

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

860

Request to be heard?: Yes

Full Name: Alan Mihan

Organisation: Therapeutic and Sports Masseur

Affected property:

Attachment 1:

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: See attached submission

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee Members

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission regarding the Environment Effects Statement for the Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project.

I moved to Bairnsdale 16 1/2 yrs ago to establish my Therapeutic and Sports Massage business which while being a one-person operation has achieved reasonable success having 1500 clients on file, (approximately 50 clients remain active at any one time). Now being semi-retired (69 yrs old), continuing to service this client group and also maintain my own good health, I am extremely alarmed at the possibility of this proposed mine being developed at Fingerboards, Glenaladale.

I consider my good fortune in business due to an influx of retirees moving to East Gippsland to take advantage of the climate, lakes, rivers, ocean and mountains all within a 2 hr drive from Bairnsdale. I estimate the population of East Gippsland has increased by approximately 10,000 people, beginning 18-20 years ago and while having slowed, particularly due to Covid-19, is again increasing rapidly with housing, infrastructure, etc, all adding to economic activity.

The Mine proposal while purporting to add to this economic activity and therefore be good for our Region, I believe the opposite to be true. The risks associated with and potential downside to this development far outweigh any potential gains.

Water Storages

Kalbar claim they will ensure all rain/surface water will remain on site to minimize the risk of runoff causing pollution issues to Mitchell and Perry Rivers, Gippsland lakes, Ramsar listed Wetlands, etc by building Dams in 19 Gullys they have identified on site (EES). When questioned regarding how they will maintain the integrity of said Dams, Kalbar management blithely reply 'we will use plastic liners like Bonnachord (a local vegetable company) have done', not seeming to realize the storage dam in question (Bonnachord's) has been breached 11 times in 8 years, the final time by a wombat digging through the Dam wall and liner allowing the contents (plain water) to escape.

Bonnachord have recently spent \$ millions constructing a new off-river Water Storage dam and to avoid leakages, have lined this Dam with 100,000 metres of clay treated with a stabilizing agent and a further 120,000 metres of rock spaul to minimize wind and water 'wash' on the internal walls of the Dam. Are Kalbar going to spend \$ millions constructing Dams?

Kalbar are also proposing building a 90 Hectare Tailings Dam in the

headwaters of the Perry River (EES). Their experts claim the risks are low of this Dam failing (EES). I'm sure the Brazilians thought the same until BHP's Samarco Tailings Dam failed, killing 19 people, ruining a river and large tracts of land.

Should we believe this minnow of a Mining Co. (Kalbar) has the resources to clean up the mess following a Dam failure or reject the whole project out of hand as not worth the Risk to East Gippsland?

Jobs

A large part of that Risk being the economic viability of this Region without this proposed Mine. Kalbar's proposal estimates a long term workforce of 200 employees plus a further 200 contractors etc in the start-up phase for a 15 year project (EES).

Compare that with the current employments in East Gippsland utilizing the same resource (WATER)

Patties Foods - 800 employees plus

One Harvest - 400 employees plus

Bonnachond - 200 employees plus

Vegetable Farms - 200 employees plus 1000 seasonal workers

Tourism - 500?

All of these jobs would disappear were a Dam failure to occur.

(It has been stated in various forums that were the Vegetable Farmers given access to the 3 Billion litres of Water Kalbar is going to require annually for their mining operation (EES), The vegetable production in the Lindenow Valley could triple.)

Aside from a Dam failure the risks to the water supply of East Gippsland simply from the day to day mining operation are huge. East Gippsland Waters' Water storage facility at Wood Glen, approximately 3 kms downwind of the site, could have Rare Earths One dust entering this water. Were this to occur, at 0.2 micron in size and being both carcinogenic and radioactive, this material is impossible to remove from the water supply by filtration or other means. Apart from the obvious health implications of residents consuming this water, the above mentioned Business would no longer be able to use this water and subsequently close or move to another area with obvious loss of employment & economic activity. Kalbar has stated it is not able to control all dust generated on their site (EES).

Suddenly Kalbar's 400 jobs added to the economy isn't the economic bonanza it first appeared and has the potential to cause the loss of thousands of jobs and possible destruction of this beautiful area.

I thank the Inquiry & Advisory Committee members for the opportunity to make this submission regarding the Fingerboards Mineral Sands project and hope it has been of assistance to their decision process. In closing I again state my opposition to the proposal and ask that it be rejected on the grounds of not making economic sense for East Gippsland.

Ann-Miriam