

**PROPOSED GRANITE MINING OPERATION
KWOLYIN**

YORK GRANITE SUPPLIES

**Report and Recommendations
of the
Environmental Protection Authority**

Environmental Protection Authority
Perth, Western Australia
Bulletin 311 December 1987

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1. BACKGROUND

York Granite Supplies has submitted a proposal to mine granite at Coarin Rock near Kwolyin in the central wheatbelt area of Western Australia. Coarin Rock is located within Reserve 35598 for the purpose of "water supply" and vested in the Water Authority of Western Australia. Although the Reserve is not being used for this purpose at the current time it has significant conservation and recreational values. The area is extensively used by local residents for recreational purposes.

A small rubbish tip is also located on the reserve.

2. PROPOSAL

Mining is proposed to occur along a 20 metre horizontal face at the southern extremity of the southern-most rock. An annual production rate of approximately 3,000 cubic metres is proposed, although initial extraction rates would be less than 400 cubic metres per year. The mining would be carried out by drilling and blasting and removal by a front-end loader. Material would be stockpiled on-site prior to being transported to Perth for cutting and polishing.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

A prospecting licence over the area proposed to be mined was granted in the mining Warden's court subject to a condition requiring that no mining be carried out until:

- (a) the licensee has supplied the State Mining Engineer with a report providing details of the mining proposal including its likely environmental effects and their management;
- (b) the report has been referred to the Environmental Protection Authority for assessment with respect to the environmental acceptability of the proposal; and
- (c) the State Mining Engineer has given his approval to the proposal following consideration of the Environmental Protection Authority's recommendation.

In accordance with the conditions of the prospecting licence the licensee submitted a Notice of Intent to the Department of Mines which has been subsequently referred to the Environmental Protection Authority for assessment. Upon receipt of the referral the Authority determined that the proposal would require formal assessment under Part IV of the Environmental Protection Act and that the level of assessment would be Notice of Intent. It was also considered that the document that was submitted would be adequate for assessment of the proposal.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The major environmental issues identified during the assessment of this proposal were primarily with regard to impacts of mining on the conservation and recreation values of the Reserve, appropriateness of current land use practices on the Reserve and the availability of alternate sources of the material to be mined.

The regional importance of the Coarin Rock reserve area was recognised with regard to its relative recreational and conservation values.

Crown land reserves in the wheatbelt area where there are remnant stands of native vegetation are important as islands for many species of local fauna as well as the conservation values associated with the vegetation itself. There is often a tendency for these reserves to be identified as a cheap source of quarry material where there are often extensive resources available on private land.

Major recreational usage of the rocks is concentrated mainly around the northern rock. However, it should be noted that the entire rocks area is used by the local community for recreational and educational activities and the most significant vegetation areas are around the area proposed to be mined.

Any quarry operation would greatly affect the aesthetic nature of the reserve as a whole.

The Authority also believes that the current class "C" vesting of the Reserve for "water supply" does not offer adequate security for the recreation and conservation values of the area.

Due to its likely effects on the aesthetics as well as the conservation and recreational values identified for this area, the Authority has concluded that the proposal to mine granite within the Reserve is environmentally unacceptable. The EPA notes that suitable alternative sources of this material may exist and should be further investigated.

It is likewise considered that the rubbish tip currently being operated on the Reserve is an inappropriate land use and should be closed and rehabilitated.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Environmental Protection Authority recommends that:

1. The proposal as submitted by York Granite Supplies is environmentally unacceptable;
2. The rubbish tip currently operated within the Reserve should be closed and rehabilitated; and
3. The purpose of Reserve 35598 should be changed to "conservation and recreation" and vested in the Shire of Bruce Rock.

