**Guidance for your Submission about the Environment Effects Statement (EES)**

* **What is a submission**: It’s just a letter that you write!
* **Make it unique:** The panel members will look closely at unique ones. We all have our own personal story to tell about why we care. You don’t need to be an expert!
* **Ask questions in your letter!** Raise doubts about the risks based on your concerns.
* **How to write it**: A structure is shown below with ideas of areas you can talk about.

*Every submission is important, no matter how short or simple. The most important thing is to make a submission, tell your story and ask others to help by doing one too!*

**How to begin your letter:**

* (Don’t put your address or private information in the letter, it will go on a coversheet; see the ‘*Instructions on Putting in your Submission’* on the last page). Start letter with:

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee members,

* (Begin your first paragraph saying you are writing this submission about the EES for the Fingerboards mineral sands mine project and tell them you strongly oppose the mine, briefly summarising why or say, for the reasons outlined below.)
* (In the next paragraph you could say how long you have lived in the area (is it near the mine) why it is special to you, and why you want to protect it.)
* (Below are some ideas to consider including in the main part of your letter. **Write about what you think are the important potential impacts of the mine and why those impacts are unacceptable.** **Say what you are worried about – what could go wrong (environmentally in particular) and why it is a problem**.

(Here are some things you could write about. **Please** **use your own words**)

* The mining proponent Kalbar Operations Pty Ltd has acknowledged there are radioactive substances being mined including rare-earths. Below ground level and undisturbed these substances do not pose a health risk. It is when they are excavated and crushed that dust is generated, dispersing these materials into the environment; this poses a health risk. Let the panel know you are concerned about this and why.
* The full analysis of the ore body hasn’t been disclosed. You don’t trust the information in the EES because we don’t know what the laboratory was asked to analyse. You don’t know the real dangers to human/animal health. Ask the Panel to ensure this information is fully disclosed and closely examined because of the risks.
* Dust travels far, so contamination and health risks are real concerns. Tell the Panel they have a duty of care not to add to the cancer burden of the community.
* The mine is too close to where many families live, farm and work. Speak about your personal concerns and/or concern for others, about health risks in the future such as lung disease from respirable silica. It is irresponsible for the Government to put the community at risk. The number of houses near the mine has been under-reported.
* Council’s ‘Lindenow & District Community Plan’ did not foresee a mine in that area. Government needs to recognise the pre-existing residential and agricultural land use. Noise from a mine operating 24 hours a day 7 days a week will be untenable and very stressful, and you don’t accept that the noise levels won’t be a problem.
* We will lose tourism dollars as people won’t want to come to the area. Talk about what makes the area special for tourists/residents and that could change and why.
* The vegetable industry in the Lindenow Valley is only 500m downwind from the mine with most of the vegetables grown above ground, so dust from the mine is a high risk. You don’t want to eat contaminated vegetables or risk that industry being shut down which could result in big job and financial losses for our region.
* Water to irrigate the crops comes from the Mitchell River. The mine is on the other side of the river on top of a plateau. There are risks of the river being contaminated, impacting on the crops, fishing, agriculture, the health of the rivers and the Gippsland Lakes (an important Ramsar-listed wetland).
* Unknown Aboriginal cultural heritage sites are stated as being highly likely to be present and will be impacted. Given the massive excavation down to 45m, it will be impossible to avoid destruction of artefacts and heritage. This is unacceptable. Their mitigation measures will not avoid the obliteration of cultural heritage.
* There will be a tailings dam 90 hectares in size, that’s nearly 1 square km. It will contain mine tailings waste and flocculants (chemicals used to treat the tailings) which have warnings on safety data sheets about being harmful to aquatic life.

Located on high ground above both the Perry and Mitchell Rivers there is a stated risk of leaching from the dam. If there is a 1 in 100-year flood, tailings waste & flocculants could be released into the creeks/rivers, harming aquatic life and aquifers. The risks are considerable and foreseeable given the many examples of dam failures (Benambra example) so the risk of failure can’t be low. There are no details in the EES for the dam’s construction so how can the risk of failure be low!

