

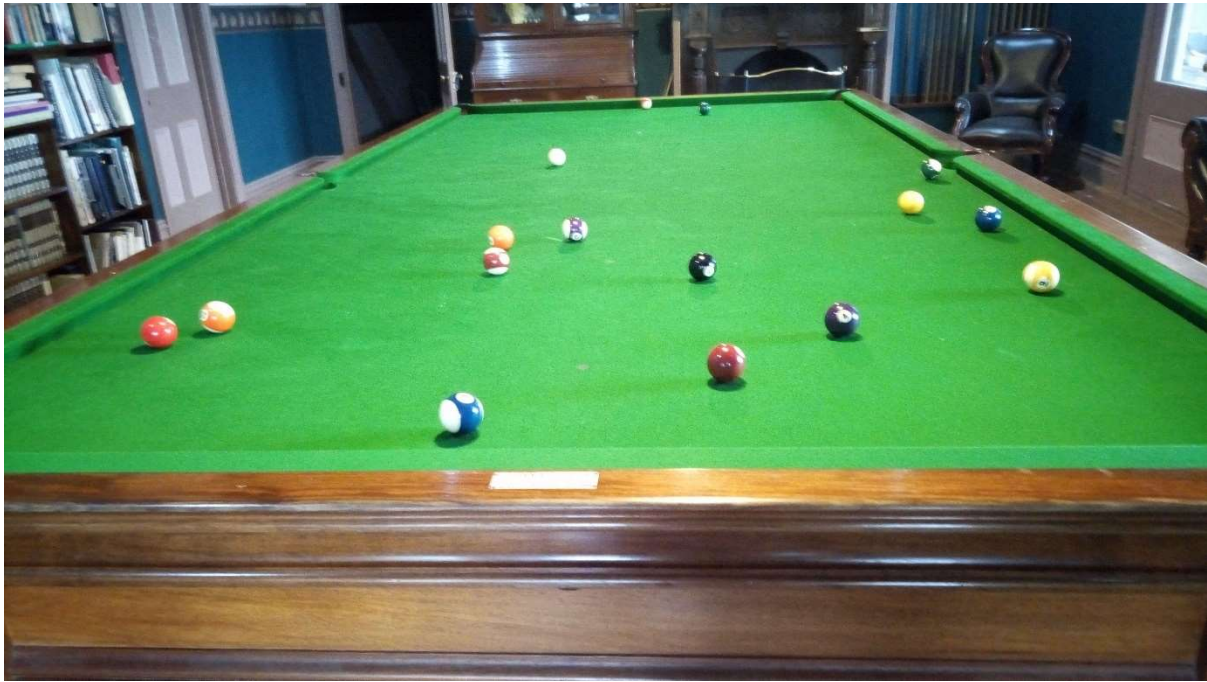


Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge and pay my respects to the GunaiKurnai people, the traditional owners of this land I am on today and that of the proposed mine site. I would like to pay my respects to their Elders and leaders past, present and emerging and to any GunaiKurnai people who may be listening today. I speak with deference to the history of Aboriginal care, custodianship and management of this land.



My name is Yvette Waller I am 33 years old and grew up in Glenaladale. Our family are sixth generations of farmers in the Glenaladale area, being the Wallers and Morrison's. I grew up in a family of 6 in our historical family homestead of "Glenloch."

We went to Kindergarten at Lindenow, Primary School at Woodglen and Secondary at Bairnsdale. I now live back in East Gippsland and visit and help work the farm regularly.



Glenloch was built in 1912 by my great grandparents Tom and Maud Morrison. The homestead was built around a competition size billiard table which is still the centre feature of the household. My great-grandfather used to host weekend billiard games with the men of the district of his era.

Our family historically farms sheep and cattle in the area. My father lives at Glenloch today and farms merino sheep for fine wool.



Our inherited farm is split over 200-acre blocks. We move stock between these properties on the road, in fact I think some of the panel saw me moving sheep on my horse when you came down for the site inspection.



Our homestead has large cattle and sheep yards and a working wool shed. It is the central point of the farm and situated directly next door and down hill from the proposed mine site.

Growing up in Glenaladale our family productively raised sheep and cattle on the land to supplement my parents working wage.



Helping Dad on the farm we learnt the values of hard work, humility and patience for long term reward. We learnt skills in animal handling and care and all about life, death and responsibility.



Along with beef and sheep - over the years we also bred and raised horses, goats, chickens, ducks, pigs, cats and dogs.



There is an abundance of wildlife at Glenloch that raises itself on the land including kangaroos, wallabies, emus, wombats, snakes, possums, bats, black cockatoos, wedge-tailed eagles, hundreds of other furry, scaly, slimy and feathered creatures. My grandma even used to have issues with spotted quolls eating her chickens at Glenloch!













This whole journey opposing this mine project started for me in 2014 when a friend asked me to attend a Kalbar Community meeting at Mossiface Hall. This friend and her husband are successful merino sheep farmers and had been fighting Kalbar proposal to mine their land at Mossiface.



They had been subject to serious impacts of coercion and bullying in the fight. I went along to the meeting to show my support to my friend, I brought my Mum with me – because farming women need to support each other. So, we were sitting there, learning and listening about the Mossiface community opposition and fight to the proposed mine and what mineral sands mining was and what resource they proposed to extract. Little did I know that that meeting would change my life for the foreseeable future.



