

## **Media Release**

**Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019**

# **Mitchell River Valley Horticulturalists Speak Out Against Mine**



In the fertile soils of the Mitchell River Valley in East Gippsland, world-class food is grown. This area supplies vegetables to restaurants, fresh markets, fast food outlets, cafes, cruise ships and various businesses along the value-added product chain throughout Australia and overseas. An industry valued at \$150M+ (annually) and employing up to 2,000 people is at risk from a proposed mineral sands mine located on top of a plateau (see photo).

At Kalbar's latest community information session held last night to present their horticultural impact study, Mr Tim Hamilton one of the impacted horticultural business owners asked why RMCG (the consulting company that undertook that study) didn't undertake any primary technical research.

Mr Kane Busch, another horticulturalist said, "I am speaking on behalf of 75% of the horticulture/viticulture business owners of the Mitchell River Valley who are not waiting for the EES report to be released to speak out against this proposed mine. We have no confidence in RMCG's report which was conducted over a year ago. We don't agree there will be a low risk of contamination. Our concerns have not been addressed and the risks are too high for the Government to allow this mine to proceed."

Mr John Hine's vegetable fields are only 500m downwind from the proposed mine, on the other side of the Mitchell River.

"The RMCG consultant leading that study left RMCG before their report was finished. I offered to pay all expenses for his replacement to fly here from Tasmania to see the area before submitting their report. That offer was declined. That's not good enough! How can you report on something when you haven't seen it," John said. (It was revealed that the Melbourne based RMCG consultant presenting the study at last night's meeting had also not had a tour of the impacted area).

"So that I could inform myself, I recently went on a tour of mineral sands mines in Western Australia, organised by Kalbar. The conditions there are nothing like what is proposed here. This mine will be much deeper, in windier and wetter conditions, near the Mitchell River (the source of our irrigation and drinking water) and our veggie crops are only a few hundred metres downwind. Our farming businesses will not be able to coexist with that mine with the risk of contamination too great. We can't have a mine there," John said.

The large audience, most of whom were dressed in orange to show their opposition to the mine, erupted in cheers to show their support for the horticulture business owners.

*To inform their stakeholders about the potential risks and their concerns, these horticulture business owners have produced a flyer.*

**For more information and a copy of the flyer contact:**

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