

# Quarry step re-ignites local dust-up with council

**Lachlan Heywood**

CITY HALL REPORTER

DUST-clouded Mount Coot-tha residents will be stuck with a quarry on their doorstep for 15 more years, despite Brisbane City Council's decision yesterday to buy a new quarry near Caboolture.

Extraction at Mt Coot-tha will be reduced from 750,000 to 400,000 tonnes when the new quarry comes on line in January; but residents are angry that its "estimated remaining economic life" will be extended from 15 to 30 years as a consequence.

Mt Coot-tha Quarry Residents Action Group president John Higgins said council's purchase of the privately owned Bracalba Quarry for \$23 million meant there was no reason to keep Mt Coot-tha open.

"If they can access rock up there, what they should be doing is closing the Mt Coot-tha Quarry completely because it is in the middle of town, in an area that is increasing in population," he said.

Dust from the quarry has been blamed for breathing and respiratory problems such as asthma, as well as failure of electronic equipment in the area.

Mt Coot-tha has been the main source of rock used in maintenance and surfacing of Brisbane's roads since the 1930s, but complaints from local residents rose sharply about two years ago when the council increased crushing operations to meet needs for the Inner City Bypass.

Earlier this year, residents sought annual compensation of \$6400 a household from council to help cover costs associated with dust removal and loss of amenity. But the council rejected the compensation bid after obtaining legal advice.

Lord Mayor Jim Soorley said it would be irresponsible of council to close Mt Coot-tha given the looming shortage of sand, gravel and rock to meet the growing needs of southeast Queensland.

"At some stage in the future history of the city, the quarry will be closed; but I don't think it is going to be in my lifetime," he said.



JUDY Magub ... 'diabolical' overproduction scaled back.

Cr Soorley said residents should welcome council's decision to scale back existing operations.

"The decision to buy the new quarry means that overnight there will be one-third less operation out of that quarry," he said.

"If I was a local resident, I would be out lighting candles to this administration for the wonderful decision we made."

The decision to buy the Bracalba Quarry was approved at a special council meeting yesterday, although the Liberal Opposition voted against the purchase. It claimed council's involvement in the commercial quarry business would distort the market.

Liberal councillor for Toowong Judy Magub said the council's proposed reduction in Mt Coot-tha quarry operations was simply a return to pre-bypass levels.

"They (the council) went into over-production mode, which was diabolical, and they are just bringing it back to what it was," she said.

Cr Magub said operations at the quarry had been scheduled to end in 1998; but in 1986 this had been extended to 2015.

She said residents would now have to wait until at least 2033.

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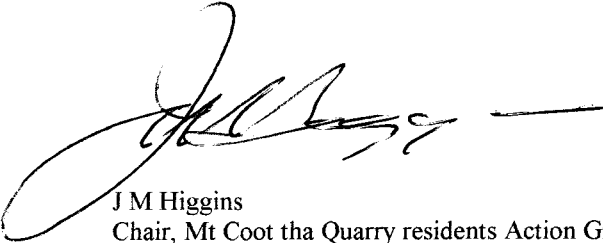
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Dear editor,

Re CM 3/7/03 “ Mt Coot tha quarry dust settles “ – Nothing could be further from the truth. The residents forced the BCC to undertake a dust emission study, not a health study. The results of this study are flawed as the readings of emissions were taken over 9 days which included several wet days ( minimal dust ), Saturdays and days of very little wind.

The study did not take into account the amount of truck traffic ( up to 200 trucks a day ) from the quarry or the dirt deposited on residences in the area.

It is a disgrace that a City still has a quarry so close to the CBD and that Cr Campbell can quote flawed reports to justify such an operation.



J M Higgins  
Chair, Mt Coot tha Quarry residents Action Group

Dear Editor

In the article (Dust-up Settles 3/7/03) Cr John Campbell has twisted the truth to claim that Council will "halve the annual production" at Mt Coot-tha Quarry.

The 410,000 tonnes was the production level before the quarry went in to overproduction to provide material for the Inner City Bypass. During that time the quarry operated 7 days a week and to 9pm on 6 evenings a week. This resulted in the formation of the resident group, fed up with the impact. It was absolute disregard for the local residents. Returning to its legal operating hours is hardly reason to announce "halving the operation"

The life of the quarry has been extended from 15 to 30 years without any consultation with local people. The so called "health" study was a long awaited dust recording exercise, undertaken on just 9 days of the year, one of which was raining!

When I recently asked to see all the Council files for the Mt Coot-tha quarry, I expected a truck load as the Council has operated this facility since 1920's. Instead I was informed the files were all "lost". After I perservered five "new" files were quickly created which contain hardly any information and certainly not the historic records of the quarry operation.

The dust-up has not settled yet, Cr Campbell

Cr Judy Magub  
Councillor for Toowong

## Quarry dust-up continues

I REFER to the article headed "Mt Coot-tha quarry dust settles" (C-M, July 3). Nothing could be further from the truth.

Residents forced Brisbane City Council to undertake a dust emission study, not a "health study". The results are flawed because the readings were taken over nine days, which included several wet days (minimal dust), Saturdays and days of very little wind.

The study did not take into account traffic from the quarry (up to 200 trucks a day) or the dirt deposited on residences in the area.

It is a disgrace that we still have a quarry so close to the CBD. — J. M. Higgins, chairman, Residents Action Group, Toowong.

July 3

■ CR John Campbell has twisted the truth to claim that the council will "halve the annual production" at Mt Coot-tha Quarry.

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Returning to its legal operating hours is hardly reason to announce "halving the operation". The life of the quarry has been extended from 15 to 30 years without any consultation with local people.— Cr Judy Magub, Toowong.

July 3