

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

355

Request to be heard?: Yes

Full Name: Jeanette Vola Wagner

Organisation: East Gippsland Community Action Group

Affected property:

Attachment 1: EGCAG_-_EES_Sub

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: Submission for East Gippsland Community Action Group attached

I am writing this submission on behalf of the East Gippsland Community Action Group based in Bairnsdale but representing members across the entire Shire from Glenaladale, to Omeo, Orbost, and Mallacoota.

The East Gippsland Community Action Group (EGCAG) is very concerned about the long-term effects of the proposed Fingerboards Mineral Sands Mining project and have been paying for ads fortnightly in the local paper (which we will provide copies of) funded by donations from our members.

East Gippsland's clean, green image is under threat by this project, particularly the immediate localities: Glenaladale, Stockdale, Mossiface, Briagalong, Nowa Nowa, Lindenow and surrounding areas. Mining and Farming are not compatible and the excellent reputation for this region's organic, fresh food production and premium meat farming will be lost, and impossible to regain. Likewise, this will affect the clean, green safe image of other Australian food production with flow on effects to our world export markets.

Concerns

- 1.** The farms close to the mining site export organic vegetables to Sydney, Melbourne and the Asian markets. They provide vegetables for the fast food industry and have for generations employed a continually rising number of people. Vegetables are regularly assessed for chemical levels. One bad test can put the future of the region's whole industry in jeopardy. Kalbar Resources (Kalbar) admits that on very windy days, radioactive dust could be blown across farms. Situations like this would raise significant alarms and health concerns and jeopardise our fresh food and vegetable markets. Many farms are within 500 metres from the mine site and an episode such as this only needs to happen once to destroy the whole industry.
- 2.** Kalbar claims the mine will employ 80 people when in production (most mineral sands mines employ 20-50 people ongoing). The predicted job losses in the meat farming and vegetable growing and processing industry is far greater.
- 3.** The proposed Fingerboards Mineral Sands Mine project is within 3 km of all town water supplies distributing from Lindenow to Lakes Entrance including the City of Bairnsdale. A severe dust storm at the mine operations could contaminate all drinking water and water for farm use in the entire area.

4. To combat this potential issue Kalbar intends to spray water onto the dust to settle it. This water would come from the water that supplies the drinking water for the entire region. It also supplies the vegetable farmers for their crops, which they say is never enough. Water supplies are collected in the winter for the summer. Kalbar estimate it will require a minimum of 3 billion litres of water per year, this compares to the current consumption of 3.75 billion litres per year for the region which caters for approximately 29,000 households and 3,500 commercial properties. Therefore, mining will impact water availability for food and meat farming. This could be devastating for the entire region as has the severe drought we have just experienced, as well as the fires.
5. Animal pastures will be fouled and wool supplies ruined from the dust storms or polluted water used for irrigation. Changes to stream flows will affect the Bass hatchery program that has been operating for 10 years and the Bream breeding at the estuary. And, what of the endangered Platypus that dwell in the rivers and estuaries.
6. After a drought, flood/s can follow. The erosion from a flood will run off the mine and onto farmer's land and again into the rivers and drinking water supplies. It is not possible to prevent a larger volume of water on the river flats from doing this, which would put the region's health in jeopardy and degrade the region and Victoria's reputation!
7. The Glenaladale good bowl region could not be replaced if destroyed. We need to think very carefully before we contaminate best farming land and our precious water supplies, with radioactive dust. The project hinges on a promise of restoring premium farming land to its original state. This cannot be done without investing the same amount of funds that are used to extract the minerals. Who is going to pay for that – the Government/Taxpayer!!
8. A mine exporting minerals overseas for a short term versus the growing need and strategic importance of feeding an increasing national and international population and the economic benefit to our region and Victoria, has not been properly quantified, nor has the detrimental impact of the mining project.

9. Rehabilitation Provisions

Kalbar are required to fund and rehabilitate the land affected by mining. Funding should be provided to cover other externalities such as, contamination to adjacent rivers, the Gippsland Lakes system and other private and farming land near the project.

Mining companies have a very poor track record on retaining the funds allocated for rehabilitation. In addition, the scope and funding for rehabilitation is blurred with consequential sale/s of the project to other companies.

There has only ever been one mine satisfactorily rehabilitated in the whole of Australia with the result often left to the Government/Taxpayer!

This is a region that survives on the Agriculture and Tourism industries, both of which would be destroyed if this mine is allowed to proceed.

PLEASE SAY NO TO THIS MINE DUE TO THE VERY BAD LOCATION SO CLOSE TO WATERWAYS AND ONE OF THE LARGEST VEGETABLE GROWING AREAS IN THE STATE!

Jeanette Wagner
Acting Secretary
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