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Department of Planning & Infrastructure
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Sent via email: lowerhunter@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

Submission
Lower Hunter Strategic Assessment

As a landholder and owner of strategic assets in the Lower Hunter Region, Boral has undertaken a review of the documents placed on Public Exhibition as part of the Lower Hunter Strategic Assessment (LHSA).

Boral operates a number of sites in the Lower Hunter Region. The most relevant to the LHSA are our Seaham hard rock and Stockton sand quarries (See *Figure 1*)



Source: Google Earth 2013

Figure 1: Boral Quarries in the Lower Hunter Region

Boral supports the approach of the LHSA, which seeks to identify Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) across the Lower Hunter Region, as opposed to individual assessments conducted on a project-by-project basis. It is hoped that the LHSA will assist in a more streamlined approvals process for projects when assessing MNES under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

However, in Boral's experience, broad brush regional based assessments can have unintended consequences due to a reliance on existing regional mapping and aerial photography that has not been verified on the ground. This has been the case in Victoria at our Donnybrook and Deer Park sites where large areas of land have been inappropriately classified, and in one case, over an approved quarry area.

There is also a need to recognise the valuable extractive resources within the region that supply the fundamental ingredients (sand and aggregates) for the construction and building industries. Without these resources being close to market, the Lower Hunter Regional Sustainability Plan will not be able to economically '*provide a diverse range of housing to meet the needs of a growing and changing regional population*¹'.

To facilitate an accurate and relevant LHSA, particularly in regard to mapping, Boral recommends that:

- regionally significant extractive resources are recognised on maps within the LHSA;
- if extractive resources are impacted by or adjoin a MNES, the land owner/s should be contacted and given the opportunity to supply more accurate/relevant data; and
- if there is a dispute in the validity/accuracy of mapping in the Draft LHSA, then there should be a process to resolve to use the best available data at the time before the LHSA is finalised.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Terms of Reference for the LHSA. We would welcome the opportunity to supply data into the successive stages of the assessment.

Yours sincerely



Rod Wallace

Project Manager – NSW/ACT Planning & Development

¹ EPBC S146 Agreement for Lower Hunter Region - Attachment B: Lower Hunter Regional Sustainability Plan - Requirements