

UNDER THE

Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)

IN THE MATTER

hearings on submission concerning the proposed
One Plan notified by the Manawatu-Wanganui
Regional Council

HEARING DATE

4 July 2008

**Statement of Evidence of Cobus van Vuuren on Behalf of
Higgins Group (Submitter 153)**

Introduction

1. My name is Cobus van Vuuren and I am [state position at Higgins, any qualifications etc]
2. Higgins Group (Higgins) is most interested in the Beds of Rivers and Lakes hearing topic, which is to be the last topic to be heard in the hearing schedule. Higgins has submitted on other hearing topics, including land, infrastructure energy and waste, air, water quality and water allocation and groundwater. Higgins will review each Planning Officer's Report on these hearing topics as the reports become available and will attend these hearings as appropriate.
3. I am mindful of the fact that the Overall Plan hearing will likely set the tone for the rest of the One Plan hearing process. With that in mind, I felt it necessary to introduce Higgins organisation to the Commissioners, describe the role of Higgins within the region and provide an overall comment on the Proposed One Plan.

Higgins Group

4. Higgins developed from a civil contracting company established in Palmerston North in the 1950s. The Group remains a family owned and run business that covers much of the North Island of New Zealand employing around 700 staff, with the majority based in the manawatu-Wanganui Region.

5. Higgins core business activity is civil construction, including earthworks, subdivisions, drainlaying, pavement construction, spray sealing and asphalt paving.
6. The company has built up a reputation for consistently producing high quality standards in civil engineering and maintenance work. This has been for a wide range of clients including Transit New Zealand, Local and Central Government, Defence, and Private Interests, both in New Zealand and overseas.
7. Supporting the construction activities are the manufacturing divisions of Higgins Concrete, Higgins Aggregates, Belspray, IANZ Laboratories, Maverick Services and Approach Signs. These Group companies are all involved in supply of materials and services to the construction industry.

Higgins Group and the Proposed One Plan

8. In relation to the Proposed One Plan, Higgins has the following direct interests:
 - (a) Higgins is very active in the Manawatu-Wanganui region, each year undertaking an extensive programme of works with associated interaction with natural and physical resources. Higgins seeks to ensure that the Proposed One Plan provides for that interaction in a practical and pragmatic way.
 - (b) Higgins core activities involve the provision, maintenance and upgrading of the region's infrastructure. This is a regionally significant activity that must be provided for and enabled in the Proposed One Plan.
 - (c) Higgins is committed to sustainable resource management and sound environmental practice and seeks to ensure that the Proposed One Plan sufficiently facilitates that company aim.
9. The Proposed One Plan will direct Higgins activities for the next 10 years. Higgins activities are regionally significant, particularly in terms of essential infrastructure provision, and the One Plan must provide for and enable Higgins activities.
10. I consider that overall the Proposed One Plan is essentially a constructive effort to simplify and streamline the management of the region's resources and the consenting process for activities. Higgins generally supports that overall intent.

11. However, for Higgins core business activities, that streamlining process has resulted in the loss of some enabling provisions of the operative plans, the carry over of some poor or lacking provisions of the operative plans, and the introduction of new policies and methods that are of concern. The details of these concerns have been outlined in Higgins submission and will be considered at each relevant hearing.

