

## **Introduction from Conundrum's Managing Director**

On behalf of the Directors of Conundrum Holdings Pty Ltd, we are humbled and so appreciative as we prepared this consolidation of supportive submissions all which have been provided to the Mitchell Shire Council relating to PLP268/19.

On reading those we have been provided a copy of, we can only say how proud and honoured we are for their comments and how astute our business partners are. On behalf of all concerned, I thank you.

We are on this journey as one, we must be proud of our quarrying industry and our endeavours, we must become more proactive and supportive of those trying to create choice, opportunity and build an example for the current and future generations.

Make no mistake, the work to promote and defend our industry is on-going.



Ron Kerr  
Managing Director  
Conundrum Holdings Pty Ltd

## **Key Points**

- 295+ submissions of support have been received since October 9<sup>th</sup>
- Submitters represent:
  - Several thousand Victorians workers
  - Over 1,000 years in the quarrying industry
  - Employees, suppliers, customers and others in the industry
- Dr Peter Marshall has prepared a summary of these letters (page ii to vi)
- Submitters' business logos are following this summary

**PJM Economics**

18/12/2020

## North Central Quarry Submissions of Support

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### Overview of Submissions

I was engaged by Conundrum Holdings Pty Ltd to write an overview of the supportive submissions that were provided to the Mitchell Shire Council relating to PLP268/19.

I have a PhD in Economics and extensive experience in Urban Economics. I completed this task as an independent contractor and attest to the veracity of the report.

Yours Sincerely



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# North Central Quarry

## SUBMISSIONS OF SUPPORT



### Overview of Submissions

Collectively these submissions tell the story of a family business that is committed, professional and innovative. This is clearly outlined in the following submissions, that also demonstrate a defined need for quarry resources, employment and opportunity in the northern part of Melbourne.

If you read just some of these submissions, you will understand the level of respect that is held for Conundrum and the family behind the business. The near universal description of Conundrum is "professional". This professionalism encompasses all facets of Kerr's business and this description is found across suppliers, customers and employees.

To facilitate your comprehension of the width and scope of support we have extracted some key messages of support

*"I have inspected in excess of 500 quarry sites in every State in the country ...I have no hesitation in stating that Conundrum Holdings and Mr. Ron Kerr are the most professional operators that I have observed"*

- Registered Property Valuer

This family business lives its ideals, and this feeds through to the community it creates. These submissions are filled with examples of how the Conundrum family motivate and encourage those that interact with them to achieve higher collective standards and instil an innovative culture.

*"The products we create have become synonymous with superior fabrication, innovation and exceptional quality."*

- Steel Fabricator and Engineer

Through the everyday running of their quarries, Conundrum always try to buy local. The wider Kerr family embody the spirit required to re-establish Victoria as a manufacturing powerhouse. If Conundrum needs equipment, they will first look local to satisfy their requirement. This community conscious effort creates new skilled local jobs and provides the development of skills locally.

### Employment

The North Central Quarry will replace the existing Epping quarry ensuring a continuance of sought after specialised jobs, and the ongoing development of highly specialized jobs in the wider community.

*"It would produce work at our local Manufacturing facilities by allowing us to make Australian belts and Pulleys"*

- Conveyer Service Provider

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*"If not for businesses like Conundrum Holdings creating work for small business like ours, it would be very difficult for small business to survive. ... if it were not for Conundrum Holdings, [my company] would not have been able to forge itself into a new direction of work that we do for them. Their time and patience put into our company for the training of skills needed to complete their work is invaluable", Steel & Construction Specialist*

It is clear from the submissions there will be a continuation of the long-held relationships and employment from Epping to Wallan. This will provide stimulating and motivating work to Mitchell Shire locals through both direct and indirect employment opportunities.

*"[This company] employs around 70 Victorians and a large percentage of those live in the Mitchell Shire", Earthmoving Equipment Supplier*

### Need for Local High-Quality Resources

A significant number of submissions refer to the need for a local high-quality resource to continue their own business. This sentiment is echoed across a range of enterprises from small local business to large infrastructure projects.

*"High quality quarry materials are extremely important to the works we deliver and becoming more difficult to source. Our sprayed sealing business carries out works through the Mitchell Shire for the DoT and tenders for Mitchell Shire and surrounding Municipal road resurfacing contracts on an annual basis"*  
- Road Services Supplier

Many within the Conundrum community have indicated they are dependent on the supply of local resource to ensure they remain competitive. The proposed quarry will provide the required high quality and commercial local resources.

