

**Request to be heard?:** No

**Full Name:** Tristan Anthony Smith

**Organisation:**

**Affected property:**

**Attachment 1:**

**Attachment 2:**

**Attachment 3:**

**Comments:** Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee members, I am writing to express my strong opposition to the Fingerboards mineral sands mine project. Whilst I am currently renting in Melbourne, I grew up in Lindenow, Bairnsdale and Wy Yung and still frequently visit the region, in particular the Den of Nargun in The Mitchell River National Park. My parents and many friends still live in the region, and I intend to live there again in future. It seems obvious to me that the mineral sands project represents a clear and present threat to the Mitchell River, the agriculture of the Mitchell valley and in turn the greater Gippsland Lakes into which the river flows. It will also destroy landmarks and sacred sites that are of importance to the Gunai/Kurnai, which I note in the company's report, is ascribed zero monetary value. It has been reported that Kalbar Operations Pty Ltd is proposing an expansive open-cut mineral sands mine at the Fingerboards, 20km NW of Bairnsdale in East Gippsland. It's dimensions are expected to be 13 square kms with a depth of 45 metres, on a plateau above the Mitchell River and the farms along the Mitchell River Valley. Kalbar's own geochemistry report lists a plethora of radioactive and carcinogenic compounds that will be present in the dust generated from the mine, which will take excessive amounts of water to try and control. (Over 3 billion litres of water annually for processing and dust suppression for 15 years). This is a significant freshwater flow lost to the entire Gippsland Lakes ecosystem. Furthermore, the mine will be a mere 500 metres from the river - to claim that no dangerous chemicals will leach into the Mitchell River is either naïve or disingenuous. The mine is at cross-purposes with the Mitchell River Valley vegetable industry that employs up to 2,000 people, and is estimated to be worth \$155 million annually. It also destroys the Andrews Government's Target 1 million fisheries program. If tourists cannot eat seafood from the Gippsland lakes due to the possibility of it being contaminated by toxic substances from the mine, the millions spent on fish stocking, removal of commercial netting and habitat restoration works will be in vain. The mine makes neither commercial nor moral sense. It comes at the inestimable cost of indigenous culture, the Mitchell River and Gippsland Lakes ecosystem, human and animal health, and the agriculture and tourism of the Region which has yet to fully manifest. Be on the right side of history. Do not allow this mine.