

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

389

Request to be heard?: Yes

Full Name: Daniella Lanteri

Organisation: SJ Lanteri Pty Ltd

Affected property: [REDACTED] Walpa, [REDACTED] Walpa, [REDACTED]

Attachment 1: Inquiry_and_Advis

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: See attached Submission Apologises as i have sent two other submissions of the same content. I had difficulties in filling in the forms but have resubmitted it with ALL the effected areas.

Inquiry and Advisory Committee

Dear Members,

I would like to thank you for taking the time to hear our submission in regards to the EES Proposed Fingerboards Mineral Sands Mine Project.

Being a part of the horticultural sector in the Lindenow Valley and also being contributing members of our local community, we would strongly like to express our grave concerns about the consequences that may occur if such a project were to take flight.

Allowing a mineral sands and rare-earths mine to be placed near farming properties, homes, shops, schools and sporting facilities can only lead to future disasters, especially as there are so many foreseeable and potentially detrimental outcomes possible. With so many elements of this proposed project being uncertain it could pose high risks to not only the Horticultural sector but also to the wider community. It is unsettling to see the possible "Flow On Effects" that could be immeasurable.

As vegetable farmers, we contribute to both the local economy and also the State and Australian economy and have so for the past 30 years.

Our vegetables are sold to wholesalers in Melbourne and Sydney, where they can be dispersed to other outlets including overseas. They are recognized through our name and reputation and are a highly sought out fresh produce.

Where the proposed mine is set to be located, there are enormous risks to our vegetables being contaminated and therefore unsellable.

If the Victorian Government were to grant Kalbar the opportunity to mine in the proposed site, they would be responsible for possible contamination of not only our food sources (both vegetables and beef are sought in this area) but also the health and safety of residents, workers and the wider community members who frequent the area daily.

It is a short term project that could possibly have long term side effects on all who live and work in and near the Lindenow Valley Food Bowl.

We would like to explain in detail the depths of risks as to why this proposed mineral sands mine should not be allowed.

Background

Farming has been in our family for two generations and the hope is that our children will one day take it over, and make it three generations of farming families.

For over 30 years, our family has grown beans and peas and serviced the local area and the Victorian and New South Wales markets. We have worked extremely hard to grow and produce high quality fresh clean vegetables that contribute to the local and State economy.

After being in the business for such a long time, we have experienced both the highs and the lows of vegetable farming. Although some seasons have been made worse with the lack of water available and unpredictable climate, we have managed to make a well-respected and well-known name for ourselves throughout Australia. This is due to the high quality of fresh produce we harvest.

We are a part of the Lindenow Valley food bowl, which contributes over \$155M a year to help the economy, and we also employ local and overseas workers. We pride ourselves on being a part of the community and are grateful that we can still provide such a high standard to both our wholesalers, employees and the wider community.

For over 20 years, local vegetable growers and members of the local council have tried to ensure that the Lindenow Valley Food Bowl remains a permanent sustainable industry. With households demanding more fresh quality produce every year, it is essential that we maintain and ensure that horticultural industry stays strong.

After reading the EES report on Kalbar's proposed mine to which they continually use the term "Sand Mine" when in fact it is a "Mineral Sands Mine", we see far too many risks associated with such a project, not to mention the inaccuracies throughout the report. Some of these risks would be evident straight away but there are also the risks that may not be seen for years to come.

Please let us explain....

Risks

Dust- Once mining begins; there will be no possible way to contain the dust that will be produced from mining. In all aspects of the mining procedure, dust is inevitable. From the mineral sands and the rare earth minerals being excavated from beneath the ground level, the tailings, all the way to the excessive number of trucks using the gravel roads to take these hazardous substances to their destination, dust will be present.

The non-disclosed information about what Kalbar is actually mining has most farmers very worried. What this dust could possibly contain could be hazardous to our lives and the lives

of everyone that works lives and breathes in the area. There is no data that can guarantee our safety and the lives of everyone associated with the Lindenow Valley Food Bowl.