12. As an overview, some specific concerns are:

- (a) Higgins is concerned that Horizons appear in practice to predominantly favour gravel extraction that relates directly to Council-owned assets and initiatives. This appears to be at the expense of private initiatives which also provide for the wider community.
- (b) Proposed Policy 6-32 sets allocation limits only, rather than seeking to enable and facilitate appropriate gravel extraction. There are no enabling objectives, policies, methods or rules in the Proposed One Plan specific to large-scale gravel extraction. This is likely to be an issue for Horizons also if there is a move towards global consent for gravel extraction, with the consent holder being Horizons.
- (c) Gravel extraction has a number of social, economic and environmental benefits, with minor adverse environmental effects in comparison. If the Proposed One Plan does not adequately recognise and provide for gravel extraction, there could be significant negative regional impacts, from needing to source gravel from outside the region, resulting in additional transport costs, an increased carbon footprint, possibly the loss of local employment, and a reduction in the supply of gravel and aggregate for construction and infrastructure development. Higgins considers, at the very least, there must be a supporting policy for Policy 6-32 to provide some flexibility and facilitation for gravel extraction.
- (d) Higgins considers there is a significant omission from the river values identified in the Proposed One Plan - the value of the gravel resource. Schedule D and Table 6.2 provide for social/ economic values, however the social and economic value of the region's gravel resource is not provided for. Higgins seeks the recognition of the gravel resource as a regionally significant river value, incorporated into proposed Section D and Table 6.2 (social and economic).
- (e) All of Higgins air discharge operations should be tested against the permitted activity standards of the Proposed One Plan rather than defaulting straight to a Discretionary Activity requiring resource consent. Remove asphalt plants from the rule guide to Rule 14-13.

Overall Plan Hearing: Planning Officer's Report

13. Two of Higgins submission points are dealt with in the Planning Officer's Report on the Overall Plan, as follows:
 - (a) Higgins general submission is that the One Plan must better provide for and enable Higgins activities.
 - (b) Clarification to be added to the Proposed One Plan regarding financial implications associated with Higgins activities, particularly gravel extraction.
14. The Officer's recommendation for these submission points is to reject them (page 78) and reasons given on page 83. The Officer has commented that it is more appropriate to deal with these submission points at the relevant hearing topics of the One Plan, rather than dealing with them more generally under the Overall Plan.
15. Although Higgins accepts that overall approach, it appears Higgins submission points above are best dealt with under recommendation *4.7.3(c) - Accept in part the submissions seeking incorporation of [Higgins] interest into the POP, to the extent that relief can be granted by way of [Higgins] submissions on specific parts of the POP.*
16. To accept in part the submission points above, allowing for the detail to be considered at the relevant hearing, is a more constructive way forward than to simply reject these points. Accordingly, Higgins respectfully requests the Commissioners to *accept in part* the above submission points, to the extent that the relief sought by Higgins submission can be considered further at the hearing.
17. Higgins wishes to start this hearing process on the right foot, in a constructive and positive manner.

Concluding Statement

18. Thank you for the opportunity to introduce Higgins to the decision-making process. Higgins looks forward to a constructive hearing process and is committed to working in partnership with Horizons and the community to ensure a sustainable future for our region.
19. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

AOA

Foundations for our future

An agenda for bedrock change to assist New Zealand towards prosperity





July 2008

Imagine a world without concrete or tarmac; no new roads, very little construction, virtually nil economic growth. It is a world that few New Zealanders would wish to contemplate.

If decisions are not made soon about improving access to rock and stone resources – the foundation for almost all development – we will all soon pay a heavy price; our future prosperity will be in question.

Already, Auckland road and construction projects are dependent on material imported from over 100kms away. Other regions are facing similar issues.

There is no shortage of aggregate anywhere, even in Auckland. Councils run shy of renewing quarry permits, let alone allowing new ones. We need government, councils and their communities to have a requirement in every town plan that it designate areas for aggregate production.

New Zealanders, and their ambitions for New Zealand, need aggregate – lots of it – but they perceive quarries will bring aggravation, especially in urban or semi-urban areas. Unfortunately, this is a view that most local authorities fail to challenge.

Quarries are not dirty neighbours that many people perceive. Most quarries carefully monitor the quality of their water and air.

The quarrying industry faces some of the most stringent environmental control regimes of any industry. It recognises and celebrates excellence in environmental performance and is constantly seeking improvements.

The Aggregate and Quarry Association (AQA) has been a supporter of sustainability since the 1970s. Last year, our annual conference theme integrated social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Our industry wants a new and urgently needed dialogue with government and local government that paves the way to sustainable access of aggregate resources.

This election-year agenda is intended to start the process.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Boyce", is positioned above the name and title.

