

Last week's, "When no news is bad news" covered Hanson's failure to disclose to our community any of the expert reports on traffic, air pollution, health, water, flora, fauna and noise for the mega gravel quarry in Bunyip North. It is believed some of those reports and studies date as far ago as 2008.

Today I share a meeting with a delightful couple who provide just one example of the negative impacts already experienced by Hanson's proposal.

John and Libby are the sort of people that you immediately trust and admire - true models of old fashioned values of integrity and manners. John's plan for his retirement was to indulge his passion for trees. John and Libby purchased the ideal property in Bunyip North in 1994. John began planting his Australian native trees in 2000 - thousands of them. When John speaks about his trees his extraordinary knowledge and passion shines. He has spent over two decades working in conjunction with the CSIRO to create a "superior" tree. John has painstakingly selected trees and their seeds for their beauty and superior quality for saw log timber. John has developed these majestic forests on his land which is a prime example how ingenuity, dedication, and huge investment of time and money can create a sustainable and lucrative market for this magnificent native timber.

It is immediately apparent why CSIRO would select John as the ideal collaborator in their study to selectively breed these superior trees for sustainable saw log timber. John is a scientist and botanist at heart and his plantation highlights his skill and knowledge. But I was mostly struck by his love of these trees. In his words "his magnificent favourites - my spotted gums". It was wonderful to hear him speak of "catching the delightful aroma just in that moment when the pollen is blown off the gum flowers".

However, Hanson's proposed mega gravel quarry on their boundary has cast a shadow over this important CSIRO study and John and Libby's personal plans to build a home on their 101 acres. John and Libby had obtained a permit to build a home in 2007 and were not concerned when the 300 acre farm on their northern boundary was sold to JRH Pastoral in the same year. However, Hanson announced in 2008 that it was planning a mega quarry right on their boundary rather than any pastoral activities. John and Libby had no choice but to wait before building their home until more was known about the quarry.

Almost a decade later, they are still waiting for that information from Hanson.

How will the changes in water impact on John's trees? Hanson's proposed quarry is on prominent hills and water runs off those hills to surrounding lower lying land - such as John and Libby's tree farm and network of creeks and waterways. How will the creeks, dams and ground water be impacted?

How will silica dust impact on the health of people and the environment? How far will this dust - associated with cancer- travel? What measures will Hanson take to make sure this dust does not reach beyond its boundaries? This is especially important as Hanson propose to quarry on prominent hills. How do Hanson stop dust reaching over 150 surrounding homes within close proximity to the quarry? Will dust reach Mt Cannibal reserve? Will dust reach Bunyip, Garfield townships?

How will the bees, needed for pollination, be impacted?

How do you make decisions about your land, research study, trees, business and lifestyle without communication about timing, impacts or scope from Hanson?

So many questions for Hanson to answer.

It is believed that the Minister for Planning is now considering the scope of expert reports that Hanson must provide as part of legal process to obtain approval for this mega quarry. These and many other questions need to be answered. The Minister for Planning and this government need to be aware that this quarry will have negative impacts on this community - whether environmental, jobs, traffic or health. Please contact the Minister for Planning to ask these and any other questions you might have.

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