

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

744

Request to be heard?: Yes

Full Name: Eden Maree Swan

Organisation:

Affected property: [REDACTED]

Attachment 1: Submission_to_Th

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: see attached submission

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee Members,

I am writing to register my strong opposition to The EES for The Fingerboards Mineral Sands Mine Project. I have included a **Personal Impact Statement** and a **Summary Of Negative Impacts** I feel will cause most harm should this project proceed.

I thank you for your time taken to consider my statement.

PERSONAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

It was devastating receive a phone call from Grace, my childhood best friend of 25 years, to learn that her house is soon to be destroyed, her land is soon to be made toxic and the lives of both the surrounding families and her immediate family (with their six generations of life and work in Glenaladale) were about to be ruined by the plans for an Open-Cut Mine spanning 11kms in diameter (1/10th of the size of Melbourne's entire Metropolitan CBD) and 45meters in depth (the height of St Mary's Church Spire inverted). The project is to take place along her property's fence line, the digging of an enormous mine quite literally on her doorstep. As I began to research I discovered the project is intrinsically destructive in nature and it's management promises so many wide-spread devastating effects

1. To the Environment and area's crop safety
2. To the Community Social Impacts and liveability
3. To the Local Economy
4. To Indigenous Heritage

The project is to be led by a Chinese company named Chinalco Rare Earths that is currently being, not just investigated, but actually *prosecuted for several major breaches of environmental regulations for their previous projects across the world*. This project has got all of the 'non-plussed disregard, devoid-of-humanity' elements crucial to any regrettable narrative that ends in harm, worsened only by *no contractual guarantee for land rehabilitation upon the project's completion*. The Kalbar Mine proposal is quite simply a plan to decimate place and the lives within it irreversibly.

I had a difficult childhood, in summary - I was not cared for, protected or supported in the ways a child should and as a result I experienced acute physical injury/sickness and mental / emotional harm all of which now require ongoing medical care as an adult to function. Due to my lived experience, I now have significant issues with *irrationality* and *irresponsibility* as I have learned the hard way, first hand how actions based in thoughtlessness have devastating real world effects. I believe that these plans by Kalbar Resources echoes this same 'damage by proxy' via thoughtlessness and for those who do have an opportunity to prevent it's commencement must understand that there will be cruel, dangerous and culpable ramifications for the land and people of Gippsland (and beyond) now and for many decades to come should this project eventuate.

My young personal life saw me grow up quickly on my own in order to survive but the maturity I learned has allowed me to understand not only how interconnectedness and causality works, plays out in the world, the crucial need for a holistic consideration at all times and how each aspect of life is linked to the other but it's also taught me that if you

see harm, you say something. You speak up to prevent it, you speak up to stop it. If there is a break in the chain, eventually one way or another the whole system collapses. If I am to apply that knowledge to this proposal, the manner by which this project is to be implemented tells me one thing: the health and functionality of Gippsland's entire Farming Region including it's inhabitants will soon cease to exist... it will be a slow and painful annihilation to agriculture, livelihood, tourism, community and health. A ripple effect via land contamination. This mine will rapidly reverse, via the "15 year life span" it promises, the 100+years of hard work done to create sustainable farm land that can be constantly regenerated, replacing it with something barren and unliveable: this will affect everyone.

The point of this background on my personal life is for you to know that due to my unstable family circumstances, starting from age 5, the Waller's (the family of my aforementioned childhood best friend Grace) took me in and essentially raised me as their own. It was with them and then for across past 25 years to present day I have either lived or frequently visited The Gippsland Region (Glenaladale / Woodglen / Lindenow / Bairnsdale / Lakes Entrance etc). With blood relatives (great grandmother Hellen Jellef and her parents George and Mary Jellef, my great great grandparents) all being born and raised in Lindenow I also have direct historical family ties to this area, it is a place I hold dear, a place I call home. The Fingerboards Mineral Sands Mine Project affects me deeply.



