

# Good things take time

It is great to see the Government's fast-track legislation introduced.

We expect some quarries will be included in the qualifying projects when this is determined as the select committee hearing into the legislation takes place.

That said, like the cheese advert says, good things take time. Our CEO Wayne Scott rightly comments on that in this Aggregate News. (see page 4)

Even the handful of quarries awaiting consents that do get fast-tracked won't be crushing more aggregate any time soon.

There is still a process of appointing expert panels for each project and then working through the application.

We in the quarry sector know that our case for rapid approvals is stronger than many industries simply because projects cannot be done without the materials we produce.

So, we trust the Government takes particular note of the need to ensure access to quarrying resources as it tries to expedite the infrastructure, roading and housing projects it wants underway ASAP across our nation.

Nowhere is that more critical than in

the possible sand supply shortages facing Auckland and Wellington. Supply and demand imbalances will be a challenge going forward, until existing suppliers increase supply and/or alternatives such as manufactured sand becoming available in sufficient quantities. (See story on page 2)

The AQA alerted the new Government to this looming potential crisis in January and got a piece on One News in February. As you'll see, Ministers are saying it's a critical issue and they are working with officials to resolve it.

Let's hope there's no sand in the grinder to hold things up.

Certainly, the AQA continues to speak for our industry. That's been bolstered by the recent addition to our Board of Duncan McGregor. (see story page 3) Duncan brings years of experience in quarrying and concrete as well as the low-key and practical attitudes of a Southlander.

He will be up for confirmation – along with the rest of the AQA Board – at our AGM at the July conference. I trust most of you have now registered and booked your



accommodation and any necessary flights because costs will rise as the conference approaches.

As a techie, I'm particularly looking forward to our keynote speaker Justin Flitter who founded NewZealand.AI and has since spoken to hundreds of business leaders keen to learn and leverage artificial intelligence in their organisations.

In addition to the conference programme and our awards, there is the obvious benefit of rubbing shoulders with old mates and making new friends. I see our Technical Update (page 6) marks the retirement of Cobus van Vuuren from our Technical Committee, someone who's generously contributed to our industry over a lifetime. We wish him well.

The same cannot be said I'm afraid for too many of you, as evidenced by the poor response to the 2022 reporting of production stats.

The failure to report is so bad that regional production data is not able to be properly calculated in a majority of our regions.

That's eclipsed by only one in five quarry sites meeting their reporting obligations to WorkSafe.

Yes, good things take time, but if your site starts getting whacked for non-reporting, it'll be hard (avoidable) cheese. Hope to see you in Rotorua.

**Jayden Ellis**  
Chair, AQA



**Time to book for QuarryNZ 2024 so you can catch up with all your quarrying friends as well as the conference insights. Pictured here at the 2023 conference are Peter Walsh (Fulton Hogan), Steve Riddell (Kaipara) and Murray Francis (Road Metals).**

# AQA calls for urgent action on sand shortage

**Auckland came close to running out of sand for construction before Christmas and urgent interim fixes are needed to avoid further shortfalls impacting building and roading projects across the upper North Island.**

That was the repeated warning from AQA CEO Wayne Scott in February after he'd written to the previous Government in March last year warning of a looming shortage of sand and seeking solutions.

After writing to Ministers in the new Government, Wayne Scott also took his message to One News.

Wayne says the quarry sector has done a good job at trying to cover for shortfalls.

"We've seen one major supplier ramping up manufactured sand supply to be more readily available from mid-year. It's also talking about a possible second operation in north Waikato.

Other sand suppliers are looking to increase production also.

"Manufactured sand may well be a key to future supply, but in the interim we urgently need to access traditional supplies which come off coasts, river mouths and land-based deposits.

"As predicted, Auckland's sand supply became a challenge during the lead up to Christmas.

"Infrastructure projects are now ramping up and with that, demand for sand will continue to rise and shortages could see project delays."

He says the coalition Government's proposal for new fast-track legislation was welcome but even if sand extraction were among projects getting approval, this could be many months away.

Wayne Scott says several factors are causing the shortage with a key one being delays in renewing resource consents for sand extracted off the coast north of Auckland, which used to supply half the region's construction sand requirements.

"Interim consenting now sees less than a third of this being provided."

He says the new National Policy

Statement for Highly Productive Land in particular, and that on Indigenous Biodiversity, were also holding up resource consent applications for a number of potential sand extraction operations.

Wayne Scott says he has been talking to Government officials about these issues for months, but was now seeking an intervention from Ministers.

"This will impact across transport, infrastructure, economic development, housing and much more. We know this is not of this Government's making, but interim solutions are desperately needed. The quarry industry has done all it can to issue the warnings and meet the shortfall but it's beyond us to resolve."

