

Regulatory activity update: Doves Quarry and Sunnyside Processing Plant, Tenterfield

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has responded to community complaints regarding the operation of Doves Quarry (Doves) and the Sunnyside Processing Plant (Sunnyside). We continue to monitor activities by the licensee to check that it is complying with its licence conditions.

Operating after hours

The EPA issued the quarry operator with a formal warning in May 2020, following our investigation of a report from the community that quarrying activities were being carried out at Doves on a public holiday. Under its current Environment Protection Licence (EPL), Doves can undertake the activities in the table below.

Table 1 Activities Doves can undertake under its Environment Protection Licence

Activity	Monday to Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Public Holidays
Dispatch of trucks to haul quarry product or arrival of trucks delivering products	7am to 5pm	7am to 5pm	Nil	Nil
Arrival and loading of trucks to haul quarry product	7am to 5pm	7am to 5pm	Nil	Nil
Light vehicle traffic associated with employees or light service vehicles entering or leaving the site	24hrs	24hrs	24hrs	24hrs
Maintenance of plant and equipment including workshop activity	24hrs	24hrs	24hrs	24hrs
Stockpiling operations	7am to 5pm	7am to 5pm	Nil	Nil
Drilling	7am to 5pm	7am to 5pm	Nil	Nil
Rock hammering	7am to 5pm	Nil	Nil	Nil

Dust

Our investigations found that Doves and Sunnyside are applying water and dust suppressant to haul roads, processing equipment and stockpiles at the sites in accordance with accepted best practice. In addition, the EPA has requested further dust mitigation and monitoring measures to be implemented at both sites.

We reviewed blast footage and weather data from Doves following several complaints of excessive dust generation during blasting. Our investigations found that Doves is appropriately assessing on-site weather conditions prior to undertaking blasting to ensure no blasts occur in unfavourable conditions (such as high winds) so dust emissions are effectively minimised. This is consistent with accepted best practice.

The EPA acknowledges community concerns regarding silica dust. NSW workplace health and safety standards for silica have been developed to protect workers who are in direct contact with, and exposed to, silica-containing materials for long periods of time. The Resources Regulator and SafeWork NSW both regulate workplace health and safety legislation. Where relevant workplace standards are met, surrounding residents are not considered to be at risk.

The EPA is responsible for ensuring best-practice pollution controls are employed at Doves and Sunnyside to minimise dust emissions. The EPA is continuing to work with the licensee to ensure best-practice dust control measures are implemented and ambient dust emissions are monitored.

Stockpile management

The EPA does not regulate the site near Sunnyside that is currently being used for stockpiling; however, we are working closely with Tenterfield Shire Council and the licensee to ensure these stockpiles are appropriately managed. We understand that the licensee is actively seeking to reduce the stockpiles.

Development Application currently under consideration

A development application to extend and expand operations at Doves is currently before the Joint Regional Planning Panel (JRPP). The JRPP is an independent body that determines development matters of regional significance including community submissions, agency advice and council recommendations.

If the quarry expansion is approved, the EPA will continue to perform its role by regulating the site through conditions on the environment protection licence.

The EPA is not responsible for determining development applications. All questions or concerns relating to the development application for the extension of Doves, or the conditions of the existing consent for the Doves or Sunnyside sites, should be directed to Tenterfield Shire Council.

Who to contact at the NSW EPA

If you have any concerns, questions or need further information about the Environment Protection Licence for either Doves Quarry or the Sunnyside Processing Plant, you can contact the EPA's Environment Line on 131 555 or send an email to info@epa.nsw.gov.au. You can report any concerns, observations or environmental incidents to the EPA's Environment Line 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

NSW Environment Protection Authority

Email: info@epa.nsw.gov.au

Website: www.epa.nsw.gov.au

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