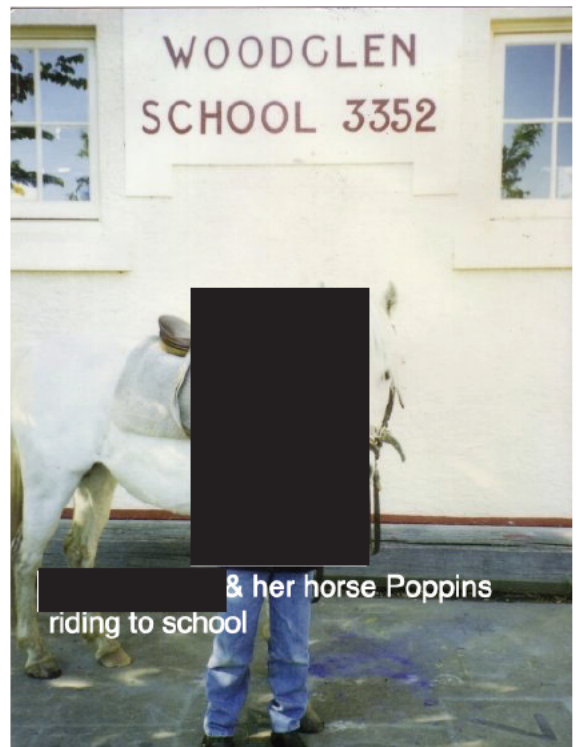
The Wallers live in the heart of Glenaladale and this is their house, known fondly amongst our community as 'Glenloch'.



As can be seen, it is absolutely beautiful, the quintessential vision of an early 1900's Victorian style home typical of the times when new Australian families immigrated from abroad and settled rurally here. The Wallers were one of those families who, across this time, cultivated the grazing country by clearing the flats and farming the cattle and building upon the land and community which

has led to their now six generational family of farmers. They laboured through hot summers and persevered through brutal winters to create it the productive farmland we enjoy now. At over 100 years old the house, barely altered, sits on 200 acres of flourishing sprawling fields with pine forest and large dams. A considerable variety of flora and fauna call the Glenloch surrounds and itself home just as I do.

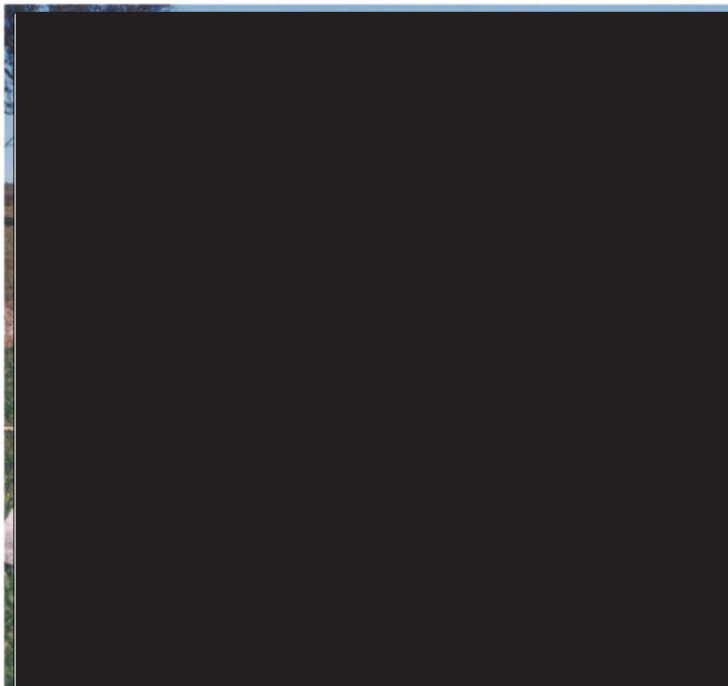
The Glenaladale area was the centre of our rural country lives growing up in that same Farmer Family Trajectory with lifestyles that matched: Our summers were spent down by The Mitchell River at The Pumping Station catching frogs. Cubby building and tree climbing up at The Pines. Riding our pet horses down to The Finger Boards for a picnic and making home-made Billy Karts for races down the big hills. When we were good, and deemed responsible enough, we helped the adults with official farm duties - herding sheep, building bon fires for burn-off season and rescuing abandoned lambs. When we were bad... We threw cow pats at each other or drove atrociously in The Paddock Bomb barely able to see over the dashboard or reach the old car's peddles. It was an idyllic time in every sense of the word; Glenloch and our lives in Gippsland were every 'True Blue Aussie' Blundstones-Wearing, Flannel Shirt-Toting, Dot & The Kangaroo Bouncing lifestyle you could imagine.





