

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

242

Request to be heard?: No

Full Name: Amy Alexander

Organisation:

Affected property:

Attachment 1: lettersubmission_

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: see attached submission

26/10/2020

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee members,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed Fingerboards Mineral Sands Mine Project. After reading an overview of the EES conducted by Kalbar, I feel strongly that the proposed mine should not proceed. I don't believe the local community will benefit at all from this proposal. In fact, after reading points from the EES, there seem to be many ways in which the community could potentially be negatively effected.

I lived in East Gippsland for the first eighteen years of my life. My family still reside in the area and I have visited them frequently over the years, sometimes staying for up to two months at a time. Needless to say I know the area well. Currently, I live in Berlin with my 3 year old son. In the six years that I have lived in Europe, I have been shocked and amazed at just how many people I have met who have visited East Gippsland all the way from Germany. I've always known that I came from an idyllic part of the world, but it wasn't until I set up my home in Europe that I truly came to understand the magnitude of it's uniqueness. The dozen or so people I have encountered talk highly about the forests, the lakes, the beaches, the small towns and the warm, generous population. East Gippsland isn't just special by Australian standards, it's special on the world stage.

The fact that the proposed Mineral Sands Mine has the potential to negatively impact this unique and special area is a strong argument to turn the proposal down.

Based on what I have read from the EES, it is clear that the proposed area for the mine is incredibly inappropriate, as it is in too close in proximity to an already existing and thriving community. This community is made up of individuals and families who live, work, farm, go to school and holiday in this unique part of Victoria, all of whom could be impacted negatively by the proposed mine.

Furthermore, I am concerned that unknown Aboriginal cultural heritage sites, which are highly likely to be present, will be impacted and/or destroyed. This concern is echoed in the opposition the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation has expressed. Representing the traditional owners of the land, they are not in favour of the mine progressing.

The noise pollution caused by mining equipment and vehicle access will be a possible cause of stress to the community. As will the high amounts of water needed for the mine. This could lead to tighter water restrictions which start earlier. The impact on the community reliant on water from the Mitchell River could be detrimental to the horticultural and sheep/cattle farms in the Lindenow area. If the drain on the Mitchel River was to occur, it is likely to reduce the fresh water that flows into the Gippsland Lakes, impacting the health of the ecosystem. This would in turn impact the tourism industry and effect the communities surrounding the Lakes.

Another area of concern is the possible pollutants generated by the mine. There is a chance that the dust, which may include radio-active and cancer causing substances, and waste products created from the mine could contaminate the Mitchell River and the Lindenow Valley. If the mine poses even the smallest potential risk of the Mitchell river being contaminated, then it should not go ahead. Even the smallest risk is too high as the livelihood and health of a whole district, including the Mitchell River Valley vegetable industry could be at stake.

On a personal note, my brother and his family live on a sheep and cattle farm with my parents. Their farm is located at the eastern boundary to the proposed mine and has been farmed by our family for five generations. They have been thorough in their due diligence, communicating with Kalbar and seeking answers to any questions which have arisen these past four years while the EES was being compiled. Despite this, and many reassurances from this majority foreign owned company that the mine will be a benefit to the area, we as a family can not see any truth in this. We believe that the potential for the whole region to be effected negatively by the proposal is too high for it to be given the green light.

I implore you, the decision makers, to not let this proposal go ahead. This uniquely balanced community is already forced to weather demanding risks of our own. We have floods which can overwhelm us and damage property, wildlife and stock. There are fires almost every year, causing the months from December to March to be filled with smoke, ash and anxiety. The droughts of the eighties, nighties and thousands - every decade I've been alive has had a devastating drought - took down live stock, properties and more than one farmers life. The resources in Glenaladale, East Gippsland are already used to maximum capacity. There is absolutely no room for this proposed mine. Please, on behalf of East Gippsland, **do not** let it go ahead.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Yours sincerely,

Amy Alexander