

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 19 December 2024 7:39 AM
To: Enquiries
Subject: Objection to sand quarry at Cooya Beach

Chief Executive Officer
Douglas Shire Council
PO Box 723
Mossman Qld 4873

Re: Council Application Number MCUI 2024_5682/1NQ Asphalt Pty Ltd., Impact Assessable Development Application For a Material Change of Use from Rural Zoning to Extractive Industry Zoning – Lot 1 on RP 893855

I am writing to formally object to the proposed development of Lot 1 on RP 893855 lodged by RPS Group on 16 October 2024. I have major concerns about the potential impacts if the DA is not refused. I became aware of an online Change.Org petition via Facebook outlining the 6 reasons below that the above development was detrimental to the Cooya community. I agree that these 6 points are valid objections.

1. The proposed development is inconsistent with the intent for the area. The area is sugar cane farming and cattle fattening. A **large scale sand quarry** is out of character with the surrounding area.
2. The proposed development **does not fit within the Extractive Industry Code**. It is not a "small scale operation" whether it be extractions of 30,000 tonnes, or 100,000 tonnes. It does not comply with the Strategic Framework 3.6.4 -Resource Extraction.
3. The sand quarry site will not be visually unobtrusive as required under the Strategic Framework. Everyone travelling along Bonnie Doon Road or the Captain Cook Highway will be able to see it. In their report RPS has **failed to comply with the requirement of a 10 metre wide densely vegetated buffer to all road frontages and to all perimeter boundaries**
(Acceptable outcome A06.2 of the Criteria for assessment – Extractive industry code).
4. A sand quarry **operating 6 days per week from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. hauling sand with 20 tonne trucks onto Bonnie Doon Road will create a traffic hazard**. There is insufficient road width for a truck turning out of or into the un-named road. This will create a dangerous situation as a lot of road users travel along Bonnie Doon Road at speeds up to 100 km/per hour.
5. **Bonnie Doon Road floods** every wet season and we are cut off at Cooya Beach. We cannot travel to Port Douglas or further south. This sand quarry will create further drainage and flooding problems in the area.
6. The proposed mining site adjoins a **wetland area of significant importance to the Eastern Kuku Yalanji People**. The vast mangrove system provides an abundance of food source for Traditional Owners, including muscles, periwinkles, crayfish, black jew fish, silver jew fish and swordfish as well as turtles and dugong. The wetlands contain spawning sites for various sea animals and significant beds of seagrass which is a primary food source for green sea turtles and dugong.

As of today (19th December), there are 560 signatures on the petition. According to the 2016 census, there were 546 people in Cooya, representing 141 families and 266 private dwellings. In the 2021 census, this number grew to 1,046 people, 305 families and 472 private dwellings. There has been significant

growth in Cooya since 2021. Accordingly, with the majority of Change.org petition signatures being local residents, I would submit there is an overwhelming community objection to this development. See the link below for the petition, including an update on the number of signatures.

[Petition · Stop Cooya Sand Quarry! - Australia · Change.org](#)

The Change.org petition was authored by Bernie Nagan, who lives adjacent to the proposed development. Bernie noted additional background to his 6 point objections above on a recent Facebook post where a Newsport article cited additional local community objections “potential environment issues that could be associated with building a sand quarry hard up against the mangroves in flood prone area (that the Walker family not only rely on as a source of food but income too). NQ Asphalt Pty Ltd wants to change the zoning from rural to extractive industry and build a sand quarry 50 metres from my family home where my wife and I are raising two little kids (2.5 year old toddler and a 1 year old that has respiratory issues) on Bonnie Doon Rd. The license they have applied for is for up to 100,000 tonnes of sand a year. 6 days a week. 7am-6pm. That's a truck every 40 minutes or so all year round. For at least the next 15 years or so. Add onto that the complete devaluation of our property.” The original RPS submission regarding the development makes a vague reference to this home and discounts the impact, citing a 50 metre regulatory exclusion zone. A distance of 50 metres is hardly going to provide protection against the sand quarry noise and dust disruption to his family.