Our local school Woodglen Primary was so small and so rural that when I started there in Prep 1995 we had a total of 12 children making it *just* viable to run. Our whole school had one teacher, Mr. Callihan, who taught us at the same time in the one room where we, the children of the seven local families of the area The Wallers, The Hines, The Banks, The Hammonds, The Blackleys and I were educated.

But this experience as humble country folk, a bunch of local farm kids who were free,



innocent and safe was certainly not initiated by chance. It was all due to the hard work of Joanne who was a School Teacher at Bairnsdale Secondary School for the greater part of a decade and her husband Ewan Waller who was Chief Fire Officer for DSE (DEWLP). Both active and progressive members of the Bairnsdale community by day and farmers every other minute. They possess honest and deep-set family values which they instilled in us as positive role models for a constant and entirely 'Hard Yakka' Farmer attitude - get the job done, put in the work and reap the rewards. They were completely committed to providing a life of this culture for themselves and four children Rhys, Honnie, Yvette and

Grace. As such - they are greatly respected members of the community. With their generosity and community spirit at their core their farm home of Glenloch became the place of many meetings, social catch ups, after school crash zone for teens, weddings etc as they willingly offered to help every other local kid and struggling family who needed it, no questions asked, everybody was welcome - including me.



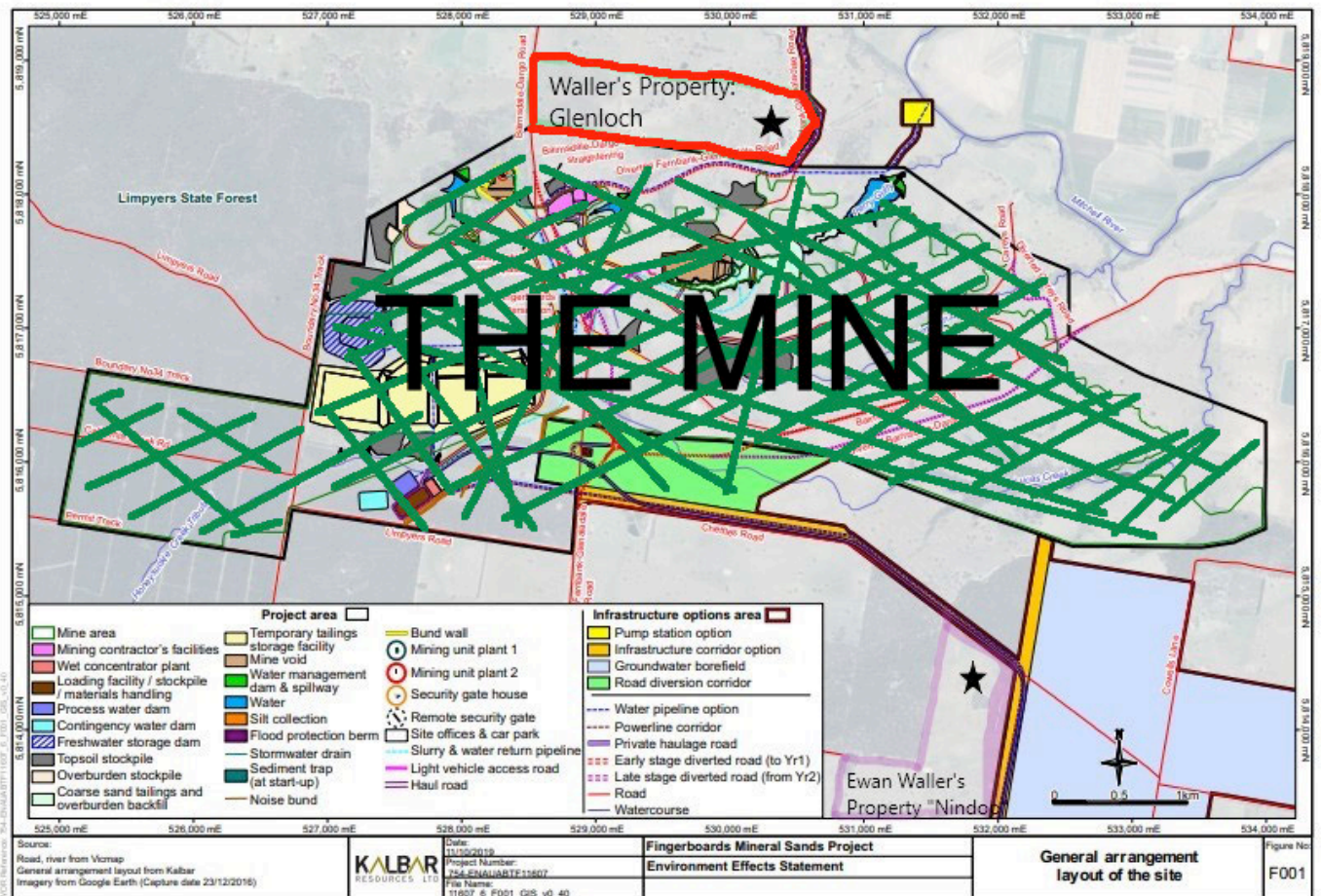
The Waller's Legacy can still be felt, they are what you would call genuinely Good People and their house is integral to the history of The Glenaladale Community. The children of Jo and Ewan have followed on this path; Rhys is now a Civil Engineer and handles contracts for Melbourne Water, Honnie is now a Veterinarian and Dairy Farmer, Yvette works for The Red Cross and Grace is a Forest and Wildlife Officer.

