

# War declared over Canterbury quarries

Bernie Napp - Mon, 25 Jun 2018

"Dust up over quarries" ran Environment Canterbury's headline on last Friday's media release on a dust monitoring programme in Yaldhurst, to which the quarry industry has reacted strongly.

"In the middle of a Christchurch suburb, tension between residents and the quarrying industry is coming to a head," ECan says in its [publicity material](#) on its intent to take "a tougher approach to quarry dust management".

ECan chief operating officer Nadeine Dommissie said: "It will take time to rebuild trust between the residents, Environment Canterbury, and the quarry operators."

In addition to imposing mandatory dust monitors at quarry boundaries within 500 metres of people's homes, ECan has sought national guidance around setback distances to "help ease land-use tensions".

The 500 metres is the distance beyond which no exceedances of nuisance dust levels were measured during the [Yaldhurst Air Quality Monitoring Programme](#).

## Battle lines drawn

Aggregates and Quarrying Association chair Brian Roche urged Canterbury quarry companies to "vigorously fight any attempt by Environment Canterbury to impose mandatory continuous dust monitors on the boundaries of all quarries that have a house within 500m of their boundary".

"The move is unprecedented in New Zealand and totally unnecessary given results released on Friday of dust monitoring in the Yaldhurst area which showed 'no serious public health risk to residents'."

Roche said there are hundreds of quarries in Canterbury, most of them very small - on farms, in forestry, and some run by district councils. Many do not crush or screen aggregate and generate little dust.

"This decision will impose unnecessary cost of continuous dust monitoring in these small operations, for no benefit to them or local residents."

"We are surprised and disappointed that ECan appear to have ignored their own data and have announced this without consulting the quarry sector. It may well be that the decision is not legally enforceable and we encourage quarrying companies to seek legal advice."

MinEx Health and Safety Council chief executive Wayne Scott challenged ECan to provide evidence that dust measured at any building site, factory, farm gate, unsealed road or quarry had an impact on residents 500m away in any direction.

"I would also ask ECan to tell us what particulate matter was in the samples on the very few occasions that PM10 limits were exceeded at Yaldhurst and what are the potential sources of that particulate." Scott said.

The Ministry for the Environment defines PM10 as containing combustion particles, organic matter, metals, sulphate, nitrates, sea salt and dust. According to MfE, the most common causes of PM10 exceedance are wood burning and sea spray.

