

I am John Hine of J & C Hine Vegetables, 1 of the 12 vegetable growers on the Lindenow Flats.

We have been growing vegetables here since 1977.

The main vegetables we grow are sweet corn, broccoli, cauliflowers and baby broccoli.

We also grow lucerne and maize for stock feed as well as running beef cattle on 500 acres at Woodglen.

We have our own semi-trailer trucks to take our produce as well as produce from other growers to markets and various outlets.

We employ 3 truck drivers and 15 permanent staff. Most of the workers in the Lindenow Valley are permanent workers and are a part of the community.

We rely on 600 megalitres of water per year to ensure we can adequately water our crops and maintain a sustainable supply of produce to keep our business viable.

This water is sourced from both the Mitchell River and the Latrobe Group Aquifer, the same sources of water the project proposes to use.

The licence for access to water from the aquifer is vital during periods

when restrictions and total bans are imposed on extracting irrigation water from the Mitchell River, which has happened and is more frequent now during most summer periods.

We applied for some of the 2 GLs of winter-fill licence water from the Mitchell River that was auctioned recently, however there was too much competition and the price became too high. We are concerned that when the last 2 GL is released for auction this year, that the same thing will happen again if Kalbar is allowed to bid for that water.

We are in a situation where because of my age, the family is looking at a

Succession Plan where the children and grandchildren will take over the farm. This may not be possible if this mining project is approved due to how close the proposed mine would be to our farm; we are only 500 meters downwind which may mean that our QA certification may be compromised. The reasons for this will become evident through the course of my allotted time.

Loss of production of lucerne and maize would have a serious impact on my daughter and son-in-law's nearby dairy farm which is reliant on these crops to feed their dairy herd. And it is not simply a question of them finding another supplier as this fodder

has to be free from any contaminants as a condition of the dairy industry's quality control measures.

Having outlined my own personal situation, I would now like to examine the impact of this proposed mine on the wider vegetable growing community of the Lindenow Valley.

With reference to the 82 page Horticultural Impact Assessment (Appendix AO16 of the EES) and Dr Blaesing's RMCG presentation and the numerous amount of misleading, inaccurate and incorrect statements, as well the omission of key issues, I

would like to make the following comments.

- The venturi effect caused by the wind blowing off the plateau will dump toxic dust on the vegetable fields directly below the escarpment
- This dust will also contaminate the Mitchell River which is a major source of our irrigation water
- The statement that north-westerly winds predominantly blow overnight (midnight to 6.00am) and then swing around to southwest between 6.00 am and midday is totally incorrect. In reality the northerly can blow up to thirty hours at a time regardless of the time of day with gusts up to 100kph and change to the south west where

it can blow for up to four days without change with similar gust speeds.

- On Slide 10 of Dr Blaesing's PowerPoint Presentation on 12th May, is a chart from SLR's **Air Quality and Impact Statement** (2018) for the Six Mile Dam Project on Queensland's Sunshine Coast hinterland. It showed that mine dust will have **no impact** on vegetation. Google Maps however shows that there are no vegetable farms in that area. To be a valid comparison it would be necessary to quote a Dust Impact Statement for a Project in close proximity to a vegetable growing area. Neither

Kalbar nor its consultants have been able to produce such a document.

- The claim that the horticulture industry is worth \$62 million is a gross underestimation and is less than half of what is quoted by government authorities which is \$150 million. We feel this was done to make our industry appear less important.
- The map on Slide 7 of Dr Blaesing's presentation headed 'Data Use, Ground Truthing of Production Data' totally misrepresents the area of the Lindenow Flats under crop but was

still used as evidence despite being aware that KPMG in its 2019 Report commented on poor data availability. The use of published data that the author admits is poor can only be misleading and lead to inaccurate conclusions. As confirmed in her cross examination by Ms Porter, Dr Blaesing did not verify this map nor data used in the RMCg report with the growers.

- The suggestion that vegetables can be washed to remove dust post-harvest not only shifts the onus on to the grower, but you heard from Dr Premier on 7th June in his submission that the processors specify that certain vegetables must

not be washed leading up to and at harvest as that can introduce fungal disease as well as reducing the shelf life of the produce during transport.

Water

- An adequate supply of high quality water is vital to sustain our industry.
- The COVID situation over the last 12 months has clearly demonstrated the need for the production of fresh vegetables within this State.
- The area under cultivation in the Valley for fresh vegetables is increasing on a yearly basis creating a growing demand for water.

