

**From:** Phil Best <PhilBest313@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, 22 August 2016 9:38 AM  
**To:** 'prue.keane@brisbane.qld.gov.au'  
**Cc:** 'Paddington.ward@bcc.qld.gov.au'; LORDMAYOR@brisbane.qld.gov.au; 'Mtcoottha Electorate Office'; Mt Coot-tha Residents Group (mtcootharesidents@gmail.com); ROWE Sarah <Sarah.Rowe@ehp.qld.gov.au> (Sarah.Rowe@ehp.qld.gov.au)  
**Subject:** The residents call on the Brisbane City Council to: CLOSE THE MT COOT-THA QUARRY  
**Attachments:** 3rdAugustBlastNoiseExceedsMaximumAllowedBy45Decibels.png;  
SoundReportFrom3rdAugustQuarryBlast.png;  
BlastingVibrationsFromQuarryNorthFaceToBestResidence.png  
**Importance:** High

(JH please forward).

Dear Prue and Lord Mayor Quirk,

**We the residents in the 80 homes in the Quarry Blast Vibration Target Zone now call on the Brisbane City Council to Close the Mt Coot-tha Quarry.**

The date promised by former Lord Mayor (Soorley) for the Mt Coot-tha quarry to close (2015) has come and gone and now the quarry seems to be ramping up its operations.

Last Month (July) several angry residents attended two meetings with the EHP Minister and his department heads.

- The head of compliance (Andrew Connor) said (at the meeting) that the quarry had promised (In writing) to his department that they would stay within the limits of the EHP stated maximums,
  - o This is 5mm/sec(95%) & 10mm/sec(5%).
- The first meeting was in the Mt Coot-tha Electorate Office and the second meeting was on site to witness an actual blast.
- Everyone was reasonably happy because on that day the blast was weak and we believed what the quarry manager had said.

However on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August the quarry ignored all their promises and let rip an extremely strong blast that measured 10.4mm/second as measured beside Mt Coot-tha road and last week they actually did two strong blasts.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> August I also hired a NATA Approved and Calibrated sound metre from NV Engineers in an effort to demonstrate to everyone how bad it is being inside your own home when it is shaken violently by a quarry blast. The sound metre is a Decibel Logging metre and NV Engineers had set all the correct parameters so all we had to do was to set it up on the tripod on the ground floor of our new home and press the start button. The metre was returned to NV Engineers after the blast and the following day they emailed the recorded data to me. I have attached this data and you can see that the sound levels did 2 things:

1. It showed a mighty rumbling explosive noise happening right inside our home where the sound level instantly went from 20 decibels to almost 80 decibels.
2. Our home continued to vibrate for almost one minute after the blast, (Like a mini-earthquake).

Our new home was built by us as a family, in close liaison with our RPEQ engineer and other Civil Engineers. We worked extremely hard and did everything possible to avoid any concrete cracking from the quarry blasts. However the current status of our new home is that it now cannot be completed because:

- a. The ground floor contains several bad cracks which are getting worse with every strong blast. Hence the floor tiles sit around stacked together as they cannot be laid until the strong blasting stops.
- b. All the windows cannot be finished as our engineer says that the walls may also be cracked as well. Being concrete we need to keep it visible so that we can see if any wall cracks develop.

We have staked our entire life on this house and it has cost us more than \$one million. If there is any further damage then we will lose all our money and our home.

Our own mental health is getting worse with every blast.

- We never know if the next blast will be the one that destroys our home.
- On the day of the blast my heart rate increases dramatically.
- By 1pm I have sweaty palms and my heart is racing.
- When the blast hits, our own home shakes violently and my heart rate increases further.
- For the next few nights I have difficulty sleeping and have nightmares whilst asleep and wake up.

I am not the only person who gets these symptoms, because many other residents suffer the same symptoms and they fear for the survival of their homes.

I have been prescribed "quarry" medication by my doctor and I take this every night, however no medication can ever combat "quarry sickness" - because the quarry continues to blast once or twice every week.

The quarry managers will never tell us the planned blast strength. So we never know from one week to the next if the next blast will be the one that totally destroys our new home - plus they say that they can't control the blast strength anyway.

If you consider the legal situation, then back in 2004 I said in my email below that the sound levels were illegal (as measured) and never got any response from Brisbane City Council.

Legally, the quarry noise is restricted to 5decibels above ambient and the only exception is the actual Sonic Wave from the blast which is called "Overpressure Blast". This lasts for 2 seconds and hence for the remaining 50 seconds the noise above 20dB(ambient) + 5dB(margin) is grossly illegal.

