



Op Ed

### **Having your cake...**

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Reading the headlines can be confusing. On one hand they shout jubilation about a much needed new road or hospital, and on the next page the headline outlines community objections to a quarry application.

People may not want a quarry in their neighborhood but they do want all the things a quarry provides for them. Quarries take a solid natural formation, turn it into aggregates – the process people don't like – and those raw materials are turned into a new solid structure – the part people do like and need.

Almost every man-made solid structure started its life as solid rock. To turn that rock into the things our society needs to function we need quarries. From motorways, airports, drainage systems to major buildings, housing and schools – they are all based on materials obtained from quarries.

Of course quarries turn a beautiful landscape into a rock face, and as a first reaction communities don't want that. But wait a few years and that quarry has an obligation to return the worksite back into an environmentally pleasing place. Deciding on whether to object to a quarry should take more consideration than a first up naturally negative response.

The consent battles to extend a quarry or to open a new one can take many years and cost many millions of dollars as the industry fights to meet every requirement and work through every objection.

Ensuring a reasonably even distribution of quarries throughout the country is vital. When quarries are not situated close to the end project the cost of the raw materials may increase dramatically. Locally sourced aggregate is the most cost-effective for while aggregates are low value relative to weight, increasing the distance over which they are transported from quarry to construction site adds significantly to costs.

Trucking aggregates over long distances also adds considerably to the country's carbon footprint and creates unnecessary traffic issues.

Quarries exist because society creates a demand for raw materials. Quarries fight for the right to supply because society doesn't like to see how those raw materials are acquired.

**James Boyce, President, Aggregate and Quarry Association of NZ**