

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

870

Request to be heard?: Yes

Full Name: Dawn Stubbs

Organisation: C.A.R.E (Concerned Artist Resisting Extinction)

Affected property:

Attachment 1:

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: See attached submission

CARE Concerned Artists Resisting Extinction
Date of submission 26th October 2020

Submission to the Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory Committee
Spokes person Dawn Stubbs

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee Members

I am writing this submission on behalf of more than 80 Gippsland Artists, in response to the Environmental Effects Statement (EES) for the fingerboards mineral sands mine project of which Artists from CARE are concerned and strongly oppose on several grounds of which we shall outline in the submission.

FIELD STUDIES

As well as the many concerns by the vegetable growers on the Lindenow flats and the farms in the area, that will be heavily impacted by the mine, CARE would like to voice objections from the point of view of the wildlife that the proposed mine is home to. The Flora and Fauna **Volume 6 by Ecology and Heritage partners**, has mainly focused on what they call significant species, and yes this is important! but our views are about the more common protected species that would be destroyed at the mine site. The EES has been very sketchy and has overlooked some of the more common species as if they aren't of any importance. We believe a lot more site survey work should be done to assess numbers etc. The use of desk top data is grossly inadequate, and field studies need to be completed, for example on Common Wombat, Echidna, Sugar gliders, Feather tail Gliders to name a few.

RECENT FIRES

The shocking impacts of the 2019-20 fires have seen well over 3 billion of our native species perish throughout East Gippsland and NSW, which is a modest estimate. Our unique flora and fauna is being more and more pushed to the limits of any sort of sustainable existence, which is of great concern to the wider community and should be taken seriously. Instead of the usual dodging and weaving around green tape by Government bodies and Private stake holders like Kalbar. The depth of concern by the general public was on show during the recent catastrophic fires. How quickly a common species like the Koala can suddenly be wiped out, and in many parts of the country now has become scarce because of one shocking summer. The depth of concern by the public about this one species was palpable! World wide.

MINING COMPANIES

Everyone is more than aware that the world is in need of the properties that this mine will be extracting. But would it be acceptable if the deposit was in the CBD or the heart of Melbourne.

Mining companies and deforestation for one reason or another are robbing future generations of their rightful heritage. And so I implore the members of this panel to take into account the dire warnings that the many scientists and public figures such as David Attenborough have been telling government bodies about for many years.

Kalbar tells us that the Mitchell River will not be contaminated by the runoff from the mine. Any runoff from the mine would propose a health risk to the community and the wildlife in the area. They have also acknowledged that there are radioactive substances being mined including rare-earths.

With the future dire warnings about a heating planet by climate scientists from all over the world we believe it to be nothing more than wishful thinking to assume that the pristine Mitchell River during a strong easterly low will never be impacted. We don't believe Kalbar has a crystal ball that can tell what the climate change scenario will deliver in 15 to 20 years time.

Right now we have over 30 species of migratory wading birds including the endangered Eastern Curlew arriving at the RAMSAR listed Gippsland Lakes System. Some of these bird species have taken the incredible journey from Siberia, Alaska and Russia. If the Lakes System is ever contaminated by the run off from this mine, or the lack of flows due to the depletion of the aquifers, the impact to local Tourism could be catastrophic.

NEST BOXES

Kalbar are proposing to erect nest boxes as a substitute for natural hollows, after the large trees in the mine area are removed, approx 700 to 900, it is sketchy where these nest boxes will be erected. The Flora and Fauna report of the EES by Ecology and Heritage Partners page 94 and 96 lists the potential species that could use hollows within the project site (**Yellow Bellied Sheathtail Bat, Powerful Owl, Masked Owl, Eastern Pygmy Possum**). There is vastly more significant species that use tree hollows than the four that are listed. In particular Sugar Glider (*Petaurus Breviceps*) and the mouse size Feathertail Gliders (*Acrobates pygmaeus*). Recent studies by researchers at the Charles Darwin University have discovered two subspecies of Sugar Gliders. Please find attached NEWS ARTICLE (Discovery of new glider species highlights conservation risk). One of which is listed as being in the same habitat as the more well known species. This research has shown that Sugar Gliders are not as common as once thought. Please find photo taken at the mine site on Tuesday 20th at approx 8.35.

Will these artificial hollows be on private adjacent farmland and have local farmers been approached? Nest boxes will only be used by a very few of the more common species. There has been recent research by ANU Scientists that suggest that artificial nesting boxes are inadequate for a lot of species as they lack the insulation that a healthy growing tree has, namely they are hot in summer and cold in winter, and with a warming planet on the horizon these nest boxes will remain unused. Sadly we believe the nest box scenario is nothing more than a token gesture to appease the community.

WILDLIFE KNOCKING ON THE DOOR OF NEIGHBOURS.

There is the assumption by the mining company that wildlife will just move on. Most of our wildlife are territorial and kill interlopers to their habitat. This assumption of moving on seems to be the answer that is provided several times in the Flora and Fauna report. The debunking of the moving on by wildlife theory, is well documented and Ecology and Heritage Partners show a lack of research, if the company believes such fabrications.

