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**Request to be heard?:** No

**Full Name:** Nigel Dalton

**Organisation:**

**Affected property:**

**Attachment 1:**

**Attachment 2:**

**Attachment 3:**

**Comments:** In the 1980s I worked as an environmental economist in NZ, supporting open-cast coal mine development in the Waikato region. Situated in prime farmland, close to precious lakes and the Waikato River, we thought we had everything under control. We thought with all our technology and planning we would avoid impacts to surrounding neighbours, including a long-standing and thriving Maori community. We were so wrong. With these mines worked to completion now, they have attracted a lot of publicity in recent times. All of it bad publicity for the region and the Council - things that looked great in the original business case, like 'the hole will be valuable as a secure waste dump for nearby Auckland' have resulted in a toxic fire that cannot be extinguished and has impacted health and liveability in a wide area 3 decades after we thought dust was the only issue. Responsibility now falls on the council for that - and it was never budgeted for. The private company involved has long gone. The impact on the lakes and waterways is permanent damage. Some things do not heal or recover. Some toxins we knew about (by-products of mining), but we optimistically thought they could be managed ... one slip and a failed bund around a waste pond 20 years ago, and a catchment was ruined. Again, the council now bears the cost of this. We thought we could predict everything that would happen, with our fancy science and engineering degrees. We barely got it 25% right. The externalities of mining are well known, but tragically easy to put aside as 'will not happen here' because you believe in your superior engineering, planning, monitoring and operational oversight of a mine. But the community is fighting a least-cost producer, who will cut every corner possible, take every liberty (with water, dust and toxic materials), and have great expertise at not responding to public enquiries or monitoring. East Gippsland, which we have visited from our home in Melbourne, is at a crossroads - become renowned for smart production of quality foods, plus tourism; or continue on the slippery slope of hoping mining brings jobs, taxes and prosperity. Don't be fooled - take a field trip to Huntly in NZ to see what this will turn out like in 5, 10, or 20 years. Or just Google it if you have no travel budget (which to be fair, with these stakes, your due diligence should definitely allow for real world research!). This mine cannot be allowed to proceed. Invest the money in sustainability, better tech infrastructure, and a future where your community, and especially the council, are not going to have to waste 100 years of ratepayer's money, let alone precious water resources, just to manage the environmental impact. To entertain this proposal while the region is just gaining a reputation for well managed 'farm to plate' supply chains is bordering on criminal neglect. Do not allow this mine to proceed.