This dust has the potential to poison our fresh clean produce and our reputation, pollute the lakes and dams we use to irrigate our vegetables, and harm both ourselves and workers by inhaling this dust. It may possibly have the potential to ruin machinery and livestock.

There have been no reports if the contaminated dust may cause damage to the tractors and other machinery found on the farms, not to mention the homes, schools, shops and other facilities close by. Does this mean that if there are arising problems with dust affecting equipment that we ourselves have to rectify this situation...and is it at our own cost?

The dust produced has the ability to contaminate our vegetables such as peas, snow peas and sugar snaps; especially as these vegetables are packed straight into boxes in the paddock and not washed before they are transported to market.

The contaminated produce would then be sent to be distributed to Victorian and New South Wales consumers....without them knowing what it is that they may be ingesting.

The maps used in the report does show the relevant distance this mine is in relation to homes, farms, schools, shops and sporting facilities. On a windy day, the dust can travel to all these surrounding areas and cause harm. This is not a "low risk" or a "minimal risk" in our eyes.

The solution to this apparently is to use water over the site to minimize the risks from dust

Water- Water is a scarce commodity nowadays. With the everchanging climate, water is in high demand. So high at times, that the farmers who pump water off the Mitchell River to water their crops have been put on restrictions. Living in a drought, they are sometimes unable to water their crops at all.

For years local farmers have tried endlessly to get approval of an off-stream water storage to secure their farming futures. To date this has been unsuccessful. Water licenses can no longer be bought and because of this we have tried to put in an extra bore at one of our properties.

Kalbar states that it is anticipating on acquiring water that has not yet been allocated, but when we have inquired about the same water we have been told it is not available at this stage. Proposed damming of the mine site has also been spoken about by Kalbar which means the flow-on to the river systems of an already strained river would be disastrous.

Not to mention that any run off water from the mine site could potentially run into the Mitchell River and contaminate fish, livestock and vegetables that use this water source.

If farming families have had to struggle for years with the lack of water, how can it be that Kalbar has water at its disposal...

Whilst writing this submission, we are trying to locate water in the underground aquifers to help us sustain our farm... and so far have been unsuccessful.

Water is too precious to waste by simply dampening soil to suppress it so as not to make dust. This is insanity at its best!

Financial- The risks involved not only pose a physical, mental and emotional challenge but they also will cause serious financial risks to us, our workers, our wholesalers and the wider community.

Financially if our fresh produce name was to be tarnished because of contaminants in our products we would lose our business, our workers and our clients. And possibly everything we have prided ourselves with by working seven days a week for years on end with no holidays. If the mine were to be approved it would have all been in vain.

If our business were to suffer because of contamination from the mining site, we could no longer produce our high quality vegetables. Nor could we employ local workers and help our local economy. We intend on being here for the long haul and will long surpass a mining entity that is only interested lining their own pockets and not worried about the long term risks that may not be evident for years to come.

The Lindenow Valley is close to many tourist hotspots and these frequently visited places may also become scrutinized if there were possible risks to people's health. Furthermore, adding more financial stress to an already struggling economy and area due to bushfires, droughts and COVID 19.

Property values would decrease as nobody would like to live next to a mineral sands mine. Along with the health problems it may cause both in the near and far future, it would devalue the area. People come to see what east Gippsland has to offer. Beautiful lakes, beaches, parklands and heritage places are what attract people from all over the world to our doorstep. We have a great tourism economy that could potentially be ruined by allowing an eyesore dust making mineral sands mine to go ahead.

We would like to thank you for taking your time to hear our submission on the proposed Fingerboard Mineral Sands Mine. We would also like to express that we are not against mines in general and believe that progress is inevitable, but we are extremely disappointed

and upset that the proposed mine site is so close to major food production sites and water systems that feed and water parts of Victoria and parts of New South Wales.

It makes sense not to approve this mine: Especially as lives will be at risk.

If the mine is approved, we will ensure that our soils are tested before mining operations start. Someone will need to be held accountable for what may lay ahead...

Sincerely,

Daniella and Sebastian Lanteri