Minister for both Transport and Auckland, Simeon Brown, said the issues raised by the AQA were serious. "I am

concerned by any supply chain issues that might affect the construction or maintenance of important infrastructure projects, including roads."

He said the RMA reforms and the fast-track legislation will help unlock the consents to build infrastructure sooner and ensure the availability of the necessary materials.

Minister for Building and Construction, Chris Penk, said he was aware of concerns around potential product shortages of sand.

"As this is a developing situation, I am getting updates from officials and the Critical Materials Taskforce is monitoring the situation closely" he said.

He welcomed all feedback on potential mitigations to reduce the impact of building material shortages in the future. **AQA**



Sands of time running out for Auckland.

# A concrete addition to AQA Board



A mate fires up  
Duncan's Howitzer  
at Te Anau's dawn  
ceremony on Anzac Day.



Duncan McGregor.



McGregor's trucks on the challenging supply line to the  
Lake Manapouri power scheme.

**If the AQA ever needed someone to come out all guns blazing, Duncan McGregor could provide a howitzer – but our newest Board member is not that kind of operator.**

The genial Southlander has an Italian 105 Howitzer field gun in the 800 square metre Fiordland Military Museum he runs by private admission, adjacent to his home, 30 kilometres from Te Anau on the road from Queenstown. Alongside it sit jeeps, excavators, wartime bulldozers, two Armoured Personnel Carriers, a truck from the WW2 Long Range Desert Group – and much more.

Duncan was co-opted to the Board at the February meeting, replacing Brian Roche who stood down last year after a long tenure as a member and chair.

Duncan brings 45 years' experience in the quarrying and concrete sector since joining the company his father Duncan Senior had established in 1966 at Wreys Bush in central Southland.

The Lake Manapouri power scheme was the making of McGregor Concrete. It carted truck-loads of concrete across the Fiordland mountain passes to build the transmission line.

"We grew rapidly in those years," recalls Duncan, although he was still a lad.

On joining the company in 1979, he was first sent to revive the dormant Winton concrete batch plant before moving to the Te Anau plant.

He became CEO in 2019 although thinks the title is a bit grand.

"We're all one team," he says. Some of the approximately 28 staff, aged from 22-76 years have been with the company longer than Duncan himself.

Duncan's home at Gorge Hill puts him within easy reach of the company's three quarries at Winton, Lumsden and Te Anau.

Between the three permanent sites and six excavation points on the Oreti and Whitestone rivers they produce concrete, sand

and aggregate, all grades of chip as well as crusher dust for asphalt, AP40 and AP20. There are 15 concrete trucks, seven truck and trailer units and about a dozen loaders.

To help maintain access to river gravel, Duncan has three to four consultants engaged on securing consents.

"We do a lot of drone work now."

He says he has a good relationship with Environment Southland who sometimes call in McGregor's to extract out of the Whitestone and Mararoa rivers near Te Anau to reduce flood risk.

"This is a common-sense approach by ES and it's just getting back to how we did it in the 70s."

However, he says to get a consent elsewhere can take a year plus and that's an issue he'd like to work on with the AQA Board and staff.

"Consents need a timeline. It'd be nice to get faster sign-off across all parties."

When he's not working for McGregor Concrete (and now the AQA), Duncan likes to travel with his wife Tina, who is a well-respected photographer. Tina did a great job photographing the Invercargill QuarryNZ conference in 2019.

"We used to do a lot of weddings together," says Duncan, although his spare time is now focused on his museum and military history more generally.

They are soon off to visit Turkey, including Gallipoli, and then attending the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings in France.

Perhaps he might just come home with another Howitzer for the museum, but apart from firing such weapons at dawn on Anzac Day in Te Anau, the guns remain silent. But, don't doubt the owner's calibre. **AQA**





Wayne Scott.

**The Government's fast-track for resource consenting will provide some of the desired progress for New Zealand if quarries are among the list of approved projects.**

In welcoming the Government's announcement and legislation, Aggregate and Quarry Association (AQA) CEO Wayne Scott says some quarries will need to be included in the fast-track criteria alongside significant infrastructure and development projects.

"All these projects will require aggregates and sand so some quarries must be on that list."

He says he made the point in a letter to relevant government ministers in February that the faster consenting pathway for significant projects must also protect the availability of aggregate and sand for such projects.

"Big infrastructure projects can require the supply of aggregate, sand and rock from multiple quarries. Not only do we need some quarries on the fast-track list, we can't afford to lose other nearby sources of good rock supply to competing development."

A 2021 Infrastructure Commission study acknowledged major projects such as Transmission Gully suffered significant disruption through a lack of aggregate supply.

But, Wayne Scott is also cautioning his industry and others not to expect that all consenting delays can be met by fast-tracked applications.

"There could be 100 of these. Each will need to be considered by an expert panel with people with the necessary skills, supported by staff from various government agencies to provide all the required information.

