



20 February 2017

Media Release

Rock needs to roll – election year challenge

The quarrying industry says the cost of the crushed rock and stone that forms the basis of every New Zealand building and road will rise significantly without major law and regulatory changes.

Brian Roche, who chairs the Aggregate and Quarrying Association, AQA, has laid out an election year challenge to politicians of all parties.

“Unless we get some real recognition of our industry’s needs to continue extracting rock and stone within or close to urban centres, the cost of every Kiwi home, building, road and footpath is going to rise significantly in coming years.

Mr Roche says the AQA wants to talk to any politician who is prepared to listen to industry concerns that New Zealanders will increasingly face major cost increases if quarries continue to be pushed further away from urban centres.

“For years now, we’ve faced what we call the sterilisation of resources. Councils and courts act on community concerns and shut down quarries or make it difficult to open them anywhere near where anyone lives.”

“Auckland is a case in point. A high percentage of the aggregate for Auckland is already trucked in from Northland and the Waikato where I live. Having to import this material adds to cost per truckload with this generally doubling for the first 30km and further increases for every kilometre material is carted from a quarry. These costs feed into every home, building and road.

“The trucks also add to traffic and congestion. It’s not because there isn’t any rock in Auckland; it’s that authorities make it difficult to continue extracting material except in pockets like the Bombay Hills area.”

Mr Roche says even some of the quarries still operating in Auckland region could face challenges given the pressure for housing and Auckland City Council’s push to extend the current urban boundaries into rural areas.

Some councils are also implementing new 10 year district plans which uphold a controversial Supreme Court decision which maintains that no economic activity of any kind can take place in areas of outstanding natural landscape.

“We could see such potentially perverse impacts as quarries no longer being able to extract river shingle in flood zones which sit in areas of outstanding natural landscape,” said Mr Roche.

“What quarries want to discover is whether there is a political party or politician out there who is prepared to review planning laws with a view to better accepting quarries in urban and urban fringe environments.”

Mr Roche says while quarries can create some noise and dust issues, these can be greatly reduced by good planning rules, shelter belts, hours of operation restrictions, good site management to minimise any effects outside quarry boundaries and improving industry approaches to engaging with neighbours and communities.

“Our industry accepts it’s not perfect but what we do allows every New Zealand home and workplace to function, as well as providing the materials for the roads that get us there. We are willing to work with communities and show them what we do. It might also help if people saw end of life quarries as great public amenities like Mt Smart Stadium, The Sculpture Park (Waitakaruru Arboretum) near Hamilton, the Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust (Christchurch) and the Whangarei Quarry Gardens (*Photos attached*). Many other quarries have returned used land to agricultural land or created a lake/water park.

