

Uralba Hard Rock Quarry

We were engaged by Newton Denny Chapelle to coordinate ecological assessment for a proposed hard rock quarry at Uralba. We were also engaged as expert witness in the subsequent NSW Land and Environment Court Class Action Proceeding 10087 of 2009.

Statutory Context

The development application was required to consider the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act); Section 5A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, and provide a Koala Plan of Management as per the requirements of SEPP 44.

Challenges and Solutions

The site sat in the foothills of the Blackall Range, and contributed to north-south habitat connectivity along the range.

Geotechnical investigations identified that the best resource sat under a well-vegetated part of the site, and so clearing could not be avoided. The clearing was expected to cause habitat loss for several conservation-significant species, and further impacts were expected due to loss of connectivity, edge effects and blasting.

The primary mitigation measure was rehabilitation of an adjoining floodplain to establish an Endangered Ecological Community. The rehabilitation works were expected to reinstate (and improve) habitat connectivity, and provide alternate habitat for several of the affected conservation-significant species.

Negotiations progressed with Council and residents, but ultimately a mutually agreeable outcome could not be achieved. The project proceeded to hearing in the NSW Land and Environment Court, where ecology issues were quickly resolved. Project approval overall was also later achieved.

Outcome

The quarry is now operational.

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