

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

893

Request to be heard?: Yes

Full Name: Sharon Clerke

Organisation:

Affected property:

Attachment 1:

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: See attached submission

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee members,

Introduction.

My name is Sharon Clerke and I reside at Glenaladale.

Almost 25 years ago to this day myself and my partner moved to Glenaladale.

It was to be our dream.

Like many in East Gippsland we moved 28 years ago from the rat race of Melbourne to live the country dream.

We purchased a retail business, employed locals and became part of the community of Glenaladale. A dream many wish for but rarely get the chance to live.

Until, almost 7 years ago when Kalbar came to town.

A look back at the arrival of Kalbar Resources in the community in 2014 immediately after the devastating bush fires which spread from Mt Ray, burning 3 homes, thousands of hectares of farmland, kilometres of fencing, sheds and most heartbreaking of all, the hundreds of cattle, sheep, goats and wildlife, many having to be destroyed by their owners.

Kalbar arrived only weeks later knocking on landowner's doors.

Something that will never be forgotten or forgiven.

On December 10th 2014 at a meeting organised by the community at the Glenaladale Hall the then managing director, Mr Rob Bishop, was told to "pack up your bags" as you not wanted here. Mr Bishop said the company was far from mining anything at Glenaladale and would not mine if a project would damage the interests of local residents and businesses. Well it has and it will.

Mr Bishop the 1st of 4 now CEO's and counting, had previously addressed a meeting at the Mossiface Hall where he had described Glenaladale as burnt blue gums, some sheep and a few lettuce growers. What a disgrace to a community that contains the third largest vegetable growing area in Victoria. Something not shown adequately on any map included in their EES.

Kalbar Operations have 'NO SOCIAL LICENSE' before, now or ever with the community of Glenaladale and surrounds.

Mr Wynne, on the 13th October 2016 I was the woman that made the 8 hour round trip to sit in the foyer of Parliament House for close to 6 hours to present you with an invitation to visit, tour and discuss with the community 'The Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project'. Unfortunately you were unable to meet with me to accept this invitation. (Attachment 1.)

I then on the 20th October 2016 sent an email reiterating my offer for you to visit. As of today's date this has never been accepted. I ask again that you visit the area at this crucial stage to view Glenaladale through the eyes of those who live here. How such a controversial decision could possibly be made by you without visiting the area and speaking with concerned landholders.

Kalbar does not mention in its 10,500 pages exactly how many people live both in Glenaladale or surrounds. The fact that 100's of people live within a 2km radius and that within 5-10 km's of the mine footprint 1,000's live. Children go to school, kindergarten, people play sport, fish and swim in the Mitchell River, attend local sports clubs/halls and hundred's rely on tank water for both themselves and their stock.

Where are these figures mentioned in Kalbar's EES Report?

Who will regularly test these water tanks?

Who will know if these water tanks are contaminated?

Who will care?

And who will listen?

The fingerboards Mineral Sands Project would have to sit in the most inappropriate area in the whole of Victoria and possibly Australia.

I can only hope that common sense will prevail.

What are you thinking Mr Wynne?

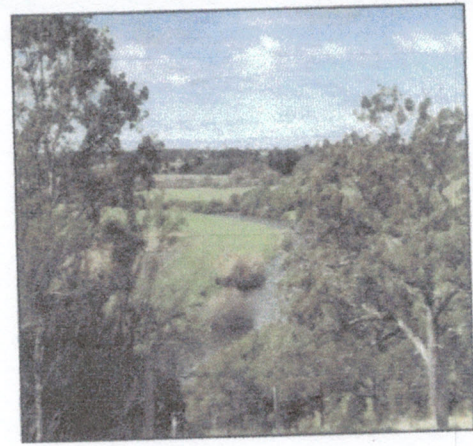
'Victoria's Adani.'

To The Honourable
Richard Wynne

*Glenaladale Residents invite you to tour
and discuss with Community
Representatives – Kalbar Resources
Mineral Sands Mine proposal in their
Community.*

At a date and time suitable to you.

Please contact Sharon Clerke on



(Attachment 1.)

Questions and there are many;

1. Have you ever visited Glenaladale?
2. Have you seen Glenaladale through eyes other than Kalbar's?
3. Project Rationale; 'The state has about a third of Australia's economically demonstrated resource of zircon and nearly 43% of the country's rutile. The project provides a significant opportunity to further enhance the Victorian mineral sands industry'. Stated by Kalbar.

At what cost to East Gippsland when Kalbar states that there is already an abundance of product in Victoria. Why would you risk the contamination of rivers, vegetables and farmland? Not to mention the 200 plus people that live within close proximity of the mine site.

