

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

709

Request to be heard?: No

Full Name: Etsuko Boulton

Organisation:

Affected property:

Attachment 1: Etsuko_Boulton_S

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: See attached submission.

29 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. I strongly oppose to the Fingerboards Mineral Sands Mine Project.

These are the reasons below I do not believe the Fingerboards Mineral Sands Mine Project should go ahead at Glenaladale, East Gippsland:

- 13 square kms on a plateau which is above the Heritage listed Mitchell River and the vegetable fields of the Mitchell River Valley is to be mined up to 45m deep. If there is runoff there are risks of the river being contaminated, impacting on the crops, fishing, agriculture, the health of the rivers and the Gippsland Lakes (an important Ramsar-listed wetland).
- 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 effect 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.
- The \$155M/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.
- 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.
- 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. Mitigation measures will not avoid the obliteration of cultural heritage.
- The pre-existing residential and agricultural land use needs to be recognised for this area. Noise from a mine operating 24 hours a day 7 days a week will be untenable and very stressful.
- There will be a tailings dam 90 hectares in size (nearly 1 square km). It will contain mine tailings waste and flocculants which have warnings on safety data sheets about being harmful to aquatic life.
- The Woodglen Reservoir where domestic and commercial water is stored for the whole Shire is 3.5kms downwind from the mine. This poses contamination risks on Bairnsdale's drinking water and those on tank water living near the mine.
- Removal of over 700 large mature trees. Flora and fauna species are threatened.

The bottom line is that we shall improve our environment in East Gippsland, not destroying it further. The proposed mineral sands mine by Kalbar will not improve our precious environment. It will be too late if anything goes wrong despite Kalbar's assurances. We cannot take a gamble on our future generations' lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Yours sincerely,

Etsuko Boulton