

Submission from the AQA on the Draft Taupō District Future Development Strategy

December 2024

Introduction

1. The Aggregate and Quarry Association (AQA) is the industry body representing quarrying companies which produce 45 million tonnes of aggregate and quarried materials consumed in New Zealand each year.
2. We would like to thank the Taupō District Council for the opportunity to comment on the [Draft Taupō District Future Development Strategy](#) (the FDS).
3. The Taupō District Future Development Strategy is the plan to manage growth in the Taupō District.
4. It is an important initiative that provides a framework to manage growth and development in the Taupō District. The Aggregate and Quarry Association is interested in the strategy because of the need to protect aggregate and other quarry materials from future development.

Key points

5. There is no reference in the strategy of the role of quarrying in the future development of Taupō District, nor the importance of sand and aggregate.
6. Provision needs to be made to identify and protect existing and potential sand and aggregate deposits and provide for their extraction.
7. The Council must avoid sterilising land containing aggregates with housing and other developments. Doing so will necessitate making provisions to access aggregates from further away which will lead to higher costs for ratepayers and users of quarried materials, increased traffic congestion and increased carbon emissions.

Aggregates and Taupō District

8. Aggregate (crushed rock, gravel and sand) is an essential resource for the construction of housing, roading projects and other transport infrastructure. It is used for general construction – in concrete, asphalt, mortar and other building products.
9. It is also important for increasing resilience and adapting to extreme weather events and climate change.
10. Due to ongoing construction and infrastructure development activity, and with the

ongoing housing shortage and infrastructure deficit needing to be addressed, there is elevated demand for aggregate across all of New Zealand.

11. Taupō, in particular, is a fast-growing district where aggregate is needed to support infrastructure and other construction activity.
12. According to the strategy, Taupō District's population is projected to increase by 25,500 people, or 61%, by 2060. This means an additional 12,400 homes will be needed to accommodate this growth.
13. Based on the rule of thumb of 280 tonnes per house, 3.47 million tonnes of sand and aggregate will be needed for the new house builds alone or 99,000 per year. This excludes aggregate needed for relevant infrastructure to support the increase in population.
14. We are disappointed there is no mention in the document of the role and contribution of aggregate and quarrying in the growth of the district.
15. Taupō District also has a unique source of volcanic rock (scoria, basalt, dacite, pumice etc) which is used throughout New Zealand. This is particularly relevant in the context of location specificity, as discussed below.

Protect access to potential aggregate resources

16. Whilst thinking about the future of the district, it is important to be aware that aggregate deposits are 'location specific'. They can only be sourced from where they are physically located and where the industry is able to access them.
17. It is therefore important that Taupō District does not shut off access to potential aggregate resources. Council planning must identify where the rock is located and protect those areas from other development and alternative land uses.
18. The AQA would be happy to talk to the Council about what is known about where potential aggregate resources lie and the work being done at a national level on this. In appendix 1 we have attached a map developed by GNS Science, which gives a broad outline of aggregate potential in the area.
19. Identifying and protecting this resource will be a major factor in future-proofing the district. Adequate provision needs to 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 a significant risk of losing access to such proximate resources.
20. Due to its weight and volume, aggregate is very expensive to transport. An additional 30kms of travel typically doubles the cost of aggregate. This highlights that shifting large volumes from outside the region, or far from where it is to be used, is very expensive and would increase the cost of many of the proposed projects.

Rehabilitation

21. Quarries have a finite lifespan – they are not there permanently. Once the aggregate

has been extracted the land is able to be returned to its original use or used in a variety of other ways. Often the land is turned into community facilities.

Highly Productive Land

22. The draft FDS refers to the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land (NPS-HPL) which aims to protect highly productive soils for future food and crop production.
23. It needs to be noted that land containing quarry materials is also highly productive. In fact, it is significantly more productive than soils used for agriculture and horticulture due to the value and scarcity of the aggregates produced relative to the value of agricultural commodities.
24. Like highly productive soils, aggregate deposits can only be sourced from where they are physically located and where the industry is able to economically access them. It will be important that potential quarry land is not sterilised by the NPS-HP).
25. It should be noted that the NPS-HPL is currently being reviewed by central government. We recommend the FDS revisit this after planned changes to the NPS-HPL have been announced.

Increasing resilience

26. The FDS acknowledges climate change is bringing more extreme weather patterns. Issues such as flooding will become more severe. Aggregates will play a role in managing this and in increasing Taupō District's resilience to climate change generally.

Conclusion

27. To future proof Taupō District and minimise the risk of future shortages of quarry materials, the strategy needs to protect aggregate resources from future development. Failure to do so will mean it will have to be sourced from outside the area, if available, at considerable cost.

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Appendix 1– Map of aggregate potential

