

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

487

Request to be heard?: No - but please email me a copy of the
Timetable and any Directions

Full Name: Claire Alexander Moore

Organisation:

Affected property: [REDACTED]

Attachment 1: Clairesubmission1.

Attachment 2: 000081730009.JP

Attachment 3:

Comments: See attached submission

Tuesday, 27th October 2020

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee members,

I am writing in response to the EES conducted by Kalbar for the Fingerboards Mineral Sands Mine Project and my objection to this proposal. I lived in the area as a child from birth to 18 years old but have returned very regularly throughout my adult life to this place I hold so dear. I grew up on the Alexander farm (bordering the proposed mine site) which now has the 6th generation of our family living and farming there. This land and the whole of this special part of East Gippsland is inside my blood and heart. I was married on the farm. My parents and brother and his family still live there and they will lose their livelihoods if the mine goes ahead, and I personally will lose a huge part of my own and my families long heritage.

The reasons I strongly oppose the Fingerboards Mineral Sands Mine Project at Glenaladale, East Gippsland are listed below:

- The Heritage listed Mitchell River which supplies water to the whole area including the Lindenow Valley farmers and also feeds into the protected Ramsar listed Gippsland Lakes is under threat with this mine proposal. The proposed mine site is 13 square kms on a plateau above the Mitchell River (500 mtrs away) and run-off is very possible especially in the case of a flood event. If there is run-off there are risks of the river being contaminated, impacting on the crops, fishing, agriculture, the health of the rivers and the Gippsland Lakes. The mine proposal also threatens the various aquifers, ground and surface water. The Mitchell's flow will be reduced while the direction of flow around important aquifers can be affected along with water quality. If the tailings dam fails (which is a possibility) the environmental impacts will be gigantic and far-reaching. Four gullies and creeks which flow directly into the Mitchell and represent almost 1% of its total catchment would be mined and damned. These gullies contain some of the only vegetated remnants in this riverside landscape, containing important and rare EVC's. The Perry Gully, which I played in as a child, will be left permanently filled with tailings and mine waste, and could very well run-off into the Mitchell.
- Kalbar's geochemistry report lists a number of radioactive and cancer-causing substances that will be present in the dust generated. Dust can travel far so this potentially could affect the entire district. The mine is too close to where many families live, farm, work and go to school, it is a highly inappropriate area. Dust is already an issue in the area as it gets so dry and windy (especially in drought times) and for those farmers living very close to the mine site (my family being one of them), this threat of radioactive dust particles will mean it will be too dangerous to continue living there. It will also mean the end to their farming business of livestock for meat which supplies food to Victoria.
- The \$155M per year Mitchell River Valley vegetable industry that employs up to 2,000 people is as close as 500m downwind from the mine. Will any farmers be able to sell their crops, meat or live-stock if their produce is contaminated and they are known to be in a toxic mining area? The answer is most likely a NO which is hugely concerning. Giving a

mine precedence OVER prime agricultural land is a ludicrous idea. This is a real issue for future **food security** for Victoria.

- With the amount of water shortages and water stress already experienced in the area from the last 3+ years of drought, the amount of water Kalbar needs - over 3 billion litres of water annually for processing and dust suppression for 15 years – is just not possible. Local water sources cannot possibly meet these requirements without detrimentally affecting those who currently rely on the water for their livelihoods. Kalbar's high need for water could lead to earlier and tighter restrictions on users reliant on water from the Mitchell River (such as the horticulture industry) and is likely to impact the health of the Gippsland Lakes from reduced fresh water.

Unknown Aboriginal cultural heritage sites are stated as being highly likely to be present and will be impacted. Given the massive excavation down to 45m, it will be impossible to avoid destruction of artefacts and heritage. This is ancient Gunaikurnai country with sacred sites and artefacts discovered on the mine footprint. The obliteration of the Gunaikurnai's cultural heritage is unacceptable.

- The planned removal of over 700 large mature trees is truly shocking. It would cause a significant reduction of habitat and will threaten flora and fauna species.

It feels, with the proposal of this mine, the whole of our beautiful area East Gippsland is under threat. I'm not sure what will happen to my being or my family or anyone I know from this magic place if we lose it to a big mining company who appears to be muscling their way into this beautiful area which houses hugely important farm land responsible for so much of the State's vegetable production it is known as 'Victoria's Food Bowl'. This huge, inappropriate mine planned just down from the incredible water source the mighty Mitchell River (Victoria's largest wild and free flowing river) will threaten this river, all the farm land and all those who live off it, by using water the river can't sustain and releasing radio-active toxic dust into the atmosphere. My family will have to move off land they have farmed for 6 generations. The area perhaps won't be liveable. This whole thing feels completely insane. It is not long term thinking for our future. We must protect our water, our ability to grow food, our people OVER big corporations and mining money.

I urge you to make the right decision and recommend that this mine NOT go ahead as it is such an inappropriate area on prime agricultural land, too close to peaceful farming communities, precious environmental land and waters and significant cultural sites. The consequences would be unthinkable not just for East Gippsland but for the entire State of Victoria if it was to be given licence. Mining cannot exist this close to farmland without threatening our food/water/air security. It cannot possibly go ahead.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission and for taking the time to read it.

Yours sincerely,

Claire Alexander Moore

