

Submission

SERA Pilot Project

6 July 2020

www.engage.vic.gov.au/sera-pilot-project

(NB: Any bold type is mine.)

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

I refer to the article by Alesha Capone, News, Star Weekly, Wednesday, 24 June 2020, page 12 and I am writing about the SERA Pilot Project as far as it affects Wyndham Council.

I have read the Summary Report, Strategic Extractive Resource Areas Pilot Project, from the Victorian State Government and the SERA Pilot Project, Wyndham Information Sheet.

My impression is that the presentation is a general statement of the needs for emerging extractive resource areas for sand, rock and gravel for population growth to exceed 10 million people by 2050, locations, buffer regions and some general concerns about effects on roads, housing and environment.

"The long-term supply of strategic extractive resources needs to be secured today, in areas close to where they will be used to **keep down transportation and construction costs.** (p1)

The SERA pilot project is a partnership between the **Victorian Government, Wyndham City Council** and South Gippsland Shire Council. (p1)

Any further SERA pilot project areas will be determined in **consultation with local councils, industry and communities** and appropriately assessed on a case-by case basis." (p1)

"The SERA pilot project was initiated by the Victorian Government, with the oversight of the Extractives Strategy Taskforce to establish a new approach to securing extractive resources and providing:

- **Certainty** for quarry operators to know that current and potential future operations will not be impacted by housing or other incompatible land uses.
- **Certainty for local community to know that their lives will not be impacted by quarry operations near their homes.**
- **Certainty** for the broader Victorian community and business to know that the construction materials required to build the infrastructure the state **needs will be safeguarded and affordable.**" (p3)
- "From 2015 to 2050, Wyndham is forecast to demand the second highest amount of hard rock in Victoria." (p4)

There are two half pages of pictures of houses and another two with railway lines. Bureaucrats certainly like to waste money and paper for psychological impressions!

While the goals are stated, there is nothing stated about how they will be tested and evaluated, who will carry out such and to whom reported.

This lack of detail echoes the gross lack of thorough planning and locating suitable sites for contaminated soil associated with the tunnelling in Melbourne. Perhaps the citizens of Victoria don't mind paying some extra few dollars for the government's ineptitude and blunder!

These are my concerns.

1. **Blasting:**

The SERA planning provision application (proposed): Wyndham map, p 8, shows "The State Resource Overlay around existing quarries includes required buffer distances (500 meters)"

How far is 500 m? The distance from the roundabout at the intersection of Tarneit and Heaths Roads to the Pacific Werribee Shopping Centre is close to 1 km. So 500 m is half that and I can walk it easily in about 5 minutes. That is the distance from the outside perimeter of the site and the work area where blasting occurs as I understand it.

The Star Weekly identifies roads enclosing the Pilot Project. The map referred to above does not identify roads and is very hazy. It seems that real estate is close to that perimeter line. Hence I will consider that real estate is close to the buffer zone distance.

When considering blasting rock I consider effects from

- **Bursts of sound (acoustic energy):**

Hence I expect that the intensity and effects be identified, tested, reported to the community through Council in the worst case scenario with error considerations stated.

Given the greatest blast, what is the minimum distance from the blast site will people and animals need to be during the night so that no detected effects are experienced especially during sleep?

Guideline: Collect data over several months when there is least traffic in the streets closest to the blasting site. Always be conservative. Whatever distance that is found, then double it in practice.

- **Dust generated:**

This is a serious health issue both for humans, animals and contaminations of flora and food production. Can dust particles carry microscopic bacteria and/or viruses?

- **Shock waves in the ground:**

This refers to energy that goes through rocks and other matter and shakes what is below ground.

This energy can travel quickly and far. As an image consider an earthquake.

This energy wave effect can affect the stumps/slabs of houses and over time cause cracking of walls both exterior and interior. Rocks, concrete, mortar between bricks are brittle materials. Cracks can appear in time.

Reports from residents close to works done on the Western Ring Road identified cracking in walls.

Was any remedial action taken to fix the problems taken by relevant organisations?

"Blasting at the former [Lilydale Quarry](#)

Council has also requested documentation in relation to Bayport's management and investigation of complaints received.

Any purported damages as a result of the works occurring at the Lilydale Quarry site are ultimately a civil matter between the individual and the site owners.”

It is obvious to me that at the end of the day the State Government, other authoritative bodies will walk away from any responsibility and accountability as is currently self-evident. Look at the fracas with the tunnelling and disposal of soils. The law will be developed accordingly. The responsibility will be put on the site managers which are well oiled financially and can challenge any complaints by protracting the case(s) indefinitely. VCAT can only support the law!

As reported on TV residents complained about dust and cracking of walls.

In order to evaluate the possible damage to houses' stumps/slabs, **seismograms** need to be taken over a wide area at ever increasing distances beyond the buffer distance of each site until there is no recording of any disturbances on houses' foundations. The worst case scenario needs to be addressed. To allow for unforeseen events, double it – innocent people's biggest investment is impacted. Ordinary people do not have the legal resources/recourses to take on big companies – notwithstanding banal suggestions by legal agencies.

All this data is to be published and open to vigorous scrutiny/objection where appropriate. Who will win the appeal case? Will ordinary people be financial enough to mount a civil matter case? And then only

- **What of the monstrous crater(s)?**

What plans are in place to use this scarred landscape for the benefit/wealth of the community?

Aquaculture? Agriculture? Huge leisure/entertainment space? Islands of real estate surrounded by waterways (another Venice)? A water runway for small planes to land? Will it be managed by indigenous people? Huge fauna and flora area peppered with forests celebrating different cultures? ...

2. **Effect on roads**

As identified by Alesha Capone “quarry operators have identified ‘increasing road congestion as the key transport- related issue impacting their operation’.

“Operators also identified residential estates as ‘encroaching on buffers and transport routes’, especially during blasting and night time operating curfews as operating challenges”.

“Cr Shaw said this would potentially mean quarry trucks on Wyndham’s roads, as they are used to transport materials to construction sites across the state.

However, Cr Shaw said the state government has not yet committed to funding the duplication of Ballan Road, which would be needed if more trucks were to start travelling on it. Cr Shaw also said the proposed SERA overlay buffer of 500 metres between quarrying operations and sensitive land uses, such as residential, might not be large enough.”

However, what is not mentioned is that quarry trucks are very heavy and their tyres will rip up the bitumen of the current roads. How many resurfacings will be required over the decades and at what cost? Given that we are looking to beyond 2050 what about considering dedicated roads/lanes with strong enough substrate able to handle such trucks? Or I suppose the government will fund elevated lanes to address this oversight at a few dollars from the citizens!

I consider the SERA Project as essential. Currently it is a vague, seriously incomplete draft because there are no relevant accompanying details to underpin the various aspirations.

Yours sincerely