

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

384

Request to be heard?: Yes

Full Name: Ursula G Alquier
Organisation: Farmers for Climate Action
Affected property:
Attachment 1: FCA_Fingerboards
Attachment 2:
Attachment 3:
Comments: see attached submission



28.10.2020

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee Members,

Re: Submission for EES for the Fingerboards Mineral Sands Mining project in East Gippsland.

We strongly oppose this mine, as it will put Victoria's food and water security at risk, will directly and adversely impact the local farming region, has no social licence from local food producers or the community and does not consider the need to support farmers in adapting to worsening climate change conditions.

Farmers for Climate Action (FCA) is a movement of over 5000 farmers, agricultural leaders and rural Australians located right across Australia, driven by a desire to be part of the solution to climate change.

Climate change is already impacting our farms and our communities. We are working hard to adapt, but we can't do it alone. We need our political leaders to stand up and lead on climate action, and we need the tools to continue to adapt, and mitigate, climate change where we live. We support farmers to build climate and energy literacy and advocate for climate solutions both on and off farm. We are independent, non-profit and non-partisan.

Food security underpins our continued existence as a civilisation, and in Australia food security is much more fragile than most Australians understand.

Farmers for Climate Action is a movement of farmers, agricultural leaders and rural Australians working to ensure farmers are a key part of the solution to climate change.

[Redacted signature block]

Authorised by Fiona Davis, c/o The Hub, [Redacted] Castlemaine, 3450.



Climate change threatens Australia’s capacity to feed ourselves and the nations which we export food to which is why protecting highly productive food growing regions like The Fingerboards should be an absolute priority.

FCA oppose the Fingerboards mineral sands mining project because:

No Social Licence

No social licence has been given by local farmers, food producers or the community. In a recent community survey of the area it was found that over 82% of the local community do not support a mineral sands mine.

(<https://minefreeglenaladale.org/learn-about-the-issues>)

Clean Green Image

At a time when we should be supporting farmers, especially food producers to stay on the land, a project like this has the potential to have far-reaching and devastating impacts not only on the region but also our state’s ability to produce safe food.

Damage to the regions clean, green image which is key to the ongoing success of the food bowl is also of great concern to many local producers & food businesses.

"The Mitchell River Valley produces about 30 to 40 per cent of veggies down in Melbourne, we've got a very clean and green image in this valley, and any damage to that

image will have a severe effect on our outlets" said John Hine who has farmed broccoli, cauliflower and sweet corn in the Lindenow Valley for 43 years.

Farmers for Climate Action is a movement of farmers, agricultural leaders and rural Australians working to ensure farmers are a key part of the solution to climate change.

[REDACTED]



[\(https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-26/kalbar-mine-plan-stokes-fear-in-lindenow-valley-green-food-bowl/ \)](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-26/kalbar-mine-plan-stokes-fear-in-lindenow-valley-green-food-bowl/)

Climate Change & Water

Rainfall in Victoria has declined in most seasons over recent decades, with the greatest decreases in the cooler seasons.

Gippsland’s rainfall is naturally highly variable and this natural variability will dominate the rainfall over the next decade or so.

Over time, annual rainfall totals are likely to decline, particularly under high emissions, with the greatest drying in spring. By late-century under high emissions, the climate change trend becomes obvious compared to natural variability with a median of 15% decrease in annual totals, larger (29%) in spring.

[\(https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/ data/assets/pdf file/0035/429875/Gippsland-Climate-Projections-2019_20200219.pdf\)](https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0035/429875/Gippsland-Climate-Projections-2019_20200219.pdf)

The East Gippsland region will be impacted by climate change due to drier spring and summer periods and the threat of flooding, however due to the regions naturally high rainfall, it is extremely important that this productive food producing region is protected from mining projects like the one proposed.

Productive, viable farmland will decrease in other food producing regions, where more pronounced climate change impacts are being experience and have been predicted to worsen, making regions like these even more valuable as other regions will have a lower capacity to consistently produce food & fibre.

Rainfall in Victoria over the past 30 years (1989–2019) for the given months compares to every 30-year period in the historical record. For example, decile 1 (very much below average) shows

Farmers for Climate Action is a movement of farmers, agricultural leaders and rural Australians working to ensure farmers are a key part of the solution to climate change.





areas where rainfall over the past 30 years is in the lowest 10% of all such 30-year periods in the full range of long-term records back to 1900 (BoM, 2019).

<https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/adapting-to-climate-change-impacts/victorian-climate-projections-2019>

As rainfall in the region decreases, safe guarding clean water for food producing irrigators must be made a priority, this project threatens this water security.

Based on local irrigation figures, if the 3 billion litres of water Kalbar requires annually was redirected to growing vegetables, 3 times more jobs could be created than Kalbar's proposal. These would be long-term sustainable jobs to grow food.

Kalbar needs over 3 billion litres of water annually for processing and dust suppression for 15 years. This shows how much water is needed to control the dust which will potentially pose major human and animal health risks.

Kalbars high water consumption could lead to tighter water restrictions from the Mitchell River, which is relied on by the local horticulture industry for irrigation.

The risk of contamination to both the Mitchell River and Perry River due to the close proximity to the proposed mine puts at risk the regions water security.

"As a farmer I am first & foremost really concerned that this mine could be built in one of our state's most productive food bowls. My husband & I run a 1000 hectare merino farm which has been in the family for over 70 years.

We love what we do and have lived through major droughts, bushfires and worsening climate conditions. Through these challenges we have had to change how we do things and have put a lot of work into adapting our pasture and stock. This mine proposal puts all of this at risk."

Farmers for Climate Action is a movement of farmers, agricultural leaders and rural Australians working to ensure farmers are a key part of the solution to climate change.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Authorised by Fiona Davis, [REDACTED] Castlemaine, 3450.



Our industry employs up to 2,000 people so one third of that is about 600 people. Kalbar is proposing to create only 200 jobs so 600 is three times Kalbar's figure. Our industry is poised to expand; we could create more jobs with that water so the mine project isn't need to generate jobs; let's use that water to grow healthy food instead."

- John Hine, Lindenow Vegetable Grower

(National Farmers Federation. (2017). Food, Fibre and Forestry Facts. A WWW publication retrieved on 12 October 2020 at <https://nff.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/171116-FINAL-Food-Fibre-Food-Facts.pdf>)

(Coffey Services Australia (Coffey). (2020). Socioeconomic Impact Assessment. Report prepared for Kalbar Operations Pty Ltd. Melbourne. Victoria)

We would be happy to attend and present at the upcoming inquiry on behalf of our Victorian FCA members.

Yours sincerely,

Ursula Alquier

Victorian/ Tasmanian Coordinator

Farmers for Climate Action

[Redacted signature]

Farmers for Climate Action is a movement of farmers, agricultural leaders and rural Australians working to ensure farmers are a key part of the solution to climate change.

[Redacted text]

Authorised by Fiona Davis, [Redacted] Castlemaine, 3450.