James Boyce
President
AQA NZ

11 tonnes

of aggregate and other raw materials used annually for every person across New Zealand*

Infrastructure is the key to New Zealand's future. Better roads, rail, ports and airports, commercial and residential buildings, factories and farms, sewerage and water schemes, broadband networks – all are crucial to improving our economic performance and community development.

All these activities are built on a basic foundation; rock.

As a nation, we are failing to provide for access to rock and stone resources. We plan individual projects well – building a house, re-surfacing a road – but plan poorly for providing the essential elements in our nation's infrastructural development. If we are to have an affordable and sustainable infrastructure base we need to better manage our access to rock and stone.

1991	14 million tonnes produced annually	3.5 million NZ population	4 tonnes per person
2008	50 million tonnes produced annually*	4.2 million NZ population	11 tonnes per person

Some rock solid New Zealand facts

- There is a direct correlation between aggregate production and economic activity.
- In 1991, when the economy was in trouble, less than 14m tonnes of aggregate were produced.
- New Zealand now produces around 50 million tonnes of aggregate annually, all used locally to help build our nation.*
- As recently as 2006, there were industry projections that this figure might take 15 years to achieve.

- We are an aggregate hungry nation – current consumption is 11 tonnes per person or a big truck load for every New Zealander.
- This places us among the top consumers in the world, reflecting what have been buoyant times.

But this economic activity is under threat. The aggregate production that underpins it is being stonewalled by public misperceptions about this vital industry and a lack of will to challenge these.

* 2008 production figures presented figures are very close to Crown Minerals' estimates.

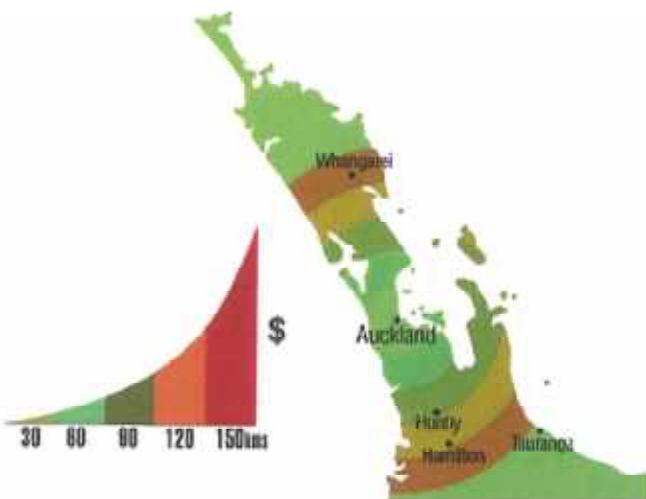
As an industry, we pledge to work with any decision maker who will address these issues and help build a better foundation for New Zealand's future.

Aggregate Issues

Access to aggregate (crushed rock, gravel or stone) is fundamental to progress.

The Resource Management Act 1991 is the principal, relevant legislation governing how extraction from quarries or from alluvial river beds operates.

Central Government passes responsibility for deciding on access to such resources to local authorities. There is no requirement for local bodies to consider the importance of providing for proximate (nearby) access to aggregate sources. This is becoming an increasingly important issue as the cost of transport continues to rise.



The cost of a truckload of gravel can double every 30kms travelled

Auckland residents are already paying more than they need to for a delivery, with aggregate being imported from Northland and Waikato. Regions with high population growth, like Wellington and Canterbury, are facing similar pressures and the problem is escalating.

This is absolutely unnecessary when proximate rock and stone resources are available throughout New Zealand.

"As a nation, this is economically and environmentally unsustainable. There are projections that unless local access to rock and stone resources rapidly improves, we will not be able to sustain our current lifestyles within 20 years time. New Zealanders' ambitions for social and economic progress will have to be parked in a grass-lined cul-de-sac."

Moreover, these projections don't fully take into account the current commitments of both major parties to infrastructural development. The latest Budget by the current government confirmed spending on physical assets, by departments and Crown entities of around \$25 billion over the next five years. Around 35% of this is expected to be spent in the transport sector alone. The current Opposition is indicating it may spend even more in some areas.

Such levels of expenditure are vital for New Zealand's advancement. However, one basic question has not been considered.

