

8 May 2022

Media Release from Aggregate & Quarry Association AQA

Auckland heading into a crisis with sand decision

The quarry industry warns Auckland faces an almost immediate crisis for road and building construction after consent application for coastal sand extraction at Pakiri near Mangawhai were declined.

Aggregate and Quarry Association CEO Wayne Scott says the decision of commissioners for Auckland Council will have almost immediate impacts on major projects in Auckland as well as causing major increases in traffic congestion and carbon emissions.

“Sand from Pakiri is currently barged into Auckland so if the decline remains in place, some 235,000 tonnes currently barged into the city will need to be delivered from further away by truck. That will mean around 1000 extra truck movements on Auckland motorways every month.”

He says Pakiri sand is particularly suited to high-strength concrete used in infrastructure. “This cannot easily be replaced.”

There is real doubt that even the same volume of sand could be sourced from existing operations in NZ in the short term given issues created by the Freshwater Regulations enacted in 2020 and the Pakiri decision meaning other sand resource consent applications may now also face challenges with approval or renewal.

“Like other quarry materials, sand is in hot demand and we are already struggling to meet demand in the midst of a housing and infrastructure boom.”

Wayne Scott says any alternatives to Pakiri sand come with very high economic and environmental cost.

“Sand is a high volume, low value product so shipping it from overseas is an expensive option. Quotes received from both Australia and the United Arab Emirates price sand delivered into Auckland at three times the current cost of Pakiri sand.”

He says it’s also unlikely a consent could be obtained to offload sand in the Port of Auckland so it would have to land in another North Island port and be trucked in, adding further cost and carbon emissions.

Wayne Scott says another potential source of sand through crushing more rock and stone, is not available at scale yet in New Zealand. It relies on capital investments of tens of millions of dollars and if financially viable, will be some years until operational.

He says he is at a loss to understand how commissioners could say that in terms of economic effects, their findings were inconclusive.

“There is no question that their decision is going to impact very quickly on Auckland construction.”

The current Pakiri consents are capped at 2M cubic metres which will likely be reached by early next year.

“This decision brings huge impacts on the cost of sand in Auckland, risks to the timeframes and costs of the region’s major projects and significant increases in carbon emissions and traffic congestion.”

He says the Government’s infrastructure programme for Auckland is at risk following the Pakiri decision.



“This decision comes just a week after the release of the Infrastructure Commission’s 30 year strategy which underlines how critical supplies of sand, rock and aggregate are to the Government’s \$60b+ infrastructure programme.

“I urge Auckland Council and the Government to look very quickly at this decision and consider an intervention which at least gives alternative sources of local supply a chance to be developed and secured.”

Contact: Wayne Scott CEO Aggregate and Quarry Association, ph 021 944 336