decorative use;
25. TQL would be willing to engage and work with TSL in order to advance a mineral extraction zone plan change;

Current resource management authorizations

26. TQL operates under existing use right provisions as evidence by a certificate of compliance (CoC) issued by the Taupo District Council on 22nd June 1992. No expiry is present for the CoC;
27. TQL operates under a suite of Regional Consents for the discharge of stormwater to land and water, discharge of overburden to land, discharge to air, expiring on 30 June 2025. Replacement consents yet to be applied for;
28. A groundwater take consent expired on 30 June 2020 and is currently in the process of renewal

Conclusion

29. Whilst TQL has enjoyed the benefit of a remote operating environment in the past, it is anticipated and expected that with the growth in the District, the current setting of the District will likely change significantly;

30. For the benefits that the quarry brings to the local community, TQL seeks to ensure that the provisions of the Taupo District Plan continue to enable quarry to occur in a manner which ensures cohesion between different types of activities and their respective interests;
31. In my opinion the best way of achieving cohesion is through mineral extraction zoning provisions, and as such TQL has instructed Mr Whyte to advance those. I understand that such provision are best placed in a future process;
32. Therefore, with no certainty for TQL that a mineral extraction zone will result, we need to ensure that in the meantime and or into the future, that PC38 takes into account the needs of TQL;
33. As such under PC42 we are addressing Rural Zone matters which also need to accommodate quarrying;
34. I refer you to the submission of MR Whyte for specific planning detail of what TQL is seeking.

Yours faithfully



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