



Proposed Austen Quarry Stage 2 Project

Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions and answers have been prepared in anticipation of the type of questions that would be asked by interested community members and groups throughout the Blue Mountains. It is hoped that these answers provide sufficient information to local community members and groups about Hy-Tec's plans to extend the Austen Quarry at Hartley. A feedback form is available to allow you to ask additional questions or provide comments which will be considered during the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement.

Part A: General Questions

1. Why is Hy-Tec extending the quarry?

Stage 2 extension of the existing quarry is due to Hy-Tec desire to continue to provide the wide range of quality quarry products that are currently produced by the Austen Quarry near Hartley. Hy-Tec would like to maintain supply of concrete aggregates to the seven Hy-Tec concrete batch plants in Sydney, 1 regional concrete batch plant (Wallerawang), as well as the range of quality quarry products to its existing customers until at least 2050.

Concrete and quarry products are a critical component of the construction of our homes, schools, offices, factories, hospitals and roads. Hy-Tec wants to continue to play its role in delivering high quality concrete and quarry products for all of these important uses and in doing so, maintaining a competitive market.

2. What will the quarry extension involve?

The Stage 2 extension of the Austen Quarry will involve an extension to the surface area and includes extending the depth of the existing Stage 1 extraction area to recover approximately 45 000 million tonnes of source rock and the enlargement of an existing overburden emplacement.

No changes are proposed to the on-site processing or the maximum output from the quarry, i.e. the maximum annual production despatch level will stay at 1.1 million tonnes per year.

3. Who owns the land on which the quarry is situated?

The land is owned by the Hartley Pastoral Company – a company owned by the Austen family, long term residents of the Hartley district.

Hy-Tec leases approximately 200ha of the 2 800ha within this property to operate the Austen Quarry.

4. How many years will the extended quarry be in operation for?

As identified in the 1994 EIS There is sufficient high quality rock on the property to operate the Austen Quarry for almost 100 years. Hy-Tec is proposing that Stage 2 will operate for 30 years, i.e. from the end of Stage 1 in 2020. Development consent will be sought until 2050.

5. How many jobs does the quarry provide?

The Austen Quarry currently provides direct employment for 16 persons on the quarry site with a further 40 indirect jobs. Approximately 45 drivers (large percentage of these are part of the local community) are employed to deliver the quarry products to the wide range of destinations in Sydney.

6. What are the benefits to the local and wider community of extending the quarry?

The local community benefits from the provision of stable employment and wages together with Hy-Tec's payments for consumables and services. In total, Hy-Tec contributes approximately \$10 million each year to the Lithgow and district community. The wider community benefits from the supply of high quality quarry products for a wide range of uses and the generation of employment to manufacture and distribute the quarry products from the existing Austen Quarry.

7. What is the production level at the quarry? Will it increase?

Production despatch at the Austen Quarry varies depending on the demands of the construction industry. Current production and product despatch sales vary from 15 000 tonnes to 30 000 tonnes per week. Current annual product sales are approximately 750 000 tonnes per year. It is, however, recognized there will be high levels of demand generated by the construction industry during this period with the increasing population of the greater Sydney, Blue Mountains and Lithgow regions. Hy-Tec considers the current approved maximum despatch level of 1.1 million tonnes per year to be appropriate for the life of proposed extension and is not seeking to change this level.

Part B: Quarry Trucks through the Blue Mountains

8. Why does Hy-Tec transport its quarry products by road (and not rail)?

Hy-Tec's quarry products are delivered to a diverse range of destinations in Sydney. Many of Hy-Tec's concrete plants are strategically located near the M4 and M7.

Hy-Tec has investigated transporting its products by rail, however, the logistics involved with three loading events required to get the product to the required site and the diverse destinations makes the use of rail for the delivery of Austen Quarry products to be uneconomical and impractical. The use of rail by Hy-Tec for product deliveries would significantly reduce the competitiveness of the concrete and quarry market.

9. How many trucks currently travel to and from the Austen Quarry through the Blue Mountains and what road(s) do they use?

The average number of truck loads of products from the Austen Quarry is currently approximately 83 per day with a maximum of 150 loads per day. All trucks travel only on the Great Western Highway through the Blue Mountains to the Sydney region. Drivers are instructed not to deviate from the Great Western Highway onto any local roads through the Blue Mountains.

10. How many trucks do Hy-Tec own?

Hy-Tec does not own any trucks – rather Hy-Tec has contracts with accredited transport companies to deliver its products to its internal and external customers. A small proportion of trucks transporting products from the Austen Quarry are operated independently by external customers, etc.

11. How many trucks will travel through the Blue Mountains from the Austen Quarry until 2050?

The average number of truck loads would vary from the existing average number of 83 per day to 125 per day if and when annual despatch reaches the approved despatch level of 1.1 million tonnes per year. The maximum number of truck loads would also be expected to increase to approximately 180 per day if and when annual despatch reaches 1.1 million tonnes per year. This maximum level would be expected to only occur on about 5 days per year.

12. How does Hy-Tec ensure truck drivers travelling to and from the Austen Quarry operate safely when travelling through the Blue Mountains?

Truck safety to all motorists and pedestrians is paramount to Hy-Tec as transportation of the products from the Austen Quarry is fundamental to its overall business – as such, Hy-Tec requires all drivers/contractors/on-site operators to conform with the Company's Chain of Responsibility System. This system is a comprehensive and integrated management system that provides a means for dealing with a wide range of health and safety issues such as driving hours, fatigue, mass and dimensions, load restraints, speed and vehicle standards.

Each driver is required to sign a copy of the Austen Quarry Traffic Management Plan at their induction for the Austen Quarry that clearly identifies Hy-Tec's expectation of each driver. Hy-Tec undertakes up to six audits per week of trucks travelling to and from the quarry and regularly reviews all assembled data to ensure compliance with all relevant approvals relating to product transportation.

Part C: Other Environmental Issues

13. How is Hy-Tec going to minimise the visual impacts of the extended extraction area when viewed from vantage points throughout the Blue Mountains, e.g. Mt York?

Hy-Tec has placed considerable emphasis upon the design of the extraction area to ensure that either the outer faces of the extraction area are retained as long as possible to shield activities and exposed extraction faces and/or progressively diminishing the visibility of exposed extraction faces through the application of a bitumenous covering and progressive rehabilitation. All final extraction benches will be planted with a selection of trees and shrubs once the benches reach their terminal location.

14. How does Hy-Tec manage issues relating to the impacts upon the Coxs River, air quality, noise and the local ecology?

Hy-Tec operates the Austen Quarry in accordance with a Site Based Water Management Plan that has identified all necessary safeguards to ensure sediment-laden water is not discharged to the Coxs River. Regular monitoring of water quality and the macroinvertebrates within the Coxs River has confirmed that the operations within the Austen Quarry have not and do not adversely affect the Coxs River.

The Austen Quarry is operated with a range of safeguards to ensure that both air quality and noise are appropriately managed to ensure that all impacts are within the guidelines or criteria nominated in the development consent and/or the quarry's environment protection licence. Monitoring of both air quality and noise has established that all air quality and noise criteria have been complied with throughout the operations of the Austen Quarry to date.

*Hy-Tec undertakes periodic programs to plant trees and shrubs endemic to the local area to offset the removal of native vegetation from within the approved operational areas. Approximately 12 000 trees and shrubs have been planted to date, approximately 3 000 of which are *Eucalyptus pulverulenta* (Silver-leafed Mountain Gum).*