- As Dr Premier stated, the Lindenow Valley is growing in importance as a producer of fresh vegetables when supply is not available from both intra and interstate due to climate constraints.
- Areas near Melbourne which have historically been used for vegetable production are now being turned into housing estates so food production from elsewhere is decreasing.
- The Latrobe Group Aquifer that is accessed by growers is vital for water security when there are restrictions and total bans on the Mitchell River during summer months, creating a high flow rate between Glenaladale and Calulu.

- If this aquifer is contaminated or levels drop below pumping capabilities, this water security is lost.
- Climate change will reduce the availability of winter-fill if snow events are shortened or fail.
- Water seeping through the Haunted Hills gravel feeds the river during summer months. Mining excavation through these gravel seams will reduce flow into the Mitchell River.
- After mining there are concerns that these seams which both direct and filter the water cannot be effectively rebuilt.
- Seepage from the mine void into groundwater which eventually

reaches the river will contaminate it and there is no guarantee this can be avoided.

- Vegetable growers are fully aware of the importance of maintaining both water and soil quality and test regularly for contaminants. Results of these tests are readily available on some of these properties Internet Web Pages.
- The unallocated 2GL of water would be better suited both socially and economically if it could be used for vegetable production rather than mining. There is still a demand from growers for this water as demonstrated in the recent over

subscribing of the 2GL auctioned last month.

- Our grower calculations, supported by Southern Rural Water show an average annual usage of 9000 mgs per year of water with employment of 2,000 jobs. So, using these figures and dividing it by the number of jobs which is 2,000 equals one job per 4.5 mg per worker.
- Using the same method of calculations for the mine which Kalbar anticipates will use 3GL and employ 200 personnel, this calculation comes out at 15 mg per job.
- The only conclusion that can be reached from these figures is that

agriculture is capable of creating over three times more direct jobs per megalitre compared to what the mine would create. Allocating this water to agriculture then appears to provide a greater value per megalitre.

- The RMCG report did not include the indirect value of agriculture to the economy (page 19). For every direct job in mining 1 indirect job is created however as referenced in MFG's Submission #813, 4 indirect jobs are created for every direct job. Many more jobs both direct and indirect are created in agriculture which is a guaranteed return to the economy.

Dust

- Dust produced from the mine will have a totally different chemical composition from dust that occurs as a result of ploughing topsoil on the Lindenow Flats. From analysis made available by Kalbar, it is clear that the mine dust will contain toxic substances capable of contaminating crops.
- This contamination can be absorbed into the plants both through uptake into the roots and through landing on the plants becoming trapped in the plant.
- These contaminants then have the potential to be absorbed by humans as a result of consuming those crops.

- Overburden stored on site will contain both toxic metals and fine sands which cannot be retained on site and will be subject to wind movement with the high potential to be deposited on the agricultural land below the plateau.
- The contention by Kalbar that the dust will be contained and not subject to wind or water movement due to grain and particle size is not supported by evidence from other mineral sands mines where stockpiles clearly show signs of both water and wind erosion.
- Workers in the paddocks, be they planting, scarifying or harvesting will be exposed to this dust which

can be taken in through inhalation, ingestion and absorption.

- Symptoms of any illness which may result from this process may not be immediate but as an employer responsible for worker OH&S, I am required to provide a safe workplace. This will not be possible in such close proximity of 500 metres to this proposed mine.

Stress Levels

- This project which has been dragging on for over 7 years has created massive stress levels not just for me and my family but for the wider community.

- We fear for the health of our workers and our family, for those who might become ill from eating our crops and for the ultimate risk of our business having to shut down after all these years of hard work that would deny our family the opportunity to continue working our land.
- Knowing that such an inappropriate project is being considered and pursued has limited most local's ability to get on with their lives. This has come on top of both severe drought and fires and now COVID.
- This project has unfortunately caused massive division in what we would have previously considered

as a cooperative and conservative community. This situation can only deteriorate further if this project is approved.

Conclusion

- Based on evidence presented to the IAC, we ask that you recommend to the Minister that this project not be approved.
- We also request the rejection of this project because the EES contains incorrect, incomplete and misleading information.
- Kalbar has been unable to correct these errors and satisfactorily answer questions put to them

during the course of this hearing.

And

- Most importantly, this is the wrong place for a mine. The negative environmental effects can't be controlled with potentially dangerous consequences.