Where will the rock and stone resources come from?

There is currently:

- no national strategy for the development of aggregate supplies;
- no formal mechanism for industry liaison with government and advice to it;
- no recognition in national transport and infrastructural development planning on the need for proximate resources;
- no requirement for local bodies to include provision for local aggregate resources in their long-term plans; and
- an unchallenged public perception that quarries are dirty, noisy neighbours.

To create the changes needed to address New Zealand's growing demand for aggregate in the most sustainable manner requires leadership, commitment and ultimately action from all levels of government - central, regional and local. Industry will respond positively and assist where possible in the process of developing and implementing strategies that secure the aggregate supplies necessary for New Zealand's ongoing development.

By highlighting these issues in this election-year agenda document the AQA seeks to raise awareness with all political parties and local body politicians about vital issues that underpin many other areas of planned development and investment in New Zealand. We want to see these issues better understood and incorporated into party policy commitments this year and also at the 2010 local body elections.

Breaking rocks and tackling myths

Myth #1: Quarries are noisy, dirty places

Quarries do generate noise, dust and water quality issues. However, these are all subject to a range of controls, both mandatory through resource consents and voluntary through the industry's own commitments to being good neighbours. Quarries go to extraordinary lengths to mitigate the impact of their essential work. Air and water quality at a quarry can sometimes be better than on neighbouring properties.

Myth #2: Quarries are not good neighbours

The quarry industry engages regularly with their communities to address concerns and to communicate what is happening. Many quarries have active community liaison groups or hold open days. Wellington's Kiwi Point Quarry regularly consults its neighbours and encourages them to ring at any time if they have concerns.

Myth #3: Quarries leave big holes in the ground

By the very nature of extracting rock, hills can be removed and holes are created. This is not always a negative. Many former quarries now provide public amenities that would not have been previously possible, e.g. Auckland's Mt Smart Stadium is built on a former quarry site. What were once bare hillsides adjoining quarries are often landscaped and planted in trees.



Myth #4: Quarries are not sustainable

Although not directly sustainable, the quarry industry manufactures products that are essential to ensure sustainable communities. Aggregate is needed for energy efficient homes and for rail and cycleway projects, just as much as for any other development. The sources are either hillsides for rock or rivers for alluvial river stones. Where hillsides are used to extract rock there is often restorative work. Taking river stone often helps with flood protection and stones are replaced by the natural process of erosion. The aggregate industry is also an active recycler of previously used materials including concrete and glass bottles.

Myth #5: It's better to source rock and stone from outside urban areas

This simply adds to costs and pressures on sustainability and traffic flow. We can lower carbon footprints through sourcing aggregate close to the buildings and roads which require it. Every kilometre that is trucked adds to the cost, and can double the price every 30kms.



(Above) Logan Point is an existing quarry operating close to the heart of Dunedin

(Left) This park in Dunedin's North East Valley, opposite the famed Baldwin Street, is a former quarry

Agenda for change

To give New Zealand's future a more solid foundation we need to address these issues:

Central Government

- A national infrastructure summit, bringing together government, local government and affected industries to urgently assess obstacles to infrastructure development and set up rapid responses to issues, like proximate access to aggregate resources.
- Direct ministerial responsibility for aggregate; rather than currently under an Associate Minister of Energy, this might come under a Minister for Infrastructural Development. The Minister would need to have a close working relationship with the Minister for Local Government and Minister for the Environment.
- A national policy statement on aggregate supply – to include consideration of changes to the RMA and Local Government Act, requiring local authorities to include provision for proximate aggregate supplies in long-term council plans.
- A ministerial advisory body on aggregate supply that meets regularly.
- Establishment of a policy framework to ensure proximate supply of aggregates in all areas of New Zealand.

- Establishment of a research programme to identify future sources of aggregate supply and alternative sustainable technologies.
- Establishment of national standards for recycling of materials for use with aggregate, e.g. demolition concrete and glass bottles.