"The last Government also established a fast-track to get things moving after Covid and 42 of the projects listed for that process still had no expert panels appointed when the legislation for them expired last June."

Wayne says anyone supplying or building infrastructure projects needs to understand that ministerial announcements are not the same as actual outcomes.

"Even those projects approved under fast-track processes, which get an expert panel are still likely to be quite some months from go to whoa."

He says just as important is what the new Government will do to replace its predecessor's reforms of the RMA.

"We also need to know whether it will abolish or fix deficiencies in national policy statements on highly productive land and indigenous biodiversity, which are holding up some quarry developments." **AQA**

## AQA works for the quarry industry – join us today

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AGGREGATE & QUARRY ASSOCIATION OF NZ

Supporting New Zealand from the ground up



# Limestone quarry becomes a sculpture park

The farmers who established the Amberley limestone quarry just before WW2 would find it hard to believe the site has now become a verdant oasis dotted with sculptures.



A few years after the last lime was produced in 1992 – amid problems with consenting – Raymond Herber bought the barren and neglected 5ha property on a back road near Waipara in North Canterbury.

He brought in 350 tonnes of topsoil, using his own machinery to spread it and work it in across the site. “It just transformed the place.”

Raymond had wider plans. He had a background in metal working and was from an artistic family of Dutch migrants. His plan was to use the old quarry buildings as his studio to create sculptures in steel.

Today the Iron Ridge Quarry Sculpture Park is dotted with steel sculptures and open five days a week to visitors.

“People stay up here for hours sometimes,” says Raymond. “They often comment on the feel of the place and some come back multiple times.”

Part of the fascination is for what the site used to do – produce lime for surrounding farms. “There’s a lot of interest in the past. People have a fascination with old mines and quarries.”

The quarry even had its own rail siding, allowing the lime to be carted to farms north and south.

Raymond pulled down old sheds and re-used them for building accommodation on site where he lives with his partner Heidi.

“The whole place is a recycling exercise.”

In line with that they run chooks and have a big veggie garden.

The couple have hosted weddings and music events at the quarry sculpture park, as well as providing a venue to celebrate some of the very smart wines produced nearby which include; The Boneline, The Crater Rim, Terrace Edge and Georges Road.

Another reason the farmers who established a quarry in 1938 would be astounded to visit the area today. **AQA**



The old quarry not long after Raymond bought it in 1998.



Raymond Herber in the loading area under where the limestone used to be crushed



# AQA Technical update

## Technical Committee farewell

- After over eight years' service, Cobus van Vuuren has retired from the AQA Technical Committee.
- We wish Cobus a very happy and contented retirement and offer our thanks for his years of service to the AQA and a lifetime of service to the quarry industry.

## Technical Committee new member

- As Cobus has retired, the Technical Committee welcomes Jos Grobler, GM of Hirock, as its new member.

## NZP and M production statistics

- 2022 results were published in December 2023. Only 374 quarries reported production.
- Total reported production was 30.9 million tonnes and revenue of \$642M, 6t/capita.
- Production per quarry was up three percent to 83,000tpa.
- Materials usage was skewed towards building products (37 percent).
- Due to low reporting, over 58 percent of regional data was withheld, preventing further detailed analysis.
- The AQA will work to assess the unreported production to give a realistic overall figure – clearly it's a lot more than 6t/capita.
- We continue to remind members that our total production figure is critical to us, the Government and local councils as we push the case for continued access to resources.
- If we as an industry are going to continue to be poor, region by region, in reporting production, we will invite the foisting on us of mandatory reporting, with all that this entails.

## Also, poor WorkSafe reporting

WorkSafe's latest quarterly extractives report also comments on poor reporting. It says: "This was the fourth quarter that quarrying operations and alluvial mining operations were required to submit quarterly reports to WorkSafe. Quarterly reports were provided by eight active alluvial mining operations (12 percent) and 201 active quarries (20 percent)."

AQA and MinEx CEO Wayne Scott says the reporting stats have been heading downward since the new extractive regs came into force. "The first quarterly report in late 2022 had 25 percent of quarries and now we are down to 20 percent. Eight alluvial mines out of 65 is also poor."

"As with production stats, we really need sites to complete the WorkSafe return. The information is valuable in terms of number of workers in the sector and in sharing incident learnings."

## New member resources on website

- By the time of publication, the manufactured sand information paper accelerated weathering position statement and some typical specification "snags" will be available on the AQA website.
- Have a look at the common specification snags to see AQA's comments on them. For example, requests for liquid limit have been coming up recently.
- The manufactured sand paper gives an overview of the product, now that it is becoming more publicised in New Zealand. **AQA**

**Mike Chilton**

**Technical Adviser, AQA**

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<https://aqa.org.nz/our-members/>

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