4. Kalbar states the minerals occur close to the ground surface and yet say they will mine to 50 metres, why?
5. Kalbar states that a storm event occurs at a frequency of 3 times in every 100 years. I have lived in Glenaladale for 25 years and seen a storm event (flood in my words) 3 times in this period. What records were Kalbar referring to?
6. Kalbar states that decommissioning of dams will not occur until water quality monitoring demonstrates that runoff from the catchment no longer requires active management. Who will actively manage this and for how long?
7. How much water will be captured in the 19 dams stopping water from flowing into the Mitchell River?
Kalbar have never answered this question even though asked on many occasions.
8. Apparently according to Kalbar's EES my tanks run the risk of contamination and my pastures covered in dust. Bottled water will be supplied for drinking water. What of my horses for both drinking and grazing of dust covered paddocks?
9. Only 11 tanks have been tested by Kalbar while many more residents have had their tanks, bores, dams and the Mitchell River, independently tested to ensure a true and correct baseline. Will this flag a class action further down the track against both the government and Kalbar for contaminated water due to the Kalbar mine?
Oh yes of course, Kalbar state there is nothing in the dust?
10. Who will be held responsible when contamination occurs? And it will.
11. Does Kalbar actually know how many residences, residents and water tanks actually exist in a 2 km radius of the mine?
12. How many residents have Kalbar actually made contact with advising them of this perilous risk?
13. The Woodglen Storage sits only 3 km from the mine site and thousands rely on clean drinking water all over East Gippsland. Who will be responsible for contamination of East Gippsland's only water supply?

That is a lot of bottled water.

14. With regard to Figure 5-1 Horticulture Report (Attachment 2). I note the only water source shown is only part of the Woodglen storage. Where is the river shown?
15. Why are other storage dams used to water vegetables not shown?
16. Why is this information over 4 years old?
17. Why does it only represent 1/3 of the vegetable production in the area?
18. The vegetable production as 2020 clearly shown on Google Earth (Attachment 3) shows the expansion over many years now encroaching to the outskirts of Bairnsdale. Why does Kalbar not mention or show this all important fact? Why are Kalbar using outdated figures from 2015/16 and including areas not relevant to this EES?
19. Why did Kalbar not even know the season beans were grown? Makes a mockery of their studies, don't you think?
20. Who will stop the dust from landing on these vegetables?
21. Who will monitor the contamination of these vegetables?
22. Who will advise the general public of the contamination of these vegetables?
23. Will you the Advisory Board know what you are eating?
24. Who will be responsible for the closing of Patties and Vegco when these vegetables don't pass quality control? Two of the largest employers in Bairnsdale.
25. And who will take the fall for a multi million dollar industry when, you, me and everyone else can't eat these vegetables?
26. Would you eat vegetables from the Lindenow Valley knowing what you know?
27. Kalbar states in the project area north of the Bairnsdale- Dargo road that in this area, levels of radiation are substantially elevated compared to the global average for uranium and thorium, likely due to the ore body occurring at, or closer to, the ground surface. Excuse me for not being an expert in radiation; however, would that not mean that the ore body buried deep in the ground would also be substantially elevated? Would this not be exposed? What dangers? What will be contained in the dust? What will be flushed into the Mitchell River?
28. Kalbar says many of the roads within the project area and surrounding region have low traffic volumes. What is the surrounding region they refer to? Were these studies done pre Covid? Were these studies done during Christmas, Easter, long weekends? Why were studies not done for a 12 month period? After all we are talking of 20 + years of mining.
29. In Kalbar's 'land use in the project area and surrounds' why are 'hobby farms' in orange marked as 'Rural residential with agriculture'? My neighbour grows tomatoes in an old bath. Does that label him 'Rural residential with agriculture'? These properties, and there are many, consist of small

5 Horticulture in the Lindenow Valley

5.1 OVERVIEW

The Mitchell River flats landscape in the Lindenow Valley is characterised by high value irrigated vegetable production. Many areas have been farmed by the same families for multiple generations. Horticultural production activities are concentrated in the area due to a combination of:

- Quality rich alluvial free draining soils
- Suitable topography for intensive production
- Reliable rainfall
- Accessible irrigation
- Suitable climatic growing conditions
- Windows of market access for higher product return in shoulder periods to peak production.

The total area of the Lindenow Valley suitable for vegetable production is approximately 4,700 hectares (refer to Figure 5-1). The crops grown include beans, broccoli, capsicum, carrots, cauliflowers, sweet corn, lettuce, spinach (including baby leaf), peas, pumpkin, and onion.