Several artists from CARE surveyed along the fence line of the mine site on the (14th Oct 2020). We observed in an approximate 50 metre area several common wombat burrows. Wombats now being a protected species, we would like to know the method that will be used to kill the animals that are living on the mine sight, of which there seems to be many. This is a subject that Kalbar is not discussing. It is an unpleasant conversation for Kalbar to have and is only vaguely talked about on page 94 **7.3.2 Direct Fauna Mortality** in the Flora and Fauna part of the EES. There are a lot of ground dwelling animals living in the mine sight and I feel that the public has a right to know how these animals will be euthanized. Of the more common species of mammals that would be destroyed would include wombats, Echidnas, Common Native Rats, and Brown Antechinus, as well as tree dwelling animals like Sugar Gliders and Feather tail Gliders and several Micro Bat species.

Australia's species loss through deforestation, introduced feral animals and mining is something that all Australians should be ashamed of and this mine has no social license to proceed. The people of East Gippsland and Wellington Shire's have had the threat of this environmental threatening mine hanging over their head now for over 5 years, and its high time that we got on with the job of protecting what we have left instead of destroying it.

It is unacceptable to allow the compulsory acquisition of private land to be used by the mine for infrastructure that will be located outside the mining project boundary.

Why wasn't this part of the mine project area? And why isn't this a matter for the East Gippsland Shire.

PHOTOS

Common Wombat burrows, Sugar Glider found in hollow on the mine sight photographed by Lisa Roberts (8.35pm 20th Oct)

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Press article about Recent discoveries by Charles Darwin University.

CARE would like to thank the Panel members for the opportunity to make a submission.

Spokes Person Dawn Stubbs



SUGAR GLIDER PHOTOGRAPHED BY
LISA ROBERTS AT THE MINE SIGHT
AT 8.35 OCT 20TH 2020.

Charles Darwin University

Discovery of new glider species highlights conservation risk

News Article

Discovery of new glider species highlights conservation risk 17 July 2020

The savanna glider (*Petaurus ariel*)

The savanna glider (*Petaurus ariel*) is the Territory's newest mammal species.

Research by Charles Darwin University has changed what was known about the charismatic nectar-loving sugar glider, finding that they are at more risk than ever, particularly after the recent bushfires devastating south-eastern Australia.

The research in collaboration with the South Australian Museum and Queensland University of Technology has discovered that the sugar glider (*Petaurus breviceps*), once thought to be a singular species actually represents three genetically and morphologically distinct species.

Published in *Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society* the discovery has been a decade in the making for the team at CDU.

Provost Professor Sue Carthew said the findings were not only a significant contribution to science but have important conservation implications.

The work began when an earlier investigation into sugar glider genetics raised questions about the identity of the glider found in the Northern Territory. With the help of a crowdfunding campaign, the team travelled to London's Natural History Museum to examine a specimen more than 150

years old. They also assessed more than 300 live and preserved glider specimens from Australian collections before resolving that the sugar glider is in fact represented by three distinct species. These are now formally recognised as the sugar glider (*Petaurus breviceps*), the savanna glider (*Petaurus ariel*) and Krefft's glider (*Petaurus notatus*).

CDU Research Associate in ecology and conservation Dr Teigan Cremona said the savanna glider occurred in the woodland savannas of northern Australia and looked a bit like a much smaller version of a squirrel glider with a more pointed nose. "The remaining two species, the sugar glider and Krefft's glider, look similar and may co-occur in some areas of south-eastern Australia."

Dr Cremona said that while the discovery of a new mammal species was uncommon and exciting, it also meant that the distribution of the sugar glider had been widely overestimated.

"When considered as one species, sugar gliders were considered widespread and abundant, and classified as Least Concern," she said. "The distinction of these three species has meant a substantially diminished distribution for the sugar glider, making that species vulnerable to large scale habitat destruction."

She said the recent bushfires had incinerated quite a large proportion of the species' current distributional range.

"Given they are hollow-dwellers and require a diverse habitat with a variety of foods, the bushfires have most likely had a devastating effect on this much-loved species," Dr Cremona said.

"Our new species from northern Australia, the savanna glider, occurs in a region that is also suffering ongoing small mammal declines."

A recent study led by CDU Research Associate Dr Alyson Stobo-Wilson estimated the species has undergone a 35% range reduction over the past 30 years.

"We need to urgently assess the conservation status of both the sugar glider and savanna glider before they are lost," Dr Stobo-Wilson said.

Professor Carthew acknowledges that much more work now needs to be undertaken to delineate the distinct ecology and requirements of each species and determine their distributions in detail.

"This will enable us to effectively assess the conservation status of each species and the management efforts required to ensure their protection as they face an uncertain future," Professor Carthew said.



COMMON WOMBAT BURROW NEXT TO
MINE SITE TAKEN 14TH OCT 2020