Conundrum creates a level of competition countering the monopolistic tendencies of large integrated quarry operations.

*"Currently there exists a monopoly for road base materials within the Mitchell Shire which is reflected in the most recent pricing. Mitchell Shire, rate payers and other consumers will ALL benefit from this competition".*  
- Local Earthmovers

*"As a premixed concrete supplier, we are often obliged to operate within the boundaries set by the monopoly that already exists outright within the industry; with multinational companies owning and controlling the vast majority of existing quarries. These multinational companies ... dictate supply, pricing, demand and supply among other things. It is of crucial importance that an independent operator such as Conundrum Holdings can counter the monopoly somewhat. Conundrum allows us flexibility, competitiveness and return trade; somewhat refreshing in our current economic environment."*  
- Concrete & Mini Mix Plant

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### Relationships

The networks they have created are long and strong. You will find multiple examples of relationships extending 20 years and more.

*"Conundrum Holding Pty. Ltd. have been a customer for over 20 years. Our company is considerably more stable with the commitment from Conundrum Holding Pty Ltd to acquire Australian made castings and its environmentally sustaining initiatives".*

- Australian Foundry

*"... has been sourcing materials for over 35 years from the current Northern Quarry.",* - Asphalt Contractors

These relationships fostered through mutual trust are the heartbeat of the economy and vital partnerships will be lost if North Central Quarry is not developed.

Most of the existing relationships within Northern Quarries will continue providing great opportunities for local employment and innovative business in the Mitchell Shire. Importantly this will occur immediately, with instantaneous benefit - not in 30-40 years- providing interesting and challenging careers for the local community.

### Community

Conundrum just doesn't connect with the community around it; **they create a community**. This community involvement is at many levels beyond the creation of skilled employment both within their own company and through their business connections.

*"The wealth and prosperity that this family has added to the state of Victoria for its people, and all levels of government is untold. The Kerr family, like our family have always had the best interest of the community at heart for well over 100 years"*

- Hydraulic Specialist

### Training

As part of this community involvement, Conundrum are deeply invested in training and supporting young people to develop long-term skills, future opportunities and purpose in life.

*"Over the years I have had the privilege to train a vast number of Conundrum Holdings' employees at all levels. Their approach to advancing the knowledge and skill levels of their employees is second to none and I can honestly say I look forward to training them at every opportunity."*

- Box Hill Institute

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Conundrum have created a work environment that fosters and encourages the development of their staff. This culture will be transferred to the North Central Quarry and help instil great values within the local community

*"My story is one of many that Conundrum Holdings has provided, with career opportunities through training and development. There are opportunities that our families would have been unlikely to achieve without the support of the company. This in turn allows us to go on and also contribute to our communities."* Conundrum Holdings employee of 26 years

### Safety and Environment

Conundrum's commitment to Safety and Compliance is described in the submissions as **best practice**. You can deduce from the submissions that not only do Kerr's implement best practice, they improve best practice.

*Conundrum Holdings go over and beyond what is legally required because WHSE is not simply an obligation enforced through legislation; it is a core value of their Managing Director and that value is entrenched in the organisation's culture."*, Safety Consultant

It is clear from the submissions there is a deep commitment to minimising any impacts upon the environment - not just meeting some arbitrary regulations - but to actually minimise the impact on the environment given the crucial need for quarry materials.

*"Their workers are proud to promote these ideals, like wise our company and staff all enjoy working there, because, we know it is a safe place to work, and they are genuinely interested in the health of the environment."*  
- Hydraulics and Power Transmission Specialist

Conundrum are also committed to rehabilitating the land they quarry and have a proud history of restoring the land to its former state or even an improved geographical aspect.

*"As a qualified landscaper, I have been contracted to site performing tree planting and guiding best practices for environmental sustainability for the site in Epping and Stawell. I have found the company to be very proactive in this rehabilitation and take advice willingly."* Landscaping

*"Being a local, family-owned business, they have a vested interest in the community for not only the customer base, but also for quality of life for the future of their family as they live here too."*  
- Plumbing and Drainage Specialist



# North Central Quarry SUBMISSIONS OF SUPPORT



Consolidation of submissions prepared as at 15/1/2021

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