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**Request to be heard?:** No

**Full Name:** Christine Hooper

**Organisation:**

**Affected property:**

**Attachment 1:**

**Attachment 2:**

**Attachment 3:**

**Comments:** Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee members, I am writing this submission about the EES for the Fingerboards mineral sands mine project. I strongly oppose this mine. I live in central Victoria, not close to this proposed mine site but I feel mining is so destructive of the natural environment and should only happen if completely necessary. It also often needs large quantities of water which this continent on the whole does not have an abundance of. Kalbar Operations Pty Ltd, a new company with no experience operating a mine is proposing a massive open-cut mineral sands mine at the Fingerboards, 20km NW of Bairnsdale in East Gippsland. 13 square kms on a plateau which is above the Mitchell River and the vegetable fields of the Mitchell River Valley is to be mined up to 45m deep. Kalbar's geochemistry report lists a number of radioactive and cancer-causing substances that will be present in the dust generated. The \$155M/year Mitchell River Valley vegetable industry that employs up to 2,000 people is as close as 500m downwind from the mine. The Mitchell River, the source of water to irrigate those vegetables and make ice to transport them is 350m downwind (between the mine and the vegetable fields). 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. 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. There are concerns that jobs in tourism and agriculture are at risk from potential contamination of the river and crops. Could other jobs be created instead? Based on irrigation data, 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. According to National Farmers Federation statistics, every job created in agriculture leads to 4.2 indirect jobs. From Kalbar's website, 1 mining job leads to 1 indirect job. This proposed mine is considered to be in a highly inappropriate and dangerous location, threatening our food, water, health and already reduced river flows. I've looked up "mineral sands" to see what they actually are and what they contain...came up with Mineral sands are old beach, river or dune sands that contain concentrations of the important minerals, rutile, ilmenite, zircon and monazite. Heavy metals. I assume money can be made from these or this company Kalbar Operations Pty Ltd wouldn't be going to this trouble. Can we risk the destruction and massive use of water? We need to stop treating this country as a giant quarry. Yours sincerely, Ms Christine Hooper