Seaham Quarry Project

Visual Amenity assessment

December 2023

Building something great

The Visual Amenity assessment being undertaken, as part of preparing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Project, is using methods based on the established and widely used guidelines, including the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition* (Landscape Institute/IEMA 2013) and the *Large Scale Solar Energy Guidelines for State Significant Development* (NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment 2022).

The assessment involves undertaking field observations and photography, consultation with landowners, computer-based data processing and analysis, and application of subjective professional judgement. The diagram below outlines the assessment and its five key stages.

STAGE 1
Visual Baseline Study

The existing landscape character and visual conditions are established. The landscape character is described and classified into landscape units. These landscape units enable the landscape to be rated for its scenic quality and sensitivity to change.

STAGE 2
Visual Catchment Definition

The zone of visual influence of the project is established using computer-generated zones of theoretical visibility, topographical data, or through fieldwork analysis. This establishes the locations where views of the project may be possible. Fieldwork is undertaken to establish the types and locations of residential receivers within this theoretical zone.

STAGE 3
Viewpoint Selection

Representative public and private viewpoints of the site are selected and the project's level of exposure to them is determined.

STAGE 4
Viewpoint Assessment

Assessment of the visual impact from key viewpoints within the visual catchment is based on three criteria.

A) **Magnitude of change** - the magnitude of visual change and the changes arising from the project are assessed and the need for project modifications or other mitigation measures evaluated

B) **Visual sensitivity** - the capacity of the landscape to absorb change without a loss of quality (its visual sensitivity) is determined

C) **Evaluation of significance** - the significance of change in the landscape is a function of the magnitude of change when considered against the view type/context and the sensitivity of a receptor.

STAGE 5
Mitigation

Where a project results in moderate to high visual impacts, mitigation should be considered. There are a number of mitigation options that can be applied.

The viewpoint assessment (i.e. Stage 4) is being developed. This involves preparing photomontages of the proposed Project area from selected viewpoints, to determine the scale and nature of any impacts.

The photomontages show a before and after image of the site, as part of assessing the potential visual impacts from each viewpoint selected. These photomontages can be made available once completed.

Images like those below are taken from the area surrounding the Project and are used to show the existing landscape character and visual conditions .

Management/ mitigation measures

The visual amenity impact assessment will include proposed management and mitigation measures to minimise impacts on nearby property owners, as much as practical. This may include:

- Retaining existing vegetation wherever possible
- Re-vegetation with native trees as soon as possible after changes to the landform.