

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

547

Request to be heard?: No

Full Name: Carol Watt

Organisation:

Affected property: [REDACTED]

Attachment 1: mine_submission.

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: Submission uploaded as attachment.

Dear Inquiry and Advisory board members

I am writing about the EES for the fingerboards mineral sands mine project. I strongly oppose the mine with particular concerns about habitat loss, the risk of contaminated dust and the serious risk of both dust contamination and water run off to both our Perry and Mitchell Rivers and the effect on Gippsland Lakes and associated wetlands.

I have lived in Walpa for the past 6 years. I grew up locally in Lindenow South and after working in Melbourne for many years, happily returned to this special and beautiful area to care for family. Having purchased land and developed a small hobby farm about 10km from the site of what is now a 13 square km proposed mine site.

This mine is in an area where there should never be a mine. It is dangerously close to the critical vegetable growing area contained within the Lindenow valley, even the smallest detection of harmful substances in the vegetable products produced, will shut farmers down. Many of these farmers have been in the business most of their lives.

Families and workers on properties, downwind from the mine risk their health to airborne particles of silica and potentially other dangerous substances. As anyone who lives here knows, it is a very windy area and dust can travel significant distances affecting private properties and businesses especially. Private water supplies including tanks and dams would also be at risk, as well as the Woodglen reservoir from potential contaminants both air and water borne. The elevated position of the proposed mine in relation to the Perry and Mitchell Rivers is of critical concern. The Mitchell River is the lifeblood of this region not just for irrigation and water supply and storage but for the functioning and health of the Gippsland Lakes. I think anyone seeing the positioning of the mine in relation to the rivers would be extremely concerned about

the possibility of contamination, through unplanned for rainfall run off and the damage to mine infrastructure this could cause as well as seepage concerns from the unlined mine void. This region is notoriously unpredictable and hugely variable in the amount of rainfall we can receive on a weekly, monthly or yearly basis. We can go from drought to heavy flooding extremely quickly. Failure of a large Tailings Dam (TSF) 90 hectares in size is a real possibility as well, especially given the limited information we have available to us regarding its construction. It is certainly too late once it happens, regardless of the apparent negligible risk referred to in the ESS.

The loss of 11.57 hectares of Forest Red Gum Grassy Woodland and the associated ecological community is a significant loss in this area, including the loss of 763 large trees in the mining pit area, with the potential for it to be even more. To lose more habitat in East Gippsland to a mine with such little value to the area seems incomprehensible to me. Especially as the proposed mine also threatens people's health, livelihoods and a hugely valuable, long established food production industry and Gippsland Lakes tourist industry. These are multi million dollar industries in this area and are right on the proposed mine's doorstep.

Why even put our environment, health and livelihoods at risk on any level, for so little actual economic, environmental or social return to the area.

It is also unacceptable to allow for compulsory acquisition of private land to be used by the mine for infrastructure that is located outside the mining project boundary for: water pipelines, bore pumps, bore

field, roadworks, new pipelines, easements, rail siding and vegetation removal. Why wasn't this part of the mine project area? Why isn't this a matter for East Gippsland Shire Council to determine.

I thank the panel members for the opportunity to make a submission

Carol Watt

WALPA