

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

830

Request to be heard?: Yes

Full Name: Karen Lee Fleischer

Organisation:

Affected property:

Attachment 1:

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: See attached submission

Fingerboards Environment Effects Statement (EES)

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee Members

Thank you for the opportunity to let you know that I am strongly opposed to the Fingerboards mineral sands mine project at Glenaladale. I am not alone in expressing this opposition, it is very much what I am hearing in the wider community. Many different people from all walks of life be it young people, working families, young business professionals as well as long-term residents and business and industry professionals are very concerned about what could happen and the potential disasters.

In relation to the content of this letter, I would welcome the opportunity to speak at the panel about the potential impacts of the mine for the following reasons:

- I am a long-term resident. In my teenage years, my family had a farm at Flaggy Creek in the Lindenow valley. It was a close-knit community with MANY generations of families harvesting a living from the land. My children and their children went to school together. Ironically, when some of my children's friends came to stay at our house from within the secondary schools, they were mini versions of their parents. We could converse over the land. They are now adults with young children of their own and I am seeing their children being born. The cycle of working and living on the land goes in full circle. I am concerned that the proposed mine with all the expected risks will not only take away their social right to earn a living from the land but it will have environmental, social, economic and health impacts on their lives all of which I expect will be documented in the many submissions you will receive.
- I have lived in the area for more than 58 years having moved here at aged 5 and have never lived elsewhere. I have firsthand knowledge of the stresses this mine is placing on individuals, families and business owners within the East Gippsland Community. Friends have become divided. In some cases, friendships have been lost. The social impact of this mine is unreasonable/unacceptable in today's modern world. Some people are at breaking point. I am mindful that some may be suicidal and ongoing mental health to support these people and their families will impact on our community's wellbeing. The socio-economic impact study that was undertaken was a long time ago; it was woefully inadequate. The division that has been created in the community is because of the mine so the suggestion that Kalbar will encourage social interaction is a nonsense mitigation strategy, the irreparable damage has already been done. Furthermore, Kalbar has done nothing to date to fix that so why should that change if the mine is approved?
- It will be impossible for people to redevelop a connection with the land once 13 square kilometres has been dug 45m deep and all the ancient trees and woodlands removed. The hilly terrain and the natural gullies that have been formed is what makes this area so special. This cannot be replicated. These high risks cannot be mitigated, and it is an insult to those who live locally to suggest otherwise.
- There are many families who live near where the mine is proposed to be located and they will be impacted by the noise of a 24 hour per day seven day a week mining operation in what is an agriculturally zoned district. It is unacceptable that a mine be allowed to operate throughout the night when so many people live nearby. Other mines in Western Australia weren't allowed to operate during the night so why is that being considered here?
- I held a ministerial appointment to Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) for 11 years and also held a seconded position for 10 years. I am currently service the third consecutive terms as a ministerial appointed member. During this time, I developed local projects which provided employment opportunities for Australians in a wide range of jobs many of whom were Job Active clients. In 2017, I developed and managed a Linking Learning to the Land (LLL) project. I networked with Food and Fibre Gippsland (formerly East Gippsland Food Cluster) to develop training programs that linked people to working on the land. Webinar and training material has and is still available for Learn Local organisations throughout Victoria. The training resources were used by Manna Gum (Foster Community House) to broker training opportunities with Burra Food. Traralgon Neighbourhood Learning House used the ACFE Learn Local pre-accredited training program as a springboard to deliver new programs including horticultural training programs. The programs have been developed in partnership with Gippsland TAFE and some of the participants have gone on to further training. The Linking Learning to the Land training program was awarded the Victorian state-wide 2017 Creating Excellence in Local Solutions award. Please see Facebook link where MP Gayle Tierney, Minister for Training and Skills and Minister for Higher Education presented the award and I began speaking at around one minutes @ https://m.facebook.com/watch/?t=522&v=1537979189557982&_rdt
According to irrigation data, if the 3GL of water was redirected to the horticulture industry, 3 times more jobs could be created than proposed by the mine. Innovation from horticulture and also other innovative sustainable projects e.g. wind farms is exciting especially as it would create a generational employment

opportunity which is the Government's aim. These are the jobs we need to support that will be long-term contributors to the economy. I am concerned the mine will attract workers from the horticulture industry because it can pay higher wages, impacting on the viability of the food sector.

- There are huge environmental risks to the health of both the Perry River and the heritage listed Mitchell River. The mine will sit on the catchment of both significant river systems. There are risks of these rivers being contaminated, impacting on the vegetable crops in the Lindenow valley, fishing, agriculture, the health of the rivers and the Gippsland Lakes (an important Ramsar-listed wetland). I have been speaking with farmers who all say that the ground is porous and that wastewater from the tailing dams will leak into the surrounding land and end up in both rivers. These are not emotional statements. The farmers know the land and surroundings. It appears that not enough evidence has been contained within the EES to assure me otherwise.
- The Woodglen Reservoir where domestic and commercial water is stored for the whole Shire is 3.5kms downwind from the mine. I am concerned that our drinking water will get contaminated. As not all the facts are expected to have been released about what will be in the dust, how will East Gippsland water be able to assure us that there won't be any risks to our health from the water?
- I have not been assured that impacts to our flora and fauna have been adequately addressed. EES technical studies have not comprehensively surveyed the area to know the full ramifications of what is at risk.
- What assurance is there that funds will not run out leaving the community and Government with the costs of rehabilitation as occurred at the Benambra/Stockman mine that is still leaching into the Tambo River?
- Whilst it is said that the mine will create around 200 jobs for up 20 years, I have first-hand knowledge of the many businesses that will be affected by the mine. For two consecutive years from October 2017 to November 2019 I held the position as the President of the Bairnsdale Chamber of Commerce and Industry. During that time, I conversed with many businesses that supported, did not support or were undecided about the proposed mine. The majority I spoke to were not in support of the mine. East Gippsland is one of the most liveable places in Australia. It is the gateway to many tourist destinations. It holds much Aboriginal artefacts and sacred sites particularly at the Fingerboards. I am deeply concerned about the impacts on our important tourism industry and to the economy and what could happen should tourism be impacted by having a mine so close with potential contamination of our rivers and the Lakes.
- I would also like to state I support responsible mining where it helps to create generational employment. I have spent the past nearly 28 years of working to help broker people to employment. However, this project does not have the rhetoric of long-term jobs in East Gippsland and is more likely to result in significant job losses in our direct and indirect food industry as well as in tourism.
- 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?
- The EES does not contain an economic analysis of the downturn of jobs in East Gippsland that could be a major consequence of this mine. I mentioned at the onset that my family had a farm in the Lindenow valley. It is now a bed and breakfast. My siblings and I were thinking of spending our money locally by staying there. We would not do so if a mine with potential hazards was within close proximity. For that matter, I would think the same about spending money in Lindenow buying fresh vegetables and dining at The Long Paddock. Whilst the restaurant serves award winning food, I would feel that food bowl has been tainted by radioactive dust. Other tourism dollars will be lost to the region as many other people are expressing similar thoughts.

In closing I would like to say that my heart goes out to the Lindenow and Glenaladale communities and the MANY OF HUNDREDS OF LIVES who will be socially, physically and economically disadvantaged if this mine is approved. This is a highly dangerous location for a mine and there are too many environmental risks that cannot be resolved. I would really like to thank you for the opportunity to voice my concerns.

I welcome the opportunity to speak to the panel from professional, personal and volunteer perspectives.

Yours sincerely



Karen Fleischer