



SCORIA PIT: The 15.1ha site is off Mt Eden Rd.

PICTURE / STEVEN McNICHOLL

Court clears path for quarry plan

Environment Court ruling gives nod to Winstone's housing, parkland project

ENVIRONMENT

by Anne Gibson

The vast Winstone quarry at Three Kings can be filled in and used for hundreds of new houses, parkland and commercial premises.

The Environment Court has allowed for development in an interim decision on the 15.1ha site off Mt Eden Rd.

Winstone Aggregates and competitor Envirowaste Services took the case against Auckland Council over its predecessor bodies' issue with the type of material that could be used as landfill.

The councils granted consent, subject to conditions, to control contaminants to protect the groundwater.

Community and environmental groups opposed Winstone, worried about the possible threat of contamination of the water aquifers underneath the quarry site.

The community was also worried about noise, dust, traffic and land subsidence.

The main issue for Envirowaste was whether the site was to be clean-filled or general-filled.

The Environment Court said Winstone intended to source all the fill material from the Auckland area, most likely from roadworks and development sites.

The council should also be able to take sample tests of the fill being used

THREE KINGS QUARRY

- Operating since 1920s
- Produces scoria & aggregate
- Auckland's largest scoria quarry
- Will be mined out by 2020

and Winstone would have to pay for those samples, the court said. Random audits could also be carried out.

Bernie Chote, Winstone Aggregates general manager, said the decision made only minor changes to conditions and was consistent with previous rulings from the two councils.

The Environment Court concluded that Winstone's bid would avoid "adverse effects on human health and the environment" by using cleanfill materials.

"To provide a very high level of assurance in respect of existing drinking water quality beneath the site, conditions avoid any potential adverse effects and give a very high level of confidence that there will be no effect on human health or the environment from granting the consent."

Mr Chote said Winstone could now create an extra 15ha of usable land in the next eight to 12 years.

He pointed out that the Environment Court believed a crucial benefit of the project was that the construction industry and quarry owners could use the site but also provide a scarce urban resource — developed land.