

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

863

Request to be heard?: No

Full Name: Penelope Carruthers

Organisation:

Affected property:

Attachment 1:

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: See attached submission

18 / 10 / 2020

Dear Members, Panel, and Committee.

Last week I was given the opportunity to travel to the Glenaladale and Fingerboards area in East Gippsland. I was able to access the fertile river flats of the Mitchell River via one of the larger market gardens, and 'food bowls' of the area.

The Mitchell flows on to the renowned Lindenow flats above Bairnsdale, a spectacular growing area, ... along with Glenaladale, supplying a considerable proportion of Victoria's food.

Unfortunately what I found to my dismay, is that the community of this area, farmers, growers, and the majority of the residents have been living in a high state of anxiety, frustration and anger as they face a proposal and application to build an open cut mineral sands mine on an elevated area above the river at Fingerboards/Glenaladale. The large and beautiful Mitchell River and its tributaries, not only supply the growing area from Glenaladale to Lindenow, but supplies the RAMSAR protected wetlands.

The mine proposal is on an elevated and undulating area above the Mitchell River and adjacent flats, a catchment area, and has the capacity not only to contaminate via airborne particles, but to leach toxins into aquifers, pollute gullies that run directly into the river, totally destroy a considerable area of the tree and canopy environment, and the animals and birds that live there, the biodiversity, - the biodiversity, but also the unseen minutiae of an increasingly challenged landscape. ... and of course, the quality of life and livelihood for the many farmers and residents in the community. ... O, and there is a primary school a few kilometres away ...

I live in the Wellington Shire, my home is approximately an hours drive from Glenaladale. I, and many others did not know very much about this proposal at all... but I feel quite certain that although many people will not be directly affected by the mine in situ, the destruction of roads and habitat in and out of the mine site, the increased and dangerous flow of heavy vehicles passing through towns and farmland on their way to some, not yet stated terminal... Port Abbot? ... or to the already inadequate Gippsland railway system? ... need to be taken very seriously by all 'gipplanders' - And what will be the effect on tourism?

Open cut mining, by necessity, requires the complete removal of all trees, mid story vegetation, all soil, ie, all animals, birds reptiles, everything. - it creates a 'moonscape', releasing air-borne particles to the capricious winds, and exposing toxins, is incompatible with life as we should know it. No matter what "rehabilitation" plan is proposed, it is so very often, far short of what the reality turns out to be, and there may be no redress from anybody in the uncertain future that we possibly may face.

We are facing, indeed, we are in, ... a time of recurring and devastating bush fire, drought, loss of biodiversity, and the ongoing extinction of so many species, - it is more important than ever before to protect our environment, especially land such as this incredibly fertile and precious growing area of Gippsland. I am shocked and dismayed that a mining company, shareholders etc, could even consider what they are proposing in this unique area of Gippsland.

Yours Sincerely... Penny Carruther, Cowwarr