At the meeting - the speaker on behalf of Kalbar was the then CEO Rob Bishop. Mr Bishop spoke about the mine and was frankly the least charismatic public speaker I have ever seen. As he went on talking about the resource at Mossiface, he then started talking about how they had found a similar deposit of this mineral sands in Glenaladale. My heart just sank. Mr Bishop then went on to talk about how the Glenaladale area and how it only had something like a “handful of lettuce growers and sheep farmers.” I went from a feeling of ice in my stomach which then turned to blood boiling rage. Teary, I got up and spoke about how much I loved this land how much it meant to my family and how there were productive farmers out there for six generations.



I could not believe what I was hearing - that someone could talk in such a flippant manner about the place I knew and loved so dearly. I was shocked. This place that had supported my family, friends, neighbours and community for generations. It was clear the Kalbar CEO had such little knowledge of what was at stake. I listened on as the out-of-towners stumbled over familiar place names and continued to talk like this was not all an awfully bad, terrible idea to pursue, which I knew in my heart it was.



Going forward, including during this EES Hearing I have heard Kalbar's so-called experts regularly mispronounce and confuse land places, landmarks and road names in the area. Dismiss the productive nature of this land. Gloss over its importance to the state's food security. State that certain protected species that we know are there are not there. Dismiss key cultural Aboriginal sites that we know would be disturbed or destroyed if this goes ahead. More evidence of their lack of understanding of the area or deliberate omissions to make the project seem viable. They talk about this land like it is nothing when it means everything to my family.





Over time they have changed plans at a whim which feels like a kick in the guts every time a new map of the plan comes out with no genuine consultation with community.

For six years since that meeting at Mossiface I have had to plead my case for my family farm and Glenaladale and surrounding areas. These objections to the mine are heartfelt and it is quite frankly exhausting, debilitating and depressing to have to keep advocating for your heartland against this greedy, divisive, foreign and insidious interest.



During this EES Panel hearing I have tuned in and heard Kalbar talk about losing \$50 million to date, with an inferred tone as if that amount is now 'owed' to them. Quite frankly I feel this process has been a costly and failed venture for the mining company. I think the reason it has continued this far is that Kalbar in the beginning thought that Glenaladale people could be easily bullied and 'pushed over.' These figures Kalbar states to have lost would be minimal compared to the amount that farmers and their families spend and contribute to the area.



Not to mention the amount we have lost in fighting this mine proposal in terms of stalled future-planning due to uncertainty, stress, worry, lost sleep, family fighting, neighbours being coerced into selling or leasing land etc. These arrangements are often triggered by rumours and lies spread by the mining company and their supporters to divide the community.

Our community has been failed by the Government at all levels not stepping in long ago to protect our farmers and the cultural land on which this mine is proposed and stopping the process. Our community have formed a fierce, vocal, educated and overwhelming majority opposition to Kalbar and this mining proposal. We know what this mine might mean adversely for our Glenaladale, Fernbank and Lindenow plus downstream Gippsland Lakes areas, how it will impact areas economically, environmentally, culturally, socially and emotionally now and for future generations.



Glenaladale has lots of friends in the community. People all across Victoria, Australia and even internationally: eat our veggies, our sheep and cattle, wear our wool. They visit our areas for tourism including the Den of Nargun, our cafes, pubs and wineries. They holiday and enjoy our pristine lakes and wilderness.





There were so many benefits to growing up in Glenaladale, it is a magical place. We are reminded of this when people visit the farm and say things like, this is so beautiful, you are so lucky, the views are magnificent, even I wish they didn't have to leave.



I was reminded growing up how lucky we are that throughout primary and secondary school we always had friends stay on the weekends. To enjoy the freedom and fun of farm life. Playing games, building cubby house, exploring, riding horses, motorbikes, playing billiards, swimming, learning to drive.



To enjoy a large and welcoming property like Glenloch and to feel at home with our family.



It was often a major change and sometimes a welcome escape from their experience at home. Glenloch is just one example of similar beautiful households in the area, who's family and friends want to protect their special houses and farms for current and future generations.



During the panel hearing I have heard Kalbar experts state that the land of the mine area is not productive. I roll my eyes at this because the land has supported my family and community for generations. I have seen improvement to the land even within the last ten years in a response to global climate change where farmers are stocking, watering, rotating stock and rehabilitating land to improve feed quality and outcomes. Farmers know this land

and are adapting to the environment to improve their practices so they can continue to feed and clothe the state. Farmers stick it out and fight for this land through drought, bushfires, the good times and the bad.







Special places like Glenloch are the hub of farming families, they are the sites of births, deaths, marriages, relationship makeups and break ups, parties and weddings.



It is the beating heart and the cultural and social meeting place of our family. Its significance cannot be underestimated, and I worry for my father if he has to choose between living in an untenable and unhealthy environment beside a mine or choosing his family farm. This farm and property which he and my mother have lovingly cared for, heavily invested in, maintained and improved for decades for the benefit of our family and visitors.



My family is just one example of people who love their homes in Glenaladale, this mining fight is pushing people to the brink emotionally and financially. There has been tactics by the mining company to divide the community including coercive land lease and purchase, spreading of rumours to divide family, friends and neighbours. Essentially an attempt to divide and conquer.



We are lucky to now after six years of advocating for our area to have thousands supporting this fight which makes you feel less alone. People are weary, depressed, anxious emotional and angry that this fight continues, despite community opposition and the overwhelming evidence that the EES process and document is hugely flawed. Our community do not want this mine.

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I have seen over six years the support against this mine build and grow as people become more aware and educated. We have a huge and mobilised opposition to this mine project. A huge army of 'accidental activists' who are pulling Kalbar up at every turn. I shudder to think if this mine project is approved what the community backlash would be and quite frankly, I think you will have a riot on your hands with people who feel they have nothing left to lose and have been pushed to the edge by this project.