

Kalbar's Proposed Open-Cut Mineral Sands Mine

Risks to Horticulture Industry in Mitchell River Valley (16th August 2019)



Located on top of the plateau, the proposed mine is as close as 350m from the Mitchell River with the vegetable fields as close as 500m downwind from the mine. 11sq kilometres of farmland is proposed to be mined.

Prime agricultural land for Victoria is located on the fertile soils of the Mitchell River Valley in East Gippsland. This area supplies vegetables to fresh markets, fast food outlets, cafes, restaurants, cruise ships and various businesses along the value-added product chain throughout Australia and overseas.

This area that produces world-class food is 500m downwind from the proposed mine. Most of the vegetables are grown above ground. Water used to irrigate them, wash those that get washed and make ice used in packing for transport comes from the Mitchell River, 350m downwind from the mine.

Vegetables are grown under strict quality assurance systems. Detection of radioactivity or heavy metals above prescribed levels will result in the produce being rejected, loss of the grower's clean green status and have financial consequences for that producer, the local economy and jobs.

About the Mining Proposal:

- Of the mine's 1,675 hectares, 1,100 hectares (11 square kilometres) is to be mined, up to 45m deep. Kalbar is proposing to mine for and partially refine zircon, titanium bearing rutile, ilmenite and rare earths minerals with radiation, arsenic and heavy metals present.
- Airborne dust containing silica or titanium dioxide will be a health risk to workers in the fields.
- Toxic dust, contamination and bioaccumulation of heavy metals in the soils are major concerns.
- There will be a 90ha tailings dam, 40m deep and 20m above ground, containing flocculants.
- During heavy rains, containing run-off and siltation of the Mitchell River will be very difficult.
- The future of this mining proposal will be determined soon, once the Environment Effects Statement (EES) process is finalised. ALL studies in the EES are funded by Kalbar. The horticulture industry has not been represented on the Technical Reference Group that is providing input for the EES.

Some Economic Information About this Horticulture Industry

- Valued at \$150M+ annually, the horticulture industry is at risk of losing its reputation and clean green status should contamination (real or perceived) occur from toxic dust, contaminated water or soil, significantly impacting on the local economy, businesses and jobs.
- Considerable additional financial benefits are delivered to the local economy down the value-added food chain from processing the horticultural produce.
- Around 30 semi-trailer truckloads of fresh produce leave the area daily, increasing to around 50 semi-trailer truckloads during the summer months.
- East Gippsland is home to the largest fresh bagged salad company in the southern hemisphere as well as 2 of the top 10 salad producers (by volume) in Australia.
- 20% of the lettuces used nationally by McDonalds outlets comes from this area.
- By volume, the 3rd largest green bean and sweet corn grower in Australia is located here.
- The area is home to 3 prominent organic vegetable producers.

Jobs:

- Depending on the season, up to 2,000 people are employed in this horticulture industry. These jobs and those indirectly employed as a result of this industry are at risk if those businesses are negatively impacted by the mine.
- Over 600 jobs could be created if the 3,000,000,000 litres of water needed by the mine **annually** was redirected to the horticulture industry; that's 3 times more jobs than Kalbar's proposed 197 short-term mostly contractor jobs that will only exist for the life of the mine.

For Further Information or to Organise a Tour of the Area

John Hine: (0418 129 316)

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FEEDBACK TO GOVERNMENT IS VITAL TO STOP THIS MINE PROPOSAL

Please Email, Write, or Telephone to Express Your Views/Concerns/Objections to:

- 1) Minister for Planning, Hon Richard Wynne: (03) 8683 0964

richard.wynne@parliament.vic.gov.au

{The Minister for Planning makes the final decision about the Environment Effects Statement}

- 2) Minister for Agriculture, Hon Jaclyn Symes: (03) 8392 2261

jaclyn.symes@parliament.vic.gov.au