

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

375

Request to be heard?: Yes

Full Name: John Alexander

Organisation:

Affected property:

Attachment 1: Submission_John_

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: see attached submission

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee members,

Please find below our submission regarding the Fingerboards Mineral Sands Mine (FMSM) Environmental Effects Statement (EES). Myself and my family strongly and emphatically oppose this project due to the extremely concerning health risks to our family, the serious agricultural and environmental consequences, and the economic impact it will have on our family business.

Our home (sensitive receptor R29) and farm business is 1.1km East of the mine directly in the prevailing Westerly winds. Our family and farm have been living in the area since 1878. The farm is a prime lamb and beef enterprise with a total holding of 835ha which includes 200ha of irrigation: 3 centre pivots and lateral bike shift irrigation. Our farm is adjacent to the proposed mine.

Below are our concerns and subsequent reasons that we strongly oppose this mine.

DUST/ NOISE IMPACTS

Our family home is identified as a Sensitive Receptor R29. We will be exposed to elevated levels of dust for the life of the project putting our family (myself, my partner and two primary school aged children) at increased health risks due to the elevated dust that will be inhaled from the air and ingested through drinking water caught from our roof.

PM10 DUST

- Maximum 24-hour PM10($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) modelled in the EES for our home at site R29 raise serious concerns for the health of our family, demonstrating massively elevated levels for the 15-20 year life of the mine.
 - During year 8, the modelling predicts R29 will exceed at least one day for the 24-hour average concentrations of PM10 above $60 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Additional mitigations would have to be implemented during mining to reduce this below the $60 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ 24 hour average.
 - We feel this is an unacceptable risk for our young family living in such close proximity to this mine, also even with additional mitigation the modelling shows that R29 will have 24-hour average concentrations of PM10 at close to $60 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for multiple years of the life of the mine. This is a risk that our family should not be expected to be exposed to. Having one child with asthmatic health conditions, we fear this elevated dust will create an unliveable environment for us to live in, even with additional mitigations in place.
 - Facts are that this mine is operating far too close to our home and business, along with many other neighbouring families' houses. The PM10 dust generated is just one health risk of many that raises major concerns. Leaving our "trust" in Kalbar to carry out the modelled additional mitigations when 24-hour average concentrations of PM10 above $60 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ will create an unacceptable risk to the community and our family.
 - We should not be expected to spend the next 20 years monitoring air quality levels to determine if dust levels will be above operational guidelines.
- As farmers, we are forced to work in the outdoors, not having the luxury of putting off work on extreme dusty days to work indoors. Myself and my employees will be exposed to dust levels that will impact our health.
- Other heavy metals that reach near maximum % of air quality design criteria that demand

further investigation for sensitive receptors include (but not exclusive):

- Arsenic and Cobalt.
- As outlined in the Air Quality and Greenhouse gas technical study in year 8 *“The highest concentration relative to the air quality criteria is cobalt, which was predicted to be at most 69.7% of the air quality design criteria.”* This demands further investigation. (38_Appendix-A009_Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Assessment (1) p.67)
- This dust will not be prevented from blowing to our farm and homes, putting our food production business and health at unacceptable risk.

Important to note: No weather monitoring site was used on the Eastern side of the mine site to accurately model the effects on our home and farm. Results from modelling are **only** a guide to the likely impacts of a new development or the expansion of an existing facility. The modelling results depend on how realistic the inputs have been, especially the assumptions made about the success of mitigation actions.

- Noise from a mine operating 24 hours a day 7 days a week will impact our quality of life and create additional stress for our family. We have spent our whole life living in a quite peaceful rural setting. Mining of this scale has never operated in the East Gippsland Shire. Agriculture should have protection given it is an established, sustainable, and existing industry in East Gippsland. Agriculture should not be adversely affected by allowing this mine to go ahead.

This mine should not be able to go ahead in its current design and we demand that KALBAR further review this risk associated to sensitive receptors and local land holders.

Government needs to recognise the pre-existing residential and agricultural land use.

COMPENSATION

- If the mine goes ahead farmland and homes next to the mine will reduce in value which will affect our equity level and ability for our business to secure finance for development and expansion. While there may be some compensation for landowners whose properties are mined, there is no compensation for properties identified as sensitive receptors within 2km.
- These properties should also be included in the impact zone with arrangements made for compensation. Landholders identified as sensitive receptors should be included as being in the project area and be compensated for the loss of access and associated impacts on productivity, health and livelihood.

AGRICULTURE

We are a land holder directly affected by this project and adjacent to the mine and have not been included in the agricultural impact report.

- EES study on Agriculture has determined the area to be mined has a “stocking rate range of 5 to 9 DSE/ha a range in weighted average gross margin per hectare of \$130 to \$187.” (44_Appendix-A015_Agriculture Impact Assessment (1).pdf p.27)
- This does not reflect the Gippsland average or what is being achieved on neighbouring farms. By not including neighbouring farms such as ours the EES has

undervalued the economic output for agriculture that will be effected by the mine.

WATER

As a primary producer we depend on clean and reliable water supply. Kalbar plan to mine to a depth of up to 60 meter which will be a source of water contamination to our stock and domestic bores which are drawing water from the similar depth. Kalbar EES does not properly address the risks to domestic and stock bores, and the risk to irrigation water supplies for local agricultural industries.

- There is an option for Kalbar to pump 3 gigalitres per year form the Mitchell River through Winter Fill Licence. This Winter Fill Licence has not been released and not been made available for other irrigators in the area. Kalbar's water requirements will create further water restrictions for irrigators in the area and reduce water supply for our farm and surrounding producers' farms. This will have a direct impact on our businesses and others ability to make a viable income from agriculture.

ENVIRONMENT

- Over 13 square kms of land will be mined which will result in a lot of trees and habitat being removed including over 700 large mature trees. EES technical studies have not comprehensively surveyed the area to know the risks to the flora and fauna that will be threatened with this land being cleared. These trees take many hundreds of years to grow and the landscape of the area will never be the same and cannot be replaced with offsets.
- 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.
 - This should be part of the mine project area. East Gippsland Shire should determine the infrastructure land use outside the mining project boundary.

We would like to thank you, the panel members, for reading this submission and I trust you will take these concerns very seriously.

Regards,

John, Jessica, Ava & Jasmine Alexander