

# Submission from the AQA on the Waikato Future Proof Strategy

November 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 would like to thank the Future Proof partners for the opportunity to comment on the [Future Proof Strategy](#) (the strategy).

The strategy is an excellent initiative to provide a framework to manage growth and development in the Hamilton, Waipā and Waikato sub-region.

While there is some mention in the strategy of the importance of protecting mineral resources from future development, insufficient mention is made of this in the document particularly as it relates to aggregates. The role and contribution of aggregate and quarrying in terms of growth in the region, existing or potential, is also overlooked.

## Key Point

This submission reminds the partners why aggregates are an essential ingredient in the growth and development of Waikato, and for the building of infrastructure, roading and housing that will support this development.

In order to future proof Waikato, adequate provision must be made to recognise existing and potential aggregate and sand deposits and provide for their extraction. Without planning that provides for adequate access to resources at workable locations, there is the real risk of losing access to such proximate resources.

## Aggregate and Infrastructure

Aggregate (crushed rock, gravel and sand) is an essential resource for the building of roading projects and other transport infrastructure, and due to the unprecedented

levels of construction and infrastructure development activity generally, aggregate is increasingly in short supply in many parts of New Zealand including the Waikato region.

Road construction and maintenance uses aggregate in large quantities. Different grades of aggregate and sand are used for the road's base layer, the pavement and the seal on top. To build 1km of a two-lane motorway, you need around 14,000 tonnes of construction aggregates (400 truckloads).

Aggregate is also used for general construction - in concrete, asphalt, mortar and other building products. (For example, the building of an average house, requires about 250 tonnes of aggregate.)

## Aggregate in Waikato

Quarrying is particularly important in Waikato as a contributor to its growth and because of the contribution it makes to the local economy.

18.8 tonnes of aggregate per resident is produced in the Waikato Region annually - the greatest per capita volume of any region in New Zealand.

It is also the fastest growing region in terms of aggregate production. Comparable figures aren't available for the sub-region (as opposed to the Region) but the significant number of quarries operating in the district tell the same story.

According to Infometrics, in 2020 the Waikato Region accounted for 25.6% of the country's overall employment in the sector and 18.2% of all business units. The sector's importance to Waikato, in terms of its share of employment, is greater than it is in any other region in the country.

## The Need to Future Proof Aggregate Supply

The Future Proof Strategy will influence where and when growth occurs in the region over the next 30 years and have a bearing on the future shape and locations of settlements and land use development.

In influencing growth and where it occurs, councils in the region need to provide for the location-specific nature of aggregate deposits.

Aggregate deposits are limited in quantity, location and availability. They can only be sourced from where they are physically located and where the industry is able to access them.

This means it is important that the nature and location of resources of value to the district are, where possible, identified. Secondly, access to such deposits must not be inadvertently shut off through land development and council planning.

There does not appear to be any reference in the strategy to ensuring that land for existing and future aggregate extraction activities are adequately recognised, provided for and protected from encroachment of non-compatible land uses.

The strategy must give consideration to this when identifying the proposed future growth areas as well as the “Priority Development Areas”. Development areas should ideally be as close as reasonable to identified areas of aggregate. Determining a reasonable distance for residential areas from potential quarry areas, is essential due to the significant expense of transporting quarry materials as well as the nature of extractive industry operations - including noise, vibration and dust. The cost of aggregate doubles when transported 30 kilometres from its source.

Waikato’s growing economy and population means there is increasing pressure on appropriate land for quarrying as expanding residential areas and competing industrial land use encroach putting areas of aggregate supply at risk.

Note that quarries have a finite life. Once the rock is extracted the land is returned to the community and can be used in a variety of ways. It is not inconceivable that housing and other developments can occur on and around former quarry land that has had the rock extracted.

It is essential that the councils take steps to ascertain such areas and provide for current and future access to aggregate and mineral resources.

Not doing this could mean lost opportunities for accessing a supply of aggregates and other minerals which are an important input in developing the infrastructure, so necessary to enable the growth and development anticipated in the strategy. It could also mean lost opportunities for the local economy in extractive industry investment and jobs. As mentioned above the quarrying sector’s contribution to Waikato economy is significant.

AQA is working with central government to increase knowledge of the location of aggregate resources in New Zealand, and we are able to assist councils and other partners in the strategy ascertain where such areas lie in their districts.

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