

# Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory  
Committee - EES

# 851

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Request to be heard?: No

**Full Name:** Beverly Sparks

**Organisation:**

**Affected property:**

**Attachment 1:**

**Attachment 2:**

**Attachment 3:**

**Comments:** See attached submission

## ***SUBMISSION RE: KALBAR OPERATIONS LTD'S FINGERBOARDS OPEN CUT MINE***

I would like to make the following points about the above mine:

- I understand that Kalbar wouldn't have known all the exact details about their project in 2014 and the first few years developing it but why were there such huge discrepancies in the original information they gave us compared to later information and why didn't they subsequently advise us why these changes were necessary. They didn't appear able to justify the significant differences. For example we were initially told that only 2-3 Gl of water was required for dust suppression but this was revised to 4-5 Gl and then amended once again to 3Gl of water required; they said that there would be no dust deposited on the vegetables due to their mitigation measures - but in a later bulletin Kalbar said they would be able to control dust only 'UP TO 90%' and one resident whose home was within a kilometre of the mine site was harassed into selling out to them because they claimed he wouldn't be able to live there with all the dust. When pressed by the Community about the risk of radiation they told us there would be no more risk of radiation from the mine than from the 'amount of radiation in a banana'. However in an earlier bulletin Kalbar Resources wrote: 'as part of the approvals process we must prepare a radiation management plan...which will detail how we will control the risk of radiation exposure to members of the public and employees'. As far as job numbers went, Kalbar stated: "during mining operations there will be 60 Kalbar employees on site" and there has been no justifiable reason ever given for increasing that number to 200 in the EES. The number of workers needed during construction also increased from 150 to 200 in the EES. "we will require a construction workforce averaging 150 people." It is little wonder that our community began to doubt the veracity of Kalbar's information and to believe that the consultation was insincere, inadequate and designed only to increase their chances of the project being approved. Ian Ross, Landcare Manager at Kanagulk near Iluka's Douglas Mineral Sands Mine, which was a slightly larger than Kalbar's project told our Community that only 90 workers were at the Douglas Mine site at any one time during operations.
- Health risks from exposure to radioactive substances like monazite and thorium which will be exposed at the 45-50 metre depth of the mine can be as severe as cancer as these substances as well as Silica are known carcinogens and in the mildest cases, lead to respiratory problems. Radioactive particles can become attached to fine clay particles and be carried long distances depending on the strength of the wind gusts and can easily be blown, airborne, onto the organic and other vegetables growing to the south west of the mine site. The distance the dust will be carried has also not been accurately assessed by Kalbar because the Weather station set up failed to record wind strength measurements for over two months so Kalbar averaged the remaining measurements. The averaged result will

not reflect the strength of the strong wind gusts. BOM wind strength reports always include mention of the strength of the wind gusts. Kalbar has used these inaccurate measurements as data in their modelling to determine the distance that dust will travel.

- I believe that the EES fails to account for the negative mental health consequence for the Community as well. The profound stress caused by both the proposed project and the lack of integrity and understanding of Kalbar CEOs and Kalbar employees has exacted a heavy toll on the local and wider communities who in the space of about 10 years have experienced one of the worst fires and droughts on record. Now they have to fight to protect their environment, their health, the future of their children, the peaceful enjoyment of their homes. Of course there are some for whom monetary gain is the motivation for supporting the mine and some who look no further than the number of jobs they think will be created. But most of the community who are aware of the project and the possible risks are devastated when they realise the terrible impact the project will have on their lives, wellbeing, and future prospects. For this reason too, Kalbar's proposal of an Environmental Review Committee consisting of a representative from ERR and from the Community will be met with scepticism, anger and resistance as will various other strategies Kalbar has proposed in the EES where the proponent relies on Community cooperation and participation to achieve amelioration of the impacts of the project.
- The 80 B double truck trips, not forgetting also all the associated mine traffic bringing workers and equipment, will create continual loud noise and disturbance for the over 82 residences who will become the 'sensitive receptors', not forgetting the hundreds of stock and wildlife including the nocturnal animals. It doesn't take much imagination to realise how debilitating this would be for the local population who will have to tolerate it day and night for 20 years if they remain in the area for that length of time.
- Kalbar stresses the point in the EES that the mine workers will be better paid than other local employees and that this might lead to resentment. But this comparison of salaries is arbitrary as it depends on the experience of the mine workers, their actual task, which could be menial, and whether they are part time, permanent or temporary. Kalbar's employees will likely commute home after their shifts as the proponent prides itself on being a 'local employer', so the workers can return home and spend their wages in their own towns so the 'local' economy won't benefit greatly from the influx of mine workers. The number of jobs created by the proposed mine is very rubbery because the obvious risk of jobs being lost in agriculture as well as in the Horticulture industry as workers move from those industries to work in the mine for the better wages Kalbar assures us they will receive and also lost if contaminated dust or water from the mine negatively impacts the vegetables and the growers lose income. For these reasons amongst others I think that Kalbar's overall cost benefit evaluation of the project is inflated, the health costs are underestimated as are the risks to the environment.

- Much of Australia is prone to extended periods of drought and low rainfall. Drought has critical impacts on Victoria's and Australia's ability to continue Agriculture and Horticulture on the scale necessary to maintain a healthy food supply. Access to a healthy, affordable, and sustainable supply of healthy food is essential for the future health of our children and should not be sacrificed for the profits of a mining company which will export the minerals overseas for the benefit and profit of another country. No doubt Australia will buy back the mineral products after secondary processing so Kalbar and that country will be the major beneficiaries of the project. The Community will be the losers.
- Cost to the beautiful natural environment, as well as to the health of the Community has been given very little genuine consideration by Kalbar in the EES. The harm the mine will do to the Mitchell River because of the mine's location, the scar on the landscape caused by the destruction of trees and vegetation, the too great risk to Providence Ponds and the 'Chain of Ponds' by seepage from the tailings dam, the loss of the region's biodiversity and wildlife, already diminished by the fire of 2014, and again in 2019, and the drought which the farmers are still recovering from - all make it impossible for the mine to be approved. When Anthony Hurst of ERR toured the mine site last year with a couple of local farmers he summed up the inappropriateness of the mine's location when he expressed surprise that a retention license had even been granted.

Bev Sparks