Local Government

- Identification and designation of resource extraction zones by every local authority.
- Establishment of appropriate working relationship models between local authorities and local quarry/river extraction operations, eg MOU between Christchurch City Council and Christchurch Quarry Owners Industry Group.
- Industry input into regional and local authority long-term plans.



About AQA

Established for over 40 years, the AQA is the national body representing 85% of the companies involved in New Zealand's quarrying industry. The industry currently produces nearly 50 million tonnes of aggregates and allied raw materials used in every roading and construction project in New Zealand

For more information

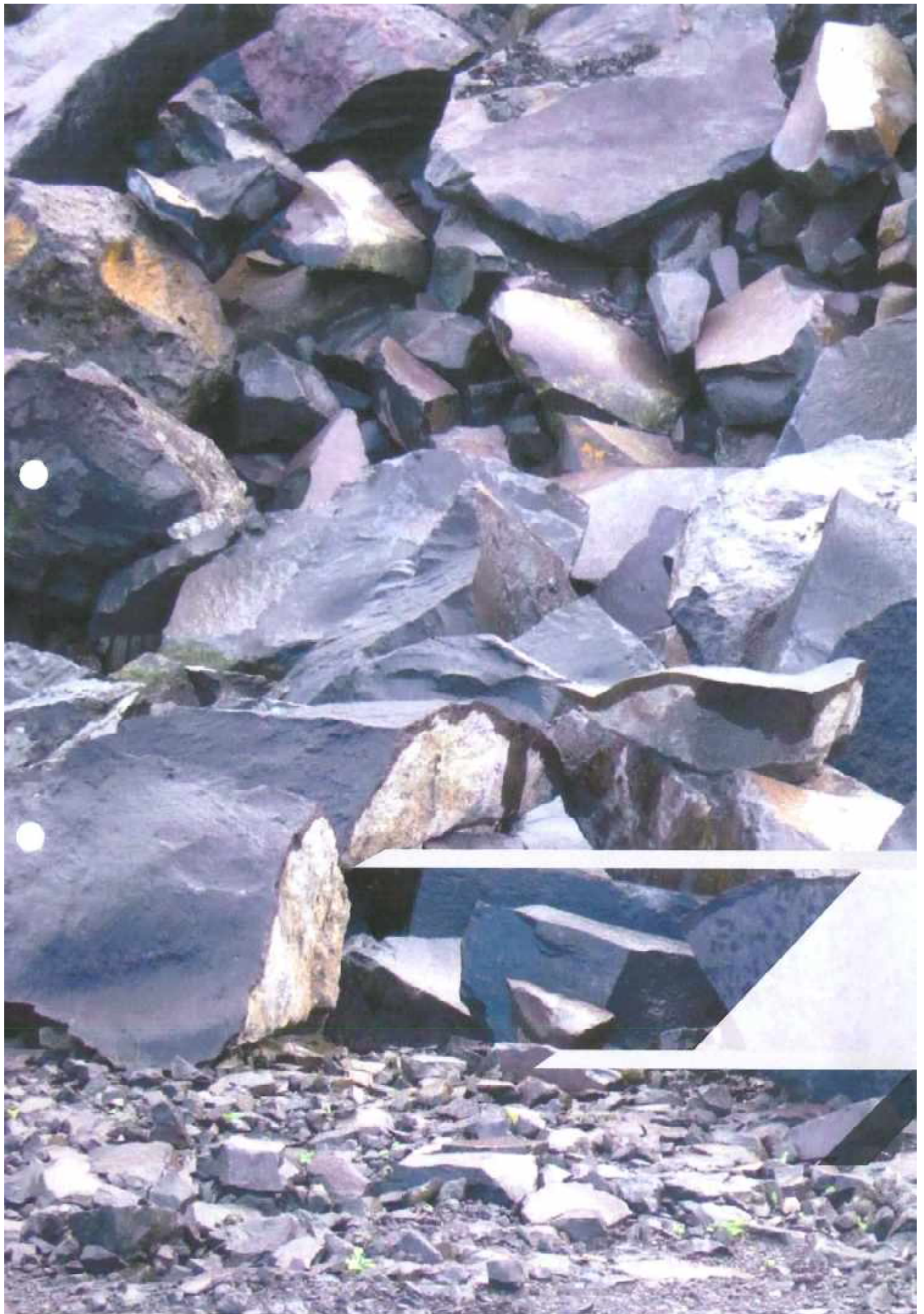
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Management for cancer widely and inter-council tensions could sometimes delay the start of studies and major funding projects.