My main objection to this development is the change of zoning request from rural to industrial. The proposal cites operations 6 days a week, 7am to 6pm including extraction of sand and the movement of sand by large trucks. To my knowledge, there has been no community consultation about this major change – except for the standard submission on the council website & the appearance of a sign at the development site just two weeks ago. The latter 2 actions are requirements of ANY development application. I would have expected some additional alert and/or consultation to the residents of Cooya since this proposed development presents a material change to our environment and day to day lifestyle.

I have lived in Cooya Beach for 16 years and in the Douglas Shire for 20 years. I have paid rates, am currently building a new home in Cooya Beach and have made a significant financial investment in this community over the years, including as the business owner of Port Douglas Weddings. Like many of my friends & family living here, we have made Cooya our home in large part because this is primarily a quiet, rural area. Of course, there are trucks involved in the cane harvesting process, however this is only for a few months each year. To have the noise from sand mining as well as trucks 6 days a week, 7am to 6pm year round so close to our homes is not what the residents of Cooya signed up for when we moved to the area.

In addition, if this development goes ahead, I (and others) are concerned that this sets a very dangerous precedent – not just for the additional rezoning of rural to industrial land, but the slippery slope of additional sand mines. This region relies heavily on tourism and we have the honour of having the only location on the planet that boasts 2 adjacent World Heritage sites: The Daintree Rainforest and the Great Barrier Reef. The last thing we need is a sand quarry that could jeopardise the fragile eco systems we enjoy. There is precedent for damage from sand quarries in Australia. See below for the negative environmental impacts to Fraser Island from sand mining:

- **Irreversible changes:** The mining process permanently changed the island's topography.
- **Soil damage:** Sand mining damaged the island's soils, making it difficult for the soil to form again.
- **Plant community disruption:** Sand mining disrupted the island's plant communities, and it will take a long time for the forests to re-establish.
- **Foredune exposure:** Mining exposed the foredunes, making them vulnerable to wind erosion.

- **Salt spray:** Mining removed the foredunes' protective buffer, exposing more than twice the mined area to salt spray.
- **Lack of understory plants:** The former Dillingham mine site lacks small understory plants, which is unusual for forested areas on Fraser Island.

See the table below for the negative impacts that pose an unacceptable risk to the residents of Cooya and the broader Douglas Shire from this proposed sand quarry.

| Negative Impacts | Description |
|---|--|
| Loss of biodiversity | Sand mining can directly impact ecosystems and lead to pollution, harming biodiversity. Ours is a fragile ecosystem with wetlands & a beach nearby. |
| Erosion | Sand mining can lead to erosion, threatening livelihoods and the tourism industry which are important to our community. |
| Salination of aquifers | Sand mining can lead to the salination of aquifers and impact surrounding rural properties. |
| Loss of protection from storm surges | Sand mining can reduce protection from storm surges. Bonnie Doon Rd regularly floods every wet season. A sand quarry could exacerbate flooding. |
| Air and noise pollution | Quarries can cause air and noise pollution, severely affecting the residents of Cooya Beach, who live just 1 kilometre from the site. |
| Disruption of natural water sources | Quarries can disrupt natural streams and springs, affecting the nearby beach & wetlands. |
| Health risks | Quarry dust can lead to respiratory issues such as bronchitis, asthma, and silicosis. Workers in the quarrying industry and nearby communities are at risk. The neighbouring property has a child with respiratory issues. |
| Carbon footprint | The carbon footprint of extracting silica sand varies depending on the quality of the sand. |
| Impact on property values & quality of life | Local residents are concerned about property values and the general effect on their quality of life with proposed operations 6 days a week for 10 years. |

I note that the Owner(s) of the development property are listed in the original submission as: Emily Ann Quaid, Jeremiah Daniel Quaid, Violet Mary Scmazzon, Glenda Margaret Clifford (Under Instrument 722482966). I assume there is a family connection to the mayor, Lisa Scmazzon? All the more reason there should have been some (if not additional) transparency regarding this submission through community consultation.

The bottom line is that this development presents an unacceptable risk to the residents of Cooya and the wider Douglas Shire. I look forward to your reply regarding the outcome of this Development Application and sincerely hope for a refusal by the council in order to protect the broader interests of our community.

Details of Submitter/s Name: [REDACTED]

Residential Address: [REDACTED] Cooya Beach QLD 4873

Business Address: [REDACTED]

