



Media Release

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The NSW Government has required significant environmental offsets before approving an extension to the Gerroa Sand Quarry, including the protection of 56 hectares of high conservation land.

Planning Minister Frank Sartor said the community had raised some legitimate environmental issues in relation to the proposal and he had listened to the public feedback.

61 strict conditions of approval include 24 hectares of native vegetation to be planted, to offset the 3.6 hectares which will be cleared.

The approval allows Cleary Bros to continue operating the quarry for 15 years, producing up to 80 000 tonnes of sand per year for the Illawarra construction industry.

"We recognise that this is a sensitive part of NSW coast and have acted on the community views submitted to the department during public consultation." Mr Sartor said.

"The sand resource is important to the Illawarra regional economy but we also want to protect the local environment for the next generation."

In recognition of the strong local interest in the proposal, the Department of Planning commissioned an independent expert to further assess potential impact on flora and fauna.

The Department of Planning, the Department of Environment and Climate Change and the independent expert found that the proposed offset measures would more than compensate for the native vegetation disturbed on this site.

The Government's conditions of approval include:

- Independent environmental audits must be commissioned regularly.
- A community consultative committee must be established.
- Cleary Bros must enter into a voluntary planning agreement for the permanent protection of the proposed conservation area.
- The proposed compensatory planting must be carried out as soon as possible.
- The quarry must be fully rehabilitated after operations cease.
- Strict air noise criteria and;
- A detailed environmental management strategy, soil and water management plans and landscape and rehabilitation management plan must be prepared for the project.

Member for Kiama Matt Brown welcomed the approval, saying it had been thoroughly assessed and it was a balanced decision.

"It is important to protect the local environment while also supporting the jobs and growth for the regional economy." Mr Brown Said.

The extension is a modified version of an earlier proposal which was approved by the Land and Environment Court in 1990, but it has significantly reduced the amount of native vegetation to be cleared.

The proposal was publicly exhibited for six weeks in late 2006. The Minister is automatically the approval authority for the project because it meets certain criteria as a coastal development proposal under the Major Project laws.