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Media Release from Aggregate & Quarry Association

Quarries pay a cost for amended freshwater regulations

Quarry operators around the country welcome new regulations rectifying earlier rules on developments involving wetlands but say it's come at considerable cost.

Aggregate & Quarry Association (AQA) CEO Wayne Scott says the unintended consequences of rushed regulations by Government more than two years ago has caused some quarries to develop uneconomic areas while holding up other quarry developments.

"We acknowledge that Environment Minister David Parker fronted up to the mistake in the 2020 regulations and he's now delivered the consenting pathway solution.

"That's welcomed and we know he and officials have tried to turn the wheels of Government as fast as they can but this has just added costs and uncertainty for our members."

[The National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 Amendment No 1 was gazetted this morning](#). It amends the original definition of wetlands which halted quarry sector development.

Wayne Scott says councils began interpreting it as meaning no development could take place across virtually any land that got wet.

"Our estimate is the now amended regulations were holding up about 15M tonnes of production a year. Our industry produces around 50M tonnes of aggregate, rock and sand a year and while quarries worked to find alternative sources, it was often from less economic areas of their sites.

"They have also lost two stripping seasons to get some areas ready to access rock and aggregate. I'm also aware of one greenfield quarry site in Waikato that's been unable to proceed and another lower North Island operator who was going to walk away from a quarry development."

Wayne Scott says the message Government officials could take from the need to revise the regulations is to talk to the quarry sector ahead of drafting.

"We are happy to discuss ideas or review early drafts. If they chose not to listen to us that's their call but at least they will have the industry's views. It may help avoid costly delays and rectifications such as we see in today's amended regulations."

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