

# Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory  
Committee - EES

# 109

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**Request to be heard?:** No - but please email me a copy of the  
Timetable and any Directions

**Full Name:** Melissa Churchman

**Organisation:**

**Affected property:** [REDACTED]

**Attachment 1:** Churchman\_Stop\_

**Attachment 2:**

**Attachment 3:**

**Comments:** See Attached Submission

Melissa Churchman

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Sarsfield VIC 3875

Date 21 October 2020

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee members,

I am writing in response to the EES conducted by Kalbar for the Fingerboards Mineral Sands Mine Project. I have lived in East Gippsland for more than 13 years and this region is incredibly special, clean, green and natural. Please don't contaminate this part of the world with harsh, water guzzling extraction pursuits! Surely the time has come to hold environmental concerns and the welfare of the people who have lived in the area for years and the vast food bowl growing capacity of the Mitchell River Flats before short term financial gain for blow-in blow-out companies who have no stake in the region beyond how much money they can make and take.

These are the reasons below I do not believe the Fingerboards Mineral Sands Mine Project should go ahead at Glenaladale, East Gippsland:

- 13 square kms on a plateau which is above the Heritage listed Mitchell River and the vegetable fields of the Mitchell River Valley is to be mined up to 45m deep. If there is runoff 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). The Lakes are the centrepiece of our region!
- Kalbar's geochemistry report lists a number of radioactive and Cancer causing substances that will be present in the dust generated. Dust can travel far so this potentially could effect the entire district. The mine is too close to where many families live, farm, work and go to school, it is a highly inappropriate area
- The \$155M/year Mitchell River Valley vegetable industry that employs up to 2,000 people is as close as 500m downwind from the mine. Will any farmers be able to sell their crops, meat or livestock if their produce is contaminated and they are known to be in a toxic mining area? The answer is most likely a NO.
- The Mitchell River, the source of water to irrigate those vegetables and make ice to transport them is 350m downwind (between the mine and the vegetable fields).
- Kalbar needs over 3 billion litres of water annually for processing and dust suppression for 15 years. This shows how much water is needed to control the dust which will potentially pose major human and animal health risks. Given how fraught our water supply in the region has been in recent years of drought, this represents an unacceptable drain on our region's waterways and systems.
- Kalbar's high need for water could lead to earlier and tighter restrictions on users reliant on water from the Mitchell River (such as the horticulture industry) and is

likely to impact the health of the Gippsland Lakes from reduced fresh water. Why should the populace of the region suffer for the benefit of a MINE?

- There are concerns that jobs in tourism and agriculture are at risk from potential contamination of the river and crops.
- Could other jobs be created instead? Based on irrigation data, if the 3 billion litres of water Kalbar requires annually was redirected to growing vegetables, 3 times more jobs could be created than Kalbar's proposal. These would be long-term sustainable jobs to grow food. According to National Farmers Federation statistics, every job created in agriculture leads to 4.2 indirect jobs. From Kalbar's website, 1 mining job leads to 1 indirect job. Kalbar's 'jobs creation' estimates are a sweetener and not likely to be monitored, proven, or demonstrable. There are many many hundreds more jobs to be generated from developing our farming foodbowl capacities going forward.
- 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. Mitigation measures will not avoid the obliteration of cultural heritage.
- The pre-existing residential and agricultural land use needs to be recognised for this area. Noise from a mine operating 24 hours a day 7 days a week will be untenable and very stressful.
- There will be a tailings dam 90 hectares in size (nearly 1 square km). It will contain mine tailings waste and flocculants which have warnings on safety data sheets about being harmful to aquatic life.
- The Woodglen Reservoir where domestic and commercial water is stored for the whole Shire is 3.5kms downwind from the mine. This poses contamination risks on Bairnsdale's drinking water and those on tank water living near the mine.
- Removal of over 700 large mature trees. Flora and fauna species are threatened and this kind of mass removal of significant tree matter is unacceptable. We lost everything on our farm in the bushfires and council told us we needed a permit to remove one damaged mature tree...how can this mass destruction of mature habitat be considered acceptable?

Please do not allow this flawed, financially greedy and short-sighted project to proceed – there are no short, medium, or long-term benefits to be seen from any who currently live and work and grow here. Instead, an unrelated, non-local company with dubious international backing, is wanting to come and wreak havoc on our region and destroy all the values we hold dear to our way of life in this healthy, productive, green and wonderful part of the world. Please please please do not let this happen.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Yours sincerely,

