

SUBMISSION ON KAIPARA SUB-REGIONAL DRAFT SPATIAL PLAN

July 2020

Introduction

The Aggregate and Quarry Association (AQA) is the industry body representing construction material companies which produce an estimated 45 million tonnes of aggregate and quarried materials consumed in New Zealand each year.

Funded by its members, the AQA has a mandate to increase understanding of the need for aggregates to New Zealanders, improve our industry and users' technical knowledge of aggregates, and assist in developing a highly skilled workforce within a safe and sustainable work environment.

Background

Aggregate is a significant resource for the district, regional and national economies. A sustainable supply of aggregate is essential for continued development to enable people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural well-being. Aggregate is not only required to provide for building, construction and roading projects associated with growth, but also to maintain and redevelop existing infrastructure.

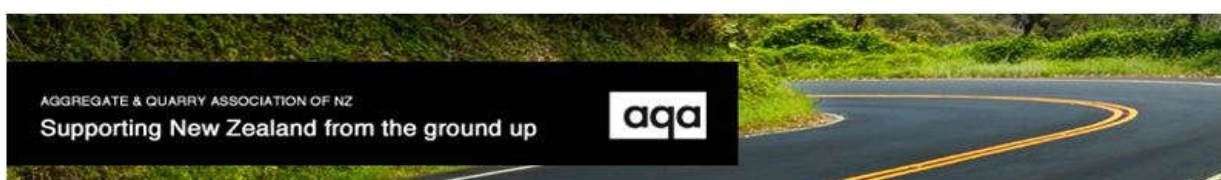
It is therefore vital that local aggregate resources throughout the country are identified, understood and effectively managed. Quarrying is a high value and temporary land use, with site restoration a critical element to ensure that land is available for future generations. In many cases, site restoration can result in the delivery of valuable new habitats, contributing towards national biodiversity targets and wider 'net gain' ambitions.

We make the following submission in relation to the Draft Spatial Plan for the Kaipara Sub-Region.

Future Direction

Rural land use

We note that you reference primary production as being "based around Agriculture, Horticulture and Forestry". This definition of "primary production" is



inconsistent with the National Planning Standards introduced by the Government and gazetted in April 2019.

Quarrying is a primary production activity under the National Planning Standards definition of primary production and therefore is a highly productive use of land.

In order to retain consistent definitions across planning documents, and avoid confusion and potential conflict, the 2019 National Planning Standards definition of primary production should be used, with quarrying included.

In the case of quarrying, the value of preserving land for primary production is not difficult to quantify by council. Unlike agriculture or other forms of primary production, a comparison of land-use outcomes in financial terms for quarrying will favour primary production activities over other land uses.

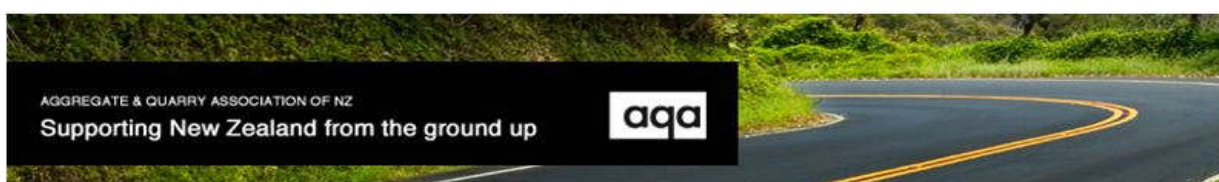
Because aggregate is a site-specific resource, it can be located within areas identified within the Spatial Plan as having important natural, ecological or landscape values or the like (e.g. indigenous vegetation, ridgelines, mountains, coastal areas, and waterways). Such aggregates may not be easily accessible outside of these areas. For example, easily accessible aggregate is often located in areas of uplifted or exposed rock such as within ridgelines or mountains, in coastal areas, or nearby or within waterways. Accordingly, any relevant policy framework needs to recognise that aggregate extraction and processing activities may need to occur in such areas if there are no suitable and economically feasible alternative sites available.

Social and cultural context

The Kaipara Region needs a secure supply of high-quality aggregate materials to meet projected growth in the wider region, including Northland and Auckland. With Kaipara alone to increase in population by 7% over the 20 years to 2043, over 500 additional homes will be needed, with each requiring an average of 250 tonnes of aggregate (125,000 tonnes overall). In addition, significant quantities of aggregate will be required for infrastructure growth and maintenance, not only in Kaipara but to support the adjoining growth areas of Northland and Auckland.

Resilient communities

In order to build resilience into infrastructure, the economy and communities, the Council needs to confirm the available sources of aggregate and sand throughout the region, including aggregate quality, accessibility, and proximity to markets so that those sources identified as critical for the region's future growth, are protected and appropriate provision is made for their development to meet future demand for aggregates.



We are happy to assist the Council in this work as we consider it imperative that Council protect key resource areas and enable their development, in order to both protect existing quarries from encroachment of non-compatible land uses such as housing, reduce reverse sensitivity potential, and to enable the expansion of these resources and development of new greenfield resources.

Planning needs to be enabling so that resource consents are quicker to obtain and less costly. Even where appropriate planning zones and controls exist, the time and cost for obtaining consents to a quarry can be significant. In the event of a favourable decision, it is often more than 3 to 5 years from commencement of the consenting process before many quarries will ever sell their first tonne of aggregate. This timeframe does not always allow for the industry to respond quickly to demands placed on it by large infrastructure projects and building growth, meaning that aggregates are often sourced from existing quarries, further away at significant cost.

Economic context

Quarry materials are not universally available and can only be sourced from where they are located; without planning to provide for adequate access to resources at workable locations, there is the real risk of losing access to such proximate resources, greatly increasing the costs of building and infrastructure development and maintenance.

Currently, the cost of a tonne of aggregate doubles when it has to travel 30 kilometres from a quarry, with additional costs for each extra kilometre thereafter. By ensuring quarries are close to their markets, transport costs, transport congestion and carbon emissions are significantly reduced.

We support the Council's holistic approach to development and management of resources and encourage Council to consider a move towards higher value industries and economic diversification. It is our view that quarrying should be considered in such an economy.

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