

# Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory  
Committee - EES

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Request to be heard?: No

**Full Name:** Debra Ann Matthes

**Organisation:**

**Affected property:**

**Attachment 1:** Kalbar\_EES\_submi

**Attachment 2:**

**Attachment 3:**

**Comments:** see attached submission

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee members,

This is a submission regarding the EES for the proposed Fingerboards mineral sands mine at Glenaladale. **I strongly oppose the mine and would like to have my objections noted and queries examined by your members.**

I am a lifetime local having lived in the Bairnsdale area for 59 years, 43 of those years on the family property at Fernbank (approximately 15 minutes from the Fingerboards). My husband's Parents and Grandparents also farmed at Fernbank. My husband and I now reside on a property in Flaggy Creek (approximately 12 kilometers overland from the proposed mine site). My son, his wife and three of our beautiful grandchildren live on a property at Wuk Wuk, closer to the proposed mine than we are.

For the health, wellbeing and safety of my family, our community and environment, my reasons for objection and your consideration are:

- The **radioactive dust particles** resulting from the rare earth mineral extraction and crushing that will be dispersed into the air are harmful. Apart from breathing in these dust particles we rely totally on **tank water** for our daily living and I believe the **increased short and long-term risks of possible exposure to these potentially carcinogenic particles is totally unacceptable.**

**I ask the panel to ensure these risks have been fully and independently investigated.**

The Woodglen reservoir which stores water for the whole shire is 3.5 kilometres from the proposed mine! The contamination risk cannot be mitigated! **Has the EES addressed what the actual contamination level would be?**

- The **3 billion litres of water required by the mine annually for up to 15 years** is a staggering amount of water to be used, including from the Mitchell River. A vital river which provides a unique example of riparian ecology. This river is 121 kilometres long and enters the Gippsland Lakes at Lake King, via internationally significant silt jetties. There are important wetlands on both sides of the river. These wetlands are part of the Gippsland Lakes Ramsar site. A tributary of the Mitchell River, Watts Creek, runs through our property.

**What will the entire environmental impact of the mine operation be on the Mitchell River and the Gippsland Lakes?**

The Mitchell River and Gippsland Lakes are a vital tourism drawcard for East Gippsland. Given the huge potential for environmental and aesthetic degradation, **what economic impact on tourism** (boating, fishing, canoeing, hiking, camping, café's, restaurants etc.) would the mine have?

**What impact will the contamination and huge water use risks have on the agricultural industry?**

**Could the water be redirected to the local horticulture/agriculture industries, thereby increasing employment by far more than is proposed by the mine?**

- The **identified risk of leakage from the huge 90-hectare tailings dam** which would contain mine waste and flocculants is also unacceptable. This dam will be situated above the Perry and Mitchell Rivers and a major flood could result in contamination. **What details have been provided by Kalbar regarding construction of this proposed dam?**
- One of the reasons we enjoy and choose to live and work in this amazing and unique area is for the peaceful environment. The **noise from a mine working continuously 24 hours** a day will be extremely stressful and I am very concerned about the effect this will have on the community's mental health.
- The **continuous heavy vehicle traffic** will contribute significantly to the noise and cause **congestion and intolerable safety hazards on our country roads.**

In closing I would like to add that this is **our home, our community**. We have so much to be thankful for, the land, forests, mountains, rivers, lakes, wildlife and the diverse and amazing people who live here. All contribute to our livelihoods and wellbeing. We must keep our home **safe and protected**. My grandchildren have the right to drink clean water from their tanks and to swim in a safe river. They should walk and work in the paddocks and only hear birds, cattle, horses, the wind in the trees and breathe fresh air. They need to be as safe as they can be on our roads without the threat of continuous heavy vehicle traffic. **We look forward to a positive future where generations of our family are living and visiting here, however if this mine proceeds, our way of life will be destructively and everlastingly altered.**

**This mine will decimate our community and the environment, the damage cannot ever be reversed.** A private company cannot be allowed to irrevocably change a society for private gain, especially given that our supposed gain is merely an approximate 200 jobs (exactly how many of those will be locally sourced?), we stand to lose so much more.

Given the devastating physical, emotional, environmental and economic effects of the recent drought, bushfires and covid catastrophes this region CANNOT be further burdened!

This is where I stand and these are the enquiries I put to the panel for consideration. For my family, for my home, for my community and for the East Gippsland environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Yours sincerely,

Debra Matthes.