

# Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory  
Committee - EES

# 778

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**Request to be heard?:** No - but please email me a copy of the  
Timetable and any Directions

**Full Name:** Roni Corby

**Organisation:**

**Affected property:** [REDACTED]

**Attachment 1:** Letter\_to\_the\_IAC

**Attachment 2:**

**Attachment 3:**

**Comments:** Please refer to attachment

29/10/2020

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 have lived in Bairnsdale for my whole life, and it has been a wonderful environment to grow into the young adult that I am now. I have always been proud to represent our community in my various ventures, however this pride is rooted in both the unequalled supportive and unified nature of the community itself, and the sheer beauty of the natural environment in which I was raised - two things that Kalbar seeks to destroy.

I am incredibly passionate about environmental issues as a whole and have been involved in various forms of climate activism. Although I support a future where we distance ourselves from environmentally destructive practices, I am not naive enough to believe that the current enemy is mineral sands mining itself. The fact of the matter is that as of present we do not have an alternative to rare earth minerals for many of their necessary uses, however the specific location of this proposed mine will result in extensively devastating economic, social, and environmental consequences.

Our two largest industries in East Gippsland are agriculture and tourism, both of which will be greatly impacted by the destructive nature of the proposed mine. There are high risks of the river being contaminated by the runoff from the mine, especially during times of flood, impacting on crops, fishing, and agriculture. While Kalbar assures us that this will not be an issue due to the irregularity of what is often referred to as our '1 in 20 year floods', as somebody who has experienced four of these so called '1 in 20 year floods' throughout my 19 years of life, I believe that Kalbar is greatly concealing the severity of this threat. On the other extreme, East Gippsland has been suffering from a severe drought for the past few years, and with the extra 3 billion litres of water required annually for processing and dust suppression, it is impossible to envision a future where farmers will not be faced with even more devastating water restrictions. This will go on further to impact on our entire community who rely upon the Mitchel river for drinking water. How will we be expected to function regularly with this greatly reduced access to uncontaminated water?

In the likely case that this water is not sufficient in dust suppression, the travel of dust to the 'Food Bowl' (including dust from what Kalbar's geochemistry report has listed to be a variety of radioactive and cancer-causing substances), will impact devastatingly on crops grown in our food bowl. With the mine being positioned merely 500m downwind from the mine, this consequence is inevitable, made evident through the fact that organic farmers have been told

that they will lose their organic certification if the mine is built. Kalbar wish to create a future where our \$155M/year Mitchell River Valley vegetable industry will be entirely destroyed, and I cannot even begin to describe the drastic consequences that this would have on a community that has been built on this industry. Even more concerning are the health implications of living in a community with frequent exposure to radioactive and cancer-causing dust.

Our tourism industry has already been greatly damaged by the lack of tourism over the summer period as a result of the recent fires, a trend which was worsened extensively by the current Covid-19 pandemic. With the clear destruction that the proposed mine will have on both the Mitchel River and on our entire environment, it is abundantly clear that Kalbar seeks to destroy this industry in order to suit their own financial agenda. With our two main industries in complete destruction, how can our community be expected to continue on?

The fingerboards is also home to a variety of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites which will be either destroyed or greatly impacted by the proposed mine. While it is abundantly clear that mining companies as a whole have no concern for the preservation of Indigenous heritage sites, it is imperative that they are held accountable for the destruction that they cause to the oldest living culture in the world. The decision to allow this mine to go forward is directly endorsing the further destruction of indigenous culture.

Kalbar continuously speak of their ability to create jobs for locals, which in theory sounds great (and clearly very necessary with the extensive job losses that they wish to create within other industries), however they tend to neglect the fact that they consider 'local' to include anybody residing within the entirety of Gippsland. This conveniently includes the Latrobe Valley, a place where a mine has just closed and left a large number of trained miners without employment. It is ignorant and naive to assume that Kalbar would train East Gippslanders in these positions when such a financially convenient alternative exists.

East Gippsland is a vibrant community, however we are also a community who have faced a lot of hardship as of recently due to environmental factors, and other external factors. This mine will completely destroy the very foundation of our community. The proposed mine is economically, socially, and environmentally destructive, and the only possible reasoning for you to allow the mine to go through is in order to line the pockets of the rich at the expense of destroying our industries, our health, and indigenous heritage sites. Despite your distance from the issue, our Food bowl supplies food for a particularly extensive part of Australia (along with places overseas). We can't eat mineral sands.

Yours sincerely,

Roni Corby