

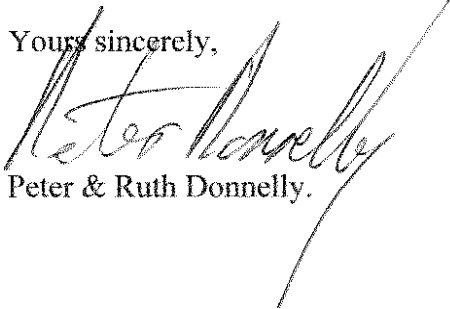
Senate Toxic Dust Inquiry Submission from the Somersby Action Committee

- After many months of investigating the problems of toxic silica dust, we conclude that it is vital to have sand mines / quarries located in unpopulated areas.
- We believe that it is vital that the inquiry is extended to include the impact of sand /quarry mining on surrounding populations, not just employees working on site and that the Senate inquiry makes recommendations to the State Governments regarding proximity or "how close" can sand mines / quarries be located to residences, schools, businesses, highways and roads. At the very least it should be several kilometres from human habitation.
- Overseas research is now showing an increase of lung cancer in surrounding populations. See attachments and photographs of dust clouds from ripping machinery.
- The Somersby Plateau already has thirteen quarries in the middle of domestic and rural land use. See Sydney extractive materials strategic study. Due to the toxic dust blowing onto surrounding populations we believe that no more mines should be allowed on the Plateau. The most harmful dust is that which is less than 10 microns in size. As this dust is not visible to the naked eye, it does not follow that because dust cannot be seen there is no danger. How many mines
- If levels of Asthma increase when air quality decreases, then toxic silica dust will surely have a detrimental effect on the local population. For example, a resident living 20m from a quarry access road suffers from a chronic asthma condition, with the trucks passing her bedroom around 30 to 40 times per day, it would not be very beneficial for her health.
- Policing the site to enforce the DA conditions that reduce the levels of dust in the air rely on self regulation and the surrounding residents report breaches of conditions. Fines for any breaches are too low to act as a deterrent. DIPNR in NSW have acknowledged this and research from residents living near mines at Maroota, Central Mangrove and Somersby, have reported total lack of implementation of the DA conditions. See DVD's enclosed, roads are not damped down as required.
- Due to the nature of sand mining there is no guarantee of effective dust control. In fact within the industry it is regarded as virtually impossible particularly in windy weather conditions and hot dry weather. This is now typically the Australian Climate. See attached aerial photographs.
- What can governments at all levels do to guarantee the long term health of the local residents surrounding a mine? It is wrong to assume that water sprays are effective in eliminating respirable dust. The nuisance dust is reduced but not always the respirable dust which can even be breathed in on very fine water particles. Ref: Mining and Quarrying Occupational Health and Safety Committee "Quarry Safe-Hazardous substance in Quarries" by D.Orme Feb' 1998
- In relation to the Rindean sand mine submission to extend their existing sand mine operation, Commissioners of the Land and Environment Court of NSW, AJ Nott and TJ Moore, pointed out in the summarisation of the case. "It was the evidence of each of the three neighbours that they experience significant dust nuisance from quarrying operations despite these dust management practices. The dust effected them in two distinct fashions. The first related to dust intrusions into their houses with possible effects on health. Secondly, there was dust contamination of their domestic water supply."
- The enquiry should include studying the accuracy of current Silica dust monitoring equipment currently used by the EPA. As recently a five years ago it was stated by an expert in the field -Dr

David Douglas- that the monitoring equipment used by the EPA in Australia did not measure fine particles less than 10 micron. As these fine particles are the ones which cause Silicosis it is imperative that accurate monitoring equipment be used by the EPA in determining whether or not the extractive industry has safe levels of dust.

Please keep us informed as to any developments and the results of the enquiry.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Peter Donnelly", written in dark ink. The signature is fluid and somewhat stylized, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Peter & Ruth Donnelly.