

# Bairnsdale Advertiser

OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER - 142<sup>nd</sup> YEAR OF PUBLICATION

PH: (03) 5150 2300

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2019

No. 17305 | Price \$1.20

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LIFT-OUT  
INSIDE

## PHONE BAN LOOMING

All Victorian state primary and secondary schools will ban mobile phones from term one, 2020, to help reduce distraction, tackle cyber bullying and improve learning outcomes for students.

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## TAKING A BREAK

As drought conditions continue to test the resilience of the wider community, two local groups have joined together for people to 'take a break' at Johnsonville.

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## POSITIVE LOCAL AG

Local apiarist, Ian Cane, of Wiseleigh, is predicting around 100 millimetres of rain before the middle of November, using the new growth on eucalypts across the eastern basin as an indicator, while the Gippsland Agricultural Group ran its first field day last week.

See the *Primary Producer* for more on both stories.



Bairnsdale Field and Game was a hive of activity over the weekend for the 2019 Field and Game National Carnival. The new three-day format introduced a standalone 100-target sporting event last Friday over three grounds. The number of layouts and targets were increased on Saturday and Sunday with 150 targets deciding the new national champion for 2019. More in Friday's *Advertiser*. PICTURED: Nate Szynda (13), of Orbost, takes aim while Bairnsdale Field and Game president, Michael Crane, and Nate's brother, Daelan, watch on. K1268-76

# No faith in hort report

A horticulture impact study, commissioned by mining company Kalbar, was presented on Tuesday night in front of a large, vocal crowd.

A number of Lindenow vegetable farmers, as well as mixed-enterprise farmers from across the district were present, alongside orange-clad members of Mine Free Glenaladale.

Kalbar, the company proposing to mine mineral sands at the Fingerboards area, west of Lindenow, hosted the community information

session in Bairnsdale.

Clinton Muller, of RM Consulting Group (RMCG), delivered the findings of the impact study, and in summary said there was an overall low risk to the 4700 hectares (11,614 acres) of conventional and organic horticulture systems but recommended communication between horticulturalists and Kalbar be kept open and transparent.

The report drew mocking laughter and criticism from the crowd.

From the floor, organic vegetable producer, Kane Busch, of Busch Or-

ganic, spoke directly to Mr Muller.

"I am speaking on behalf of 75 per cent of the horticulture/viticulture business owners of the Mitchell River Valley who are not waiting for the Environmental Effects Statement (EES) report to be released to speak out against this proposed mine," Mr Busch said.

"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 ad-

ressed and the risks are too high for the government to allow this mine to proceed."

Mr Muller's report listed eight points: dust generation and deposition; potential contaminants in dust particles; quality of run-off water; traffic/road safety; competition for labour; climate change and landscape amenity/clean green image.

Bean producer, Tim Hamilton, asked why the report findings included no independent research.

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Kalbar's Fingerboards Project chief executive officer, Dr Victor Hugo, answers questions from the floor at Tuesday night's horticulture report. K137-1122

# Public feedback important

## From page 1

"I personally believe this is an obsolete report," he said.

"There is a lot lacking on technical information."

Mr Hamilton listed baseline monitoring and accused Kalbar's Fingerboards Project chief executive officer, Dr Victor Hugo, of being

dismissive of issues.

The crowd was assured the studies had been independently peer reviewed.

Dr Hugo said the EES was a very rigorous process and the concerns were addressed in it, and that the company had conducted baseline monitoring.

"We are required to manage dust levels, lev-

els of metals in dust will be well below EPA standards," Dr Hugo said.

"If we don't manage the dust properly, we will be shut down by the EPA.

"We will be closed before we trigger respirable silica."

By its reaction it was clear some members of the crowd didn't believe many of the statements the mine proponents made, with one member calling out "Just the perception of contamination is enough to ruin the horticulture industry".

Other issues raised included soil testing, water collection and usage as well as silicosis.

Vegetable farmer, John Hine, who recently toured mining land in Western Australia with members of Kalbar and the Victorian Farmers Federation, criticised Mr Muller for not having been to the site.

"I don't feel we can co-exist with this mine," Mr Hine said.

It was the twelfth public meeting hosted by Kalbar over a two-year period.

Dr Hugo said the feedback received from the sessions was important for the company to ensure that the EES covered all relevant issues.

"We continue to encourage more feedback as the studies are finalised in preparation for public exhibition of the EES," he said.

"Anyone who wants to find out more about the project, check any information about the EES studies, or provide further input can contact us and arrange to talk with our staff and consultants."




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