

# RUSSELL NORTHE MLA

Member for Morwell

## MEDIA RELEASE

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Date: 28 October 2019

### Northe seeks Premier's support of local quarry industry

Last week in State Parliament, Member for Morwell Russell Northe called upon the Premier to urgently intervene into ongoing issues that are preventing the Latrobe Valley (LV) Quarry industry from achieving their potential.

"This is an issue that I've been calling upon relevant State Government Ministers to address for years", Mr Northe said. "The reality is that local quarry operators including Matthews Quarries, LV Blue Metal, Latrobe Valley Sands, and Maryvale Sands all have relatively limited years in which to operate under existing licences" said Mr Northe.

Fortunately all these operators which to continue to base themselves in the Latrobe Valley and expand their operations whilst employing hundreds of local people and providing quality material to customers across the State including many State Government Departments, agencies and projects.

Unfortunately these same quarry operators continue to face multiple delays and barriers whilst dealing with separate Government departments for expansions to their operations. The silo mentality and approach to these issues creates an environment where this vital local industry cannot expand or grow.

"That's why I've called for the Premier to intervene and seek a whole of Government approach and put an end to these setbacks. The LV quarry industry is a large employer in our region, which I would have thought the Government would be doing everything in its power to secure long-term employment opportunities for our community" Mr Northe said.

The success of these local businesses is not only critical to our local economy: but that of our State. The State Government has been warned about the consequences of this industry not being adequately supported. The Construction Materials Processors Association (CMPA) previously stated;

*"The costs of the houses and gardens of Victorians will increase substantially as required extractive material will have to be imported from farther afield, nearby States or even overseas. Unquestionably, these impacts will involve significant employment losses with their associated economic and social costs". ([ref](#))*

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In response to my recent Parliament speech the CMPA also said;

*"The CMPA supports the principle of responsible, balanced legislation that is in the best interests of Victoria, however, small to medium quarry owners are being heavily disadvantaged by the one size fits all, complex, costly and circuitous approval process. This is evidenced by very few significant approvals being made for extensions to and new quarries in regional Victoria which is deeply concerning for current and future government and private infrastructure projects." - Dr Elizabeth Gibson, General Manager, CMPA*

"We know that local small to medium enterprises (SME)'s are struggling to expand with current constraints and problems on their expansion", Mr Northe lamented. "They do not have the guarantee of supply of the raw materials they need to grow, due to the complex, costly and lengthy approval process. This is very concerning given all the construction works that are going on in Victoria that these businesses could be participating in".

By way of a recent media release, the Minister for Resources is quoted as saying;

*"We're attracting people to our minerals and mining industry with a strong track record of integrity and collaboration with the community, to ensure we can keep supporting local economies and creating jobs." (ref)*

Such a statement is a kick in the face for Latrobe Valley quarry owners and operators who have faced years of barriers in trying to advance projects in our community. In fact the Ministers statement is just completely incorrect when you consider the lack of progression on local developments.

Through its own admission, the Government have also stated that;

*"...rock, gravel and sand weigh tonnes, it's critical these extracted raw materials come from places near transport routes to building sites, to keep the construction costs down."*

"I've been pleading with the State Government and various Ministers for years to assist in resolving the issues that are threatening the future operations of these important employers in my community, but this unfortunately has been to no avail", Mr Northe continued. "That's why now I've called upon the Premier to intervene to fix the issues that exist and allow the LV Quarry industry to continue to make significant contributions to our State and to our local community".

Please find a link to Mr Northe's speech last week [here](#)

Please see a list of previous Parliament contributions Mr Northe has made on this subject:

- a. 13/12/2017 – [Adjournment matter](#)
- b. 08/02/2018 – [Members statement](#)
- c. 07/06/2018 – [Budget papers](#)
- d. 19/06/2018 – [Flora and Fauna guarantee amendment Bill 2018](#)
- e. 20/06/2018 – [Constituency Question](#)
- f. 01/05/2019 – [Morwell Grievance Debate](#)
- g. 13/08/2019 – [Budget papers](#)
- h. 14/08/2019 – [Flora and Fauna guarantee amendment Bill 2019](#)

**Note: Dr Elizabeth Gibson, General Manager, CMPA is also available to comment – 0434 692 618.**

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