They are among many local families who are positively contributing members of the immediate community and wider society. A value system like The Waller Family's keeps thing together, keeps things right, keeps things moving. And The Waller's have not gone without seeing their fair share of personal hells, one example includes the 2014 Mount Ray Fire which saw Jo and Ewan single handedly fight the fire to save their house.





The Wallers, like many families in the community, are decent people who now face a new and unexpected form of hell -enter The Kalbar Mine proposal. This Map which shows the true perspective on what it would mean to have a Mine built on your doorstep. It's terrifying:



SUMMARY OF NEGATIVE IMPACTS:

1. HEALTH EFFECTS

> Physical Health

- Radio-Active substances including dormant Rare Earth Minerals that are toxic to humans when exposed, crushed and altered
- Water from The Mitchell River (which is the town's water supply) becoming contaminated from the dual use between Mine and Town along with Domestic Water Tanks and the nearby Woodglen Reservoir being contaminated, dirty drinking water
- Dust dissipating across surfaces causing respiratory sickness and causing cancer also contaminating vegetable crops grown in Lindenow Valley only 500metres away from the proposed mine location
- Mine is far too close to civilians and their activities: Families, Children and Schools impacting their health and safety and detrimental to their rural life function

> Mental Health

- Due to the massive disruption to usual life as has been for over 100 years, especially seen in 24/7 drilling noise to residents nearby. Similar effects are seen now in higher rates of mental illness due to the widespread effects of pandemic Covid 2020 via disruption to daily life with no escape, high suicide rates already exist for farmers in Victoria

2. ENVIRONMENTAL ABUSE

> Land & Animals

- Harm to Aquatic Life due to Mine tailing's waste and flocculants (chemicals used to treat the tailings) in the water, if there is a 100metre flood (common) this will spill out into surrounding rivers and water bodies infecting them as well
- 3 Billion Litres (3GL) of water being used across the Mine's lifetime
- Proposed 700 x removal trees killing the habitats of local flora and fauna