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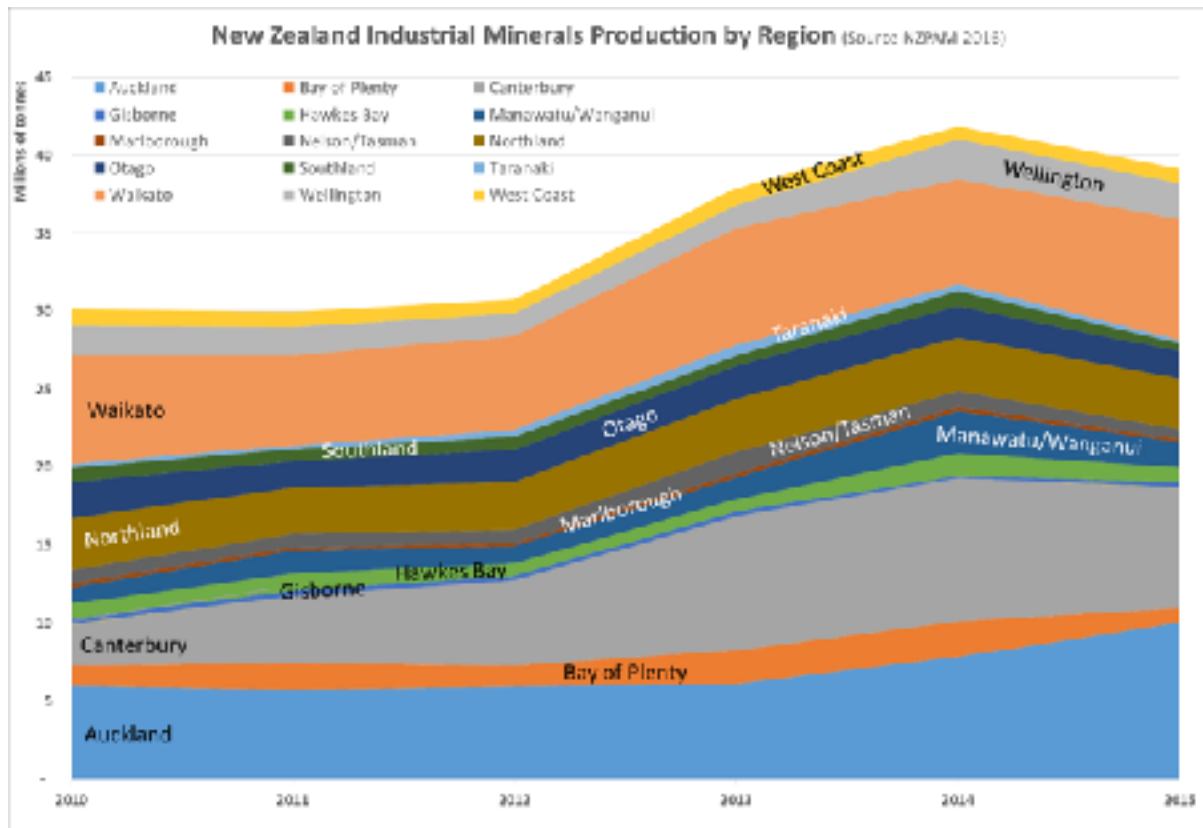
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No stonewall here – the Aggregate facts

- New Zealand sources its aggregate from land based quarries or from river gravels
- Currently we use around 40 million tonnes of assorted aggregates every year
- That’s the yearly equivalent of a big truckload (around 8.5 tonnes) for each person
- About 10m tonnes goes into buildings; most of the rest goes into roads and farms
- Auckland is still the biggest consumer but much of the region’s aggregate has to be trucked in from Waikato and Northland
- Post-quake Canterbury now has aggregate production exceeding Waikato’s

Provided photos caption: Former quarries can become public amenities like the Whangarei Quarry Gardens. (Photo supplied)

Some regional graphs follow as provided by NZ Petroleum and Minerals, the Crown entity managing mineral resources. NB. The figures are for production volumes as supplied to NZPAM.



Region	Production in Tonnes					
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Auckland	5,981,017	5,765,428	5,934,088	6,131,664	7,843,339	10,028,466
Bay of Plenty	1,294,277	1,654,999	1,320,949	2,113,691	2,282,800	912,336
Canterbury	2,639,559	4,314,238	5,478,217	8,612,656	9,167,870	7,759,659
Chatham Islands	19,945	10,726	7,297	4,601		18,628
Gisborne	330,970	358,710	278,652	316,307	147,071	351,334
Hawkes Bay	972,463	1,088,390	791,607	753,309	1,417,058	908,961
Manawatu/Wanganui	1,031,302	1,440,287	1,135,134	1,406,419	2,718,833	1,635,564
Marlborough	246,740	234,341	189,910	251,160	298,736	188,916
Nelson/Tasman	873,495	859,069	858,566	1,371,866	984,732	617,996
Northland	3,302,785	2,976,122	3,050,207	3,415,149	3,462,352	3,264,450
Otago	2,349,989	1,653,774	2,080,946	2,106,971	2,005,287	1,742,641
Southland	899,974	782,151	854,447	642,409	954,635	546,702
Taranaki	254,070	278,805	425,003	699,892	440,269	216,073
Waikato	6,945,252	5,707,315	6,006,284	7,509,062	6,736,280	7,710,598
Wellington	1,935,528	1,852,254	1,430,776	1,473,914	2,526,404	2,320,887
West Coast	1,053,754	991,857	894,697	1,101,223	863,409	925,371
Total	30,131,120	29,968,466	30,736,780	37,910,293	41,849,075	39,148,582

Production by region over last five years (Figures as supplied to NZ Petroleum and Minerals)