* Over 3 billion litres of water (3GL) is required by the mine annually for up to 15 years (the maximum life of the mine) for processing and to control dust. This shows how big a problem dust is. What will the impact of this be on bores, aquifers and the Mitchell River? According to irrigation data, if the 3GL of water was redirected to the horticulture industry, 3 times more jobs could be created than proposed by the mine.
* The Woodglen Reservoir where domestic and commercial water is stored for the whole Shire is 3.5kms downwind from the mine. What are the contamination risks? (Those on tank water living near the mine are also at risk of water contamination).
* With 13 square kms of land being mined a lot of trees and habitat will be removed including over 700 large mature trees. Flora and fauna species are threatened. EES technical studies have not comprehensively surveyed the area to know the full ramifications of what is at risk. This could mean more loss than reported in the EES. The landscape of the area will never be replaced; offsets can’t address this loss.
* Full rehabilitation rarely happens. Will progressive rehabilitation actually occur (example is Douglas mine at Balmoral in Western Victoria where a toxic waste dump was left behind)? The risks of no rehabilitation are high if the mine goes into ‘care & maintenance’ with the tailings dam and 19 dams on gullies/creeks being abandoned. Rehabilitation bonds have been shown to be grossly inadequate to cover costs.
* It is unacceptable to allow compulsory acquisition of private land to be used by the mine for infrastructure that is located outside the mining project boundary for: water pipelines, bore pumps, bore field, roadworks, new powerlines, easements, rail siding and vegetation removal. Why wasn’t this part of the mine project area? Why isn’t this a matter for the EG Shire Council to determine?

(Could everyone please include the last dot point in their submission which is in response to the Draft Planning Scheme Amendment - Attachment C in the EES).

(Finish your letter by thanking the Panel members for the opportunity to make a submission. Write your name at the bottom but don’t include any address information).

**Instructions on Putting in your Submission**

Once you have written your submission (see help above) you’re ready to submit it. **Applications close 5pm on Thursday 29 October 2020.**

Each submission is a public document and will be treated as a submission in response to all the exhibited documents, so only one submission addressing all of your views about the Project is needed. Submissions can be lodged as a hardcopy (see B below) although if you have access to a computer and the internet, it is preferred that you make your submission online via this website: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/fingerboards-IAC>

1. **Online submission via the above website (preferred option):**
2. Go to the bottom of the above website page to: ‘Make your submission’.
3. Read the privacy statement.
4. Tick the 4 boxes.
5. Type your name, address, email and phone number.
6. Indicate if you are making your submission on behalf of an organisation.
7. Type in your submission (if less than 500 words) or preferably save it as a document and upload it as a .doc or .pdf document (photos can be included).
8. Indicate if you wish to speak to your submission during the Public Hearing phase starting February. We highly recommend you do; guidance will be given.
9. The response to calling an expert witness is most likely ‘no’.

Contact Planning Panels Victoria on 136 186 (select option 6) if you have any problems.

1. **Hardcopy submission**
2. You can either handwrite (if legible) or type your submission.
3. A ‘Submission Coversheet’ has to be enclosed with each submission. It has the questions shown in A above, that you handwrite the answers to on that form. You can get a coversheet by ringing 136 186 and they will post one to you **OR** you can get one from Sharon at the Paint Shop (black building on the corner of Dalmahoy & Bailey Streets, Bairnsdale - across from Spotlight). Fill it in and put it with your completed submission in a sealed envelope, put your name and phone number on the back of your envelope and give it to Sharon. {The Paint Shop is closed: Wednesdays, Saturday afternoons and Sundays}.
4. Sharon will courier submissions when a few have been received. **If you want us to forward your submission (with coversheet) you must have them to Sharon by 4pm on Thursday 29 October 2020 to meet the 5pm submission deadline on that day.**

**Public Hearing dates**

* The hearing will begin the week commencing 1 February 2021 for up to 6 weeks (mostly likely Kalbar will be called first which could take the first 2 weeks of that period).
* Anyone who wants to speak at the hearing must have made a written submission.
* It would be terrific to have as many people as possible speaking to their submission!