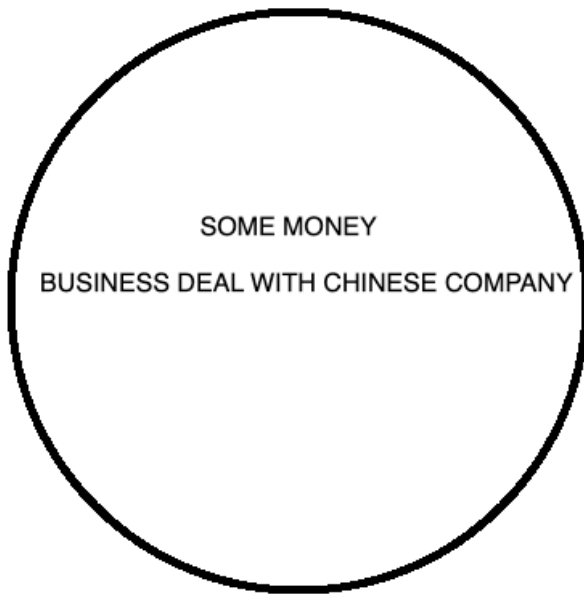
> Australian History

- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage sites and artefacts will be unavoidably destroyed
- 100+ years of local farmer family history

3. UNCONFIRMED & MISSING INFORMATION

- The full analysis of the ore body hasn't been disclosed to us meaning we cannot guarantee the information in the EES because the laboratory source for analysis is unknown therefore we don't know the real dangers to human or animal health. Please ensure this information is fully disclosed to public and closely examined because of the high risks.
- It is unacceptable to allow 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 powerlines, easements, rail siding and vegetation removal. Why wasn't this part of the mine project area? Why isn't this a matter for the EG Shire Council to determine?

WHAT YOU GAIN:



WHAT WE LOSE:



Kalbar Resources has now been championing this abomination for close to 6 years and while they have been paid to work on it's eventuation, the residents of Gippsland have had to take time off from their work to keep up. They have united and funded and fought, they have lost time, energy and money to keep what is sacred and healthy. Thursday 29th October 2020 marks the beginning of an opportunity for official response from those who will be directly disastrously impacted. You have plenty of scientific and economic evidence to support the flaws and failings of this project as provided by expert opinion and research: the consequences of this project's actions will be an irrefutable disaster, very much a situation where the losses outweigh the benefits. The facts and figures quite literally speak for themselves. But here in this letter I am not appealing to your common sense alone, I am appealing to your sense of humanity and understanding of how this has already and will continue to negatively impact the lives of the involved human beings themselves.

The picture I have painted is very clear. You are deciding whether or not to destroy the lives of Good Honest People, The Hard Working Farmers who have borne the brunt of the work to feed and provide for all Australians, who will not survive and simply do not deserve this takeover by The Fingerboards Mineral Sands Mine Project. Currency is often considered to be an exclusively monetary term, but what of social currency seen in community? What of cultural currency seen in Australian History? What of symbiotic currency where we nourish our environment and it in turn provides us with sustenance? What of humanity?

Finally, this decision relies on a signature, signed by someone who holds the power, either a power used to protect us as we deserve or a power used to destroy us as we do not. To proceed with the open cut mine would be to destroy the lives of people who have done nothing but contribute constantly to our great nation The Wallers for example are leaders

in Education, Fire Management, Water Engineering, Dairy Farming etc. They provide vital things we each need to function. The EES for the Fingerboards Mineral Sands Mine Project is an autocratic, a-moral and flat out obscene human-imposed natural disaster. It is based in nothing but greed. It is profoundly un-Australian. If someone proposed an 11km, 45metre depth mine in your backyard, what would you say?

STOP KALBAR MINE. #MinefreeGlenaladale

The Waller's story is just one family's story. There are infinitely more.

Sincerely,

Eden Swan