

**Reprising Reefman Arts Estate Retreat
at the Fingerboards Mineral Sands IAC Enquiry**

I am Donrita Reefman, and I manage our small hospitality business, *Reefman Arts Estate Retreat*, with my husband, Peter Reefman. We moved here from Sydney in 2014 to live a more sustainable and healthy lifestyle.

On our 115 acre farm situated in Calulu above the Lindenow flats and approximately 13 km from and in direct sight of the proposed mine site, we have built *Lavender Cottage*, a two-bedroom, off-grid, bed-and-breakfast cottage, which can accommodate up to 7 adults. It has stunning views on all sides – of the farm and of the Lindenow valley. We also have three guest-rooms in the main house – two queen rooms and one king single with a trundle. In total we can accommodate up to 13 guests at our site. We host interstate and international tourists, people seeking a short reprieve from Melbourne, students visiting for a local placement and professional people needing accommodation while performing temporary work in the area.

In addition, our farm's operation relies on the assistance from "workawayers" - usually young tourists from overseas and other parts of Australia, who offer 25 hours of work per week in exchange for free board. The rest of the time these people enjoy much of what the East Gippsland natural environment has to offer – on the lakes and rivers and national park, cycling, walking, indigenous culture, dining in local restaurants and contributing to the local economy.

Our six children also visit our farm, bringing our grandchildren with them to experience clean, fresh, healthy country living.

Reefman Arts Estate Retreat's focus is to provide a retreat in a serene, natural, picturesque and peaceful environment, where folks can rest, relax, reflect and restore, away from city pollution, noise, light and frenzy. We actively share with our guests and workers our passion for caring for our natural surrounds, frequently sending them home with a resolve to put into practice the principles of sustainable living they have learned while staying with us. Our guests remark about our beautiful views, the clean air, the unspoilt drinking rainwater, the night sky full of more stars than they have seen at home, the quiet, often reporting that they had never slept so well anywhere else.

We have attended Kalbar's community connection sessions and listened carefully to their proposal, assessing its impact on our business and the local community and environment, and heard Kalbar's assurances that adverse mining impacts would be mitigated. We have found their proposal alarming, their assurances unconvincing and their responses to the community's genuine concerns dismissive. Kalbar's continual shifting claims and unviable solutions have left us wholly unconvinced that they would accept any responsibility to protect the community from the mine's adverse consequences.

Mr Wimbush and members of the IAC Committee, I will leave it to others to present the specific scientific evidence of the adverse and unavoidable effects that the proposed mine would have on the local environment and community. Unmistakably, such a mine's impact will do severe and ongoing damage to the health, lifestyle and economic viability of the local community. *Reefman Arts Estate Retreat* will be no less impacted. Guests staying in Lavender Cottage, instead of looking out over the serene Lindenow valley, will be looking at the scar of an open minesite. The peace and serenity which has become one of our best features will be perpetually invaded by the noise of a mine that operates 24 hours a day. Constant mine operation will mean that guests will no longer wake refreshed after the uninterrupted, recuperating sleep that our present quiet and proper dark provides. They will no longer stand on our deck in the morning to breathe fresh, healthy, country air. Instead, they will likely breathe in the toxic dust, which Kalbar cannot comprehensively control, given our local weather patterns. The spectacular sunsets

they currently enjoy will be marred by the dust Kalbar will spew into our air. The clean drinking water in our water tanks, which our guests currently enjoy drinking, will capture and hold this toxic dust. The unspoilt natural attractions which currently attract tourists to our region will be compromised by the literal flow-on effects of the mining operation's toxic fallout.

Our guests have been made aware of the mining proposal. They have indicated they would no longer visit the area, and have signed petitions against the mine. Our children would not wish to bring their children to visit us so close to a dangerous mine. We would need to consider moving out of the area to continue to be part of our grandchildren's lives.

The mine's impact would not only be environmental but also economical. How many of Kalbar's promised "new jobs" will be at the cost of established jobs, industries, and generations-long-held family farms and homes? How many locals work in mining anyway? Most of Kalbar's jobs would not be for us locals. As for *Reefman Arts Estate Retreat*, as you have heard, the features that currently attract our customers would be destroyed by the mine's impact. Our business would no longer be viable.

After the impacts of the recent drought, followed by the bushfires, followed by the crippling effects of COVID restrictions on hospitality sectors, all of which have already brought about challenging struggles to our business, a misplaced mine to produce ceramics and white pigment for primarily overseas investors and customers while, destroying a local community's right to live and prosper, is clearly not deserving of the resources already spent in considering it.

I, along with the vast majority of our local community, depend on you to protect the local people from the destruction which would be the cost to us of a venture to increase the wealth of a few, who do not have to shoulder that cost.