The Commission recommends that the Government consider changes to the RMA and the Local Government Act to make councils include aggregate resources in long-term plans.

Mr Lowe said a sufficient number of potential sites had already been rendered unusable by urban development.

The association says agriculture are key strategic raw materials for the country's economic growth and resources need to be secured.

Since 1991, the production of electricity has risen from 14 billion tonnes a year to an expected 50 million tonnes for 2009, far ahead of earlier estimates.

$$v_1 \otimes v_2 = (v_1 \otimes 1) + (1 \otimes v_2) \in \mathcal{F}_{\leq 1} \otimes \mathcal{F}_{\leq 1} \subset \mathcal{F}_{\leq 2} \otimes \mathcal{F}_{\leq 2}$$

Read Group: [Explanations for Age- and Sex-Related Changes](#)

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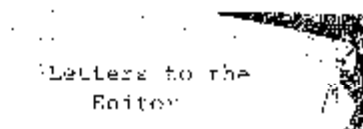
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Aggregate aggravation is enough to give industry a gravel rash

NZPA

Tuesday July 1 2008 - 04:12pm

James Boyce is a lobbyist facing a big challenge - he needs to make gravel politically sexy.

And Mr Boyce - president of the Aggregate and Quarry Association - plans to also change public perceptions of quarries as dirty and noisy, with the argument they are a beneficial form of "longterm landscaping".

His association today mounted a campaign for political commitment to longterm planning of aggregate mining.

"There isn't a national strategy for where our future supplies of aggregate are going to come from," said Mr Boyce, who is operations manager at Holcim's Bombay Quarry south of Auckland.

"If society is expecting growth, then we have to have access to raw materials".

Central government had essentially washed its hands of considering aggregates as a material of national importance, and left it up to local councils, which were reluctant to plan longterm.

The association was calling for a national infrastructure summit to address resource issues with appointment of a minister responsible for aggregate mining -- perhaps a Minister for Infrastructure -- with an advisory body drawing on the industry.

And his industry wants a national policy statement on aggregate supply -- a powerful tool under the Resource Management Act -- which would enable the Government to set standards for regional councils to meet in longterm planning for "local" aggregate supplies.

Every local authority should have to identify and designate "resource extraction zones", with quarry operators given a say in regional longterm planning for rock and gravel mining.

The association will stage its 40th annual conference in Auckland next week, starting on July 9, and delegates will only have to look out the window to see their dilemma.

Though the public doesn't think about shortages of alluvial gravels, crushed rock and other aggregates, sources in the Auckland region have become so scarce there have been proposals to bring aggregate in from the north of the South Island for construction of roads and buildings.

Already, Auckland was reliant on aggregate trucked in from Northland and Waikato for about 25 percent of its supply.

Auckland's best rock sources were old lava flows but many of the city's 50 volcanic cones had already been quarried and the rest were now protected. It was 10 years since any new resource consents were given for quarries around Auckland.

The crisis was predicted a decade ago by GNS Science, in a paper, New Zealand's Industrial Mineral Potential, as Auckland's population was predicted to soar by 40 percent from 1.11 million in 1996 to a predicted 1.56 million by 2021.

Nationally, less than 14 million tonnes of aggregate was mined in 1997: 4 tonnes per person. Now about 60 million tonnes are produced -- about 11 tonnes for every New Zealander.

As recently as 2006 this level of consumption was predicted to still be 15 years away.

Mr Boyce said the lack of planning for extraction of aggregates was a national problem, and had taken on new urgency with concerns over rising fuel prices and the cost of the nation's carbon footprint.

The cost of aggregate doubles for every 30km it has to be trucked from a quarry to a building site: the relatively low total value per tonne makes transport costs a major factor in the economics of supply.

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