

Submission  
No 88

**INQUIRY INTO PLANNING SYSTEM AND THE IMPACTS  
OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND  
COMMUNITIES**

**Organisation:** Save Balickera Incorporated

**Date Received:** 3 November 2023

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Save Balickera Inc.  
Balickera House  
BALICKERA NSW 2324

*Please send correspondence by email*

3 November 2023

Ms Sue Higginson MLC  
Committee Chair  
Portfolio Committee No 7 – Planning & Environment

Submitted online

CC:

## **Inquiry into the planning system and the impacts of climate change on the environment and communities**

1. I write on behalf of Save Balickera Inc., an incorporated association that represents residents and other concerned members of the community who wish to protect our local area from inappropriate development, including the further expansion of quarrying. We thank you for initiating this important inquiry and providing the opportunity for submissions.
2. Our small rural community is currently facing three applications for quarries in close proximity within the Balickera area. These are all State Significant Developments. They are:
  - i) [Stone Ridge Quarry](#) in the Wallaroo State Forest, for which we are awaiting the response to the 138 objections lodged (read ours [here](#)),
  - ii) [Eagleton Quarry](#) EIS is currently on exhibition till Monday and for which we are currently preparing a submission;
  - iii) [Seaham Quarry](#) – Boral’s massive expansion plans for its existing quarry. This quarry was scheduled to wind up but an EIS to expand it is instead being prepared.
3. In response to the Committee’s terms of reference, we note that these developments are indeed proposed in flood and fire prone areas. The greater exposure to natural disasters was evidenced in the super storm events that devastated the area in 2015 and 2016, as well as there being regular bush fire and drought conditions. There can be little doubt these events are increasing in frequency which is consistent with predictions in relation to climate change.
4. The community consultation has been manifestly inadequate to date. The Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) prepared for these quarries include reports

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which have been prepared in a manner that do not take adequate account of changing climatic conditions or the cumulative impacts of multiple development approvals on already fragile flora and fauna and a long suffering community.

5. Should these quarry developments be approved this will involve massive clearing of forestry and the destruction of vast acreage of habitat (approximately 450 acres combined) including threatened ecological communities. Many threatened and endangered species have been identified as living in the forestry, including the iconic koala, and yet this makes no discernible difference to the quarry operators who seem to rely on the bio credit system to escape responsibility for destruction of the environment. Greater detail can be found in the many submissions objecting to each of these projects.
6. Unfortunately, as a small community group we are not resourced to obtain expert reports to rebut the material put together on behalf of the quarry companies. Furthermore, the malfunctioning website at the NSW Department of Planning makes lodging objections an extremely challenging exercise even for those of us with experience navigating technology, let alone those who are not accustomed to it.
7. Local Councils don't have the resources to effectively oppose these quarry operators and their massive plans and are likely to feel constrained from spending rate payer's money in endless litigation in the Land & Environment Court. In respect to State Significant Developments, Local Council's seem to have very limited power to block developments, amend or revoke existing approvals.
8. For example, Boral's existing Seaham Quarry was approved many years ago and has limited conditions so that it does not have to effectively monitor the impact of its operations on the local environment and community. Other quarry operators seem encouraged by this to apply for further developments in the same area, hoping that they too can benefit from this basically unregulated environment. The EIS for Eagleton Quarry, for example, seems to suggest its impacts are inconsequential in view of the existing Seaham Quarry rather than considering the cumulative impacts.
9. There must be a planning system that takes account of the big picture, including climate change, the cumulative impacts of multiple developments and the needs of the community in this context. This is a very brief submission on a very large subject but further details can be accessed through our website at "Save Balickera" and in our detailed submissions lodged objecting to the various quarries in question. We would welcome any opportunity to expand on our concerns if that would assist the Committee. In the meantime, we attach some photos of endangered species taken by local residents.

*Save Balickera Inc.*



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Brush tailed phascogale 25 March 2023 Photo credit: Anthony Crawford



A photo of a Koala taken on Italia Road on 12 September 2023. Photo credit: Til-Lea Valcombe



Black Cockatoo found stunned on the corner of the Pacific Highway and Italia Road on 29 November 2022. It was in the centre of the Highway when rescued by a resident who picked it up and contacted WIRES who collected it. Photo credit: Andrew Cusbert

Anna Kerr  
President, Save Balickera Inc