

The last minute decision to use a centrifuge for the proposed Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project shows a lack of preparation, planning, and regard for people's safety. Not only could it cause injury or death to the people working on this proposed project, but the centrifuge will also have significant impacts on the noise level of the project and the water use of the proposed project.

Centrifuges have never been used as part of a mineral sands project before so this is an unprecedented decision, and given that there has been a history of accidents when they have been used for other types of projects, there is no guarantee that there will be no accidents with this project. There is no documentation in the environmental effects statement exploring the issue of safety and whether there is any risk to workers on the project – this is a significant omission that cannot be overlooked.

There is no clear indication of what the noise level will be from the inclusion of six centrifuges in the proposed project as the proponents have not included any information on this. However, having worked in laboratory in the past and being familiar with an incredibly small-scale centrifuge, it is likely that this is going to have a significant effect on the workers, hundreds of residents surrounding the project and the animals (both native and livestock) that we cannot predict.

The use of centrifuges in the proposed project will not reduce the overall environmental impact of the project, it will increase it. The amount of water estimated by the proponents was originally 3 billion litres per year, but this was incorrect and it has been determined that this project will require 5 billion litres of water every year if a tailings dam is used. Centrifuges will require 2.9 billion litres of water annually, which is the same as the proposed amount of water required in the original environmental effects statement. Thus, all previous stated issues by concerned parties regarding water use are still relevant. This amount of water use every year is simply deplorable when the Mitchell River supplies water to the Gippsland Lakes Ramsar wetlands – a site that should be protected at all costs.