The real estate report that we received says that property values are down by between 50% to 35% because the quarry did not close and continues to operate under their legacy open-ended blasting license which allows them to blast up to 10mm/second on the other 9 blasts and as strong as they like on every 10<sup>th</sup> blast. Plus there is also no limit to the number of times that they can blast.

Hence we estimate that for the 80 homes in the Quarry Target Zone, the loss of property value is above \$30Million (who would buy our home if they knew the truth).

Yet everybody ignores our plea, the cracks in our concrete get bigger and wider plus we cannot finish our new home.

Andrew Connor (EHP Compliance Manager) cannot do any more, he negotiated with the quarry and then they immediately broke their promises.

When Andrew Fraser was Treasurer, the same negotiation was done where the quarry promised to adhere to the EHP legal maximums and then 6 months later the promises were abandoned and the strong blasting resumed.

Please help us – we beg you!!!!

THE YEAR TO CLOSE THE QUARRY IS 2016.

- The residents need it and Brisbane Tourism needs it.
- We all know that Tourism can make much more than \$5/ton earned by digging gravel - especially when the mine rehab costs are much higher.
- The quarry seam dips at 30 degrees to the North East and to continued mining requires added expense and then much higher mine rehabilitation costs.
- The BCC is committed to Zero Harm and Best Practice – for everywhere other than the quarry residential blast zone.

Yours sincerely, Philip Best and the Mt Coot-tha blast zone residents.

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**From:** Phil Best [mailto:[PhilBest313@gmail.com](mailto:PhilBest313@gmail.com)]

**Sent:** Sunday, 30 March 2014 11:09 AM

**To:** LORDMAYOR@brisbane.qld.gov.au; 'prue.keane@brisbane.qld.gov.au' <[prue.keane@brisbane.qld.gov.au](mailto:prue.keane@brisbane.qld.gov.au)>; 'Toowong Ward Office' <[toowong.ward@ecn.net.au](mailto:toowong.ward@ecn.net.au)>;

**Subject:** Follow up March 26 Kenmore Listen Forum regarding SSGD&SD Street Lighting plus MCQ Residents Issues

**Importance:** High

(this Email includes hidden recipients – JH please forward)

Dear Prue,

We met with Lord Mayor Graham Quirk (and yourself) one-on-one and we are extremely grateful for this opportunity.

We would like to say firstly a big thank-you for this opportunity and secondly to congratulate the council on this initiative.

Could you please ensure that these items are again considered by Graham Quirk, Peter Matic as well as all other relevant Civic Cabinet members (especially the member responsible for MCQ).

Mt Coot-tha Quarry.

I advised Graham Quirk that the residents were bitter for two reasons.

1. The previous Soorley local government had advertised that by now the MCQ would have been closed and the existing botanic gardens expanded to take over and expand onto the quarry land.
  - a. Many local residents purchased in the region for these reasons (ourselves included) only to find that this decision was indefinitely reversed by the LNP local government and there is now no established closure date at all.
  - b. It was of much surprise to us that Graham Quirk was totally unaware of this extremely important fact.
2. The blasting activities carried out by MCQ are in accordance with the old DERM/EHP DA which allows them to exceed the level of 10mm/sec ppv.
  - a. Most of the residents believe that this is causing damage to their houses and property, which they cannot afford to repair.
  - b. The MCQ blast vibrations exceed the level of 5mm/sec ppv (95% of the time) which exceeds the standard for almost every city council urban area in the Australia and overseas.
  - c. The MCQ do not publicise their blasting results and in order for any resident to obtain these they have to pay a state government fee each and every time.
  - d. The MCQ has a maximum background sound level of ++5 decibels which they clearly exceed, however they never conduct any measurements or definitions of this.
  - e. There is a very strong possibility that due to decades of strong blasting, fibro homes in the Mt Coot-tha and Toowong areas are releasing asbestos fibres into the actual domestic living environment with every new blast.

As far as the current Botanic Gardens tourists are concerned, I am sure that they tell their friends back home how they have to be briefed about the strong blast that will occur and that this is indeed not an earthquake.

Please advise what will be the outcome of these issues personally raised with Graham Quirk on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2014 at the listen forum.

Thank you for reading this email.

Phil Best plus the residents of Mt-Coot-tha & Toowong plus the MCRG members.

Phil Best

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