



## **Greg Piper MP**

### **Member for Lake Macquarie**



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **GREG PIPER TO ASK GOVERNMENT TO SLOW DOWN ON SAND QUARRY**

Greg Piper, Member for Lake Macquarie, has agreed to support the Somersby Action Group in its call for further air quality tests to be considered before the Minister for Planning announces a decision on the Somersby Fields project.

The proposed sand quarry would produce up to 450,000 tonnes/year and operate for up to 18 years. Residents are concerned at the health risk from respirable silica dust that may spread from the site.

Mr Piper says he will raise the matter in Parliament and ask the Government to delay a decision until a benchmark for safe exposure to respirable silica dusts is established.

"I will remind Parliament that independent tests at Somersby have found excessively high levels of silica dusts," said Mr Piper. "This dust is known to cause silicosis and cancer, but the application doesn't include enough information on how much dust there would be and how far it would spread."

"A number of residents of the Lake Macquarie electorate would be affected, including pupils of Somersby Public School."

According to Mr Piper, the World Health Organisation says that occupational exposure to respirable crystalline silica is associated with silicosis, lung cancer, pulmonary tuberculosis and airway diseases.

"The World Health Organisation and the International Labour Office say that managing workplace hazards should also consider possible impacts on surrounding communities," Mr Piper said. "I think that this project can't be approved without considering the existing dust levels, what the increase would be and what is a safe level of exposure to silica dust."

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World Health Organisation

[http://www.who.int/occupational\\_health/publications/newsletter/gohnet12e.pdf](http://www.who.int/occupational_health/publications/newsletter/gohnet12e.pdf)