

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

308

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

Full Name: Merryn Padgett

Organisation:

Affected property:

Attachment 1: Submission_Finge

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: See attached submission

27 October 2020

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee members,

It is with the utmost respect that I write to you regarding the proposed Fingerboards mineral sands mine project in Glenaladale, East Gippsland.

As a hospitality business owner in Bairnsdale, I strongly oppose the mine as I value the pristine, clean green food bowl in Lindenow which supplies our business with fresh produce.

We will lose tourism dollars as people won't want to come to the area. The area is blessed with natural assets such as clean rivers, the Ramsar-listed Gippsland Lakes, mountains, oceans and streams.

East Gippsland is a special place for tourists and residents and the ecology of the area could change if the proposed mineral sands mine project is approved. I am also concerned that project will threaten hundreds of jobs in the agriculture and tourism sectors.

I sea-changed from St Kilda to Paynesville in 2007, having holidayed here for over 35 years and having a life-long connection with the area.

When we're not running our hospitality business, my family and I love to explore the natural assets of the region by bushwalking, camping, boating and four-wheel driving. I love the pristine natural environment of the Gippsland Lakes and Mitchell River National Park and value the protection, **not the destruction**, of the ecology of East Gippsland.

I am particularly concerned about the close proximity of the mine footprint to the heritage listed Mitchell River which supplies water to irrigate the crops in the Lindenow Valley.

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.

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As you can see in the image below, captured from a vegetable farm on November 2018, the mine footprint 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).

The Woodglen Reservoir where domestic and commercial water is stored for the whole Municipality is 3.5kms downwind from the mine area. What are the contamination risks?



I am seriously concerned about airborne dust contamination to this clean, green farmland which will inevitably cause health and food security issues.

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.

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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 East Gippsland Shire Council to determine?

I thank you for the opportunity to make a submission regarding this project, which should NOT proceed.

Warmest

Merryn Padgett