

# Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory  
Committee - EES

# 158

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Request to be heard?: No

**Full Name:** Carl Smith

**Organisation:**

**Affected property:**

**Attachment 1:** OBJECTION\_TO\_FI

**Attachment 2:**

**Attachment 3:**

**Comments:** See attached submission

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee members,

**Re: STRONG OBJECTION TO FINGERBOARDS MINERAL SANDS MINE PROJECT**

The Covid-19 virus has applied an intense focus to Australia's ability to be self sufficient. Food and tourism are two important industries slated to play a significant part in our recovery and future economic growth. From what I have read, in addition to the economic harm, there are many environmental risks with significant consequences.

The Victorian Government needs to protect the major food bowl that is nearby and ensure that tourism to East Gippsland is not unfavourably impacted. Creeping urbanisation is already gobbling up massive swathes of farming land. Land we cannot afford to lose.

I understand the proposed location of the mine is far too close to where many people live, farm and work. It would be irresponsible for the Government to allow a mine to proceed at this location and put the health of so many people, including children at risk.

I am not a resident of the East Gippsland region, but as a Victorian I believe we all need to be concerned about this proposed mine. From my reading I am not confident that there has been full disclosure of what is contained in the ore body and ask that the panel members ensure this information is fully investigated and disclosed. For example; I understand that the one wind monitoring station was located in a wind shadow so how can that possibly give accurate information about the impacts to the community. The panel members have a duty of care to ensure all the evidence about this is sought and disclosed.

The vegetable growing industry in the Lindenow Valley is as close as 500m downwind from the mine. The risks from toxic dust are considerable. That industry relies on water from the Mitchell River to irrigate those crops, so if the tailings dam or the other dams on creeks and gullies above the Mitchell River fail, the risk of our fresh vegetables become contaminated is high.

The drinking water for East Gippsland and its visitors is from the Woodglen Reservoir, only 3.5kms downwind from the mine. Has the impact of possible contamination of the drinking water been considered?

In addition, the proposed mine will require approximately 3 billion litres a year for up to 15 years. I would have thought a project that requires that amount of water, just as we are coming out of a 10 year drought, would have a very low priority. Fresh water is an important resource which must be used wisely and saved for agriculture and the environment. In particular environmental flows into the Gippsland Lakes wetlands and the Ramsar protected waterways, as well as the tourism industry that strongly relies on the Gippsland Lakes.

Over the years we have all watched with horror the unspeakable damage tailings dams have caused to local communities all round the world. Failure is all too commonplace. I am informed that the location of their tailings dam is on a ridge

above the catchment of two rivers, the Perry and Mitchell Rivers; this is an environmental disaster just waiting to happen. The risk is absolutely unacceptable given there are also no plans for the tailings dam in the EES so how can the impacts be properly assessed with no details provided? I also understand the structure of the soils in this area is subject to tunnel erosion, making the risk of a failure extremely high.

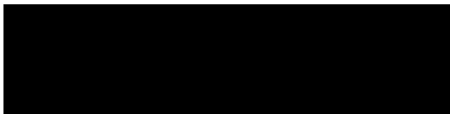
By the very nature of mining there will be a loss of flora and fauna and that an unacceptable consequence particularly given massive losses from the recent horrific bushfires in the region? The extent of the possible cultural heritage loss is stated as being unknown; the risk of significant loss given the history of the area is therefore expected to be high.

Finally I strongly feel it is unacceptable to permit compulsory access to private land outside the mining project boundary. This greatly extends the size of the mine project and yet no size of this additional area has been given. Why isn't that infrastructure contained within the project area which is already massive at 1,675 hectares? The issue of infrastructure should be a matter for the local Council to determine so this draft planning scheme amendment should be refused.

Please consider the high environmental risks posed by this mine proposal and recommend that it not be approved.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Carl M Smith.

Carl M Smith