

Submission from the AQA on the Far North District Council's Long-term Strategy

April 2021

Introduction

The Aggregate and Quarry Association (AQA) is the industry body representing construction material companies which produce 45 million tonnes of aggregate and quarried materials consumed in New Zealand each year.

Funded by its members, the AQA has a mandate to increase understanding of the need for aggregates to New Zealanders, improve our industry and users' technical knowledge of aggregates and assist in developing a highly skilled workforce within a safe and sustainable work environment.

We welcome the opportunity to make this submission to the Far North District Council on the [Far North Long-Term Strategy – Far North 2100](#) (the Strategy). The Strategy is an important document because it envisages how the Far North might look in the year 2100. It will provide an overarching strategic direction for future planning documents over the next 80 years.

A key part of the necessary planning over this period will be to ensure that the availability and supply of aggregate – necessary for the district's infrastructure development – is planned for and does not conflict with the likely population growth and economic development that will occur over the period.

The Importance of Aggregate in the Far North

We are pleased to see the inclusion of quarrying in the reference to resilient economic growth for sustainable prosperity on page 14 of the Strategy. Quarrying is an important part of the primary sector which is needed to provide aggregate (crushed rock, gravel and sand).

It is also a crucial, but often overlooked, component of the infrastructure supply chain and so is relevant in the discussion around the many references to infrastructure throughout the document.

Aggregate is an essential resource for construction and infrastructure development. It is used for general construction - in concrete, asphalt, mortar and other building products. The building of an average sized house requires about 250 tonnes of aggregate.

Road construction and maintenance also uses aggregate in large quantities. To build 1km of a two-lane motorway, you need around 14,000 tonnes of construction aggregates (400 truckloads).

Aggregate is also used to increase resilience of the community to natural hazards and climate change. Aggregates, for example, are needed for flood protection and to

adapt to sea level rise and coastal erosion through strengthening of sea walls etc. They will be needed to repair damage to coastal infrastructure such as roads and to make infrastructure more resilient generally to greater intensity storms and extreme weather events.

Planning for Aggregate in the Long Term

It is important to note, aggregates and other quarry materials are a site-specific resource. They are not universally available and can only be sourced from where they are located. Without planning to provide for quarrying there is the real risk of losing access to the resource as populations and alternative land-uses grow. It is critical that planning is streamlined, and quarry resources are protected so they can supply vital construction materials for the long-term benefit of the Far North.

A lot of land comprising suitable aggregate resource in the Far North has already been built on or has been sterilised as a result of inadequate planning in years gone by. With a proliferation of competing land uses it is important that land with suitable aggregate resource is first identified and then protected for future use.

The transportation of aggregate from quarry to destination is an issue given the heavy costs of shifting it (an additional 30km travel typically doubles the cost of aggregate). This means potential aggregate resource must be able to be accessed as close to roading projects as possible to reduce the cost of construction.

Failure to adequately plan for future aggregate extraction over the next 80 years would lead to a substantial increase in cost of development and maintaining of infrastructure, and delays as aggregate is sourced from outside the region.

It should also be noted that quarries have a limited lifespan and aggregate extraction is a temporary land-use. Once all the aggregate material has been extracted, quarry land is returned to the community to a former use, or an alternative use. By the year 2100 there will be no trace of quarries operating in the Far North today. Pristine areas of parkland, working farms or housing developments are the likely land uses by that time. Aggregate resource on land not currently quarried could be extracted and returned by 2100, but it is important that planning occurs now to achieve a smooth transition.

Conclusion

In conclusion we ask the council to reflect this submission in the Strategy, to acknowledge the importance of planning for quarries to ensure the sustainable access to aggregate is provided for over the long-term, and to be aware of the implications for the community if the future supply is exhausted through inadequate planning.

Wayne Scott
Chief Executive Officer
Aggregate and Quarry Association
wayne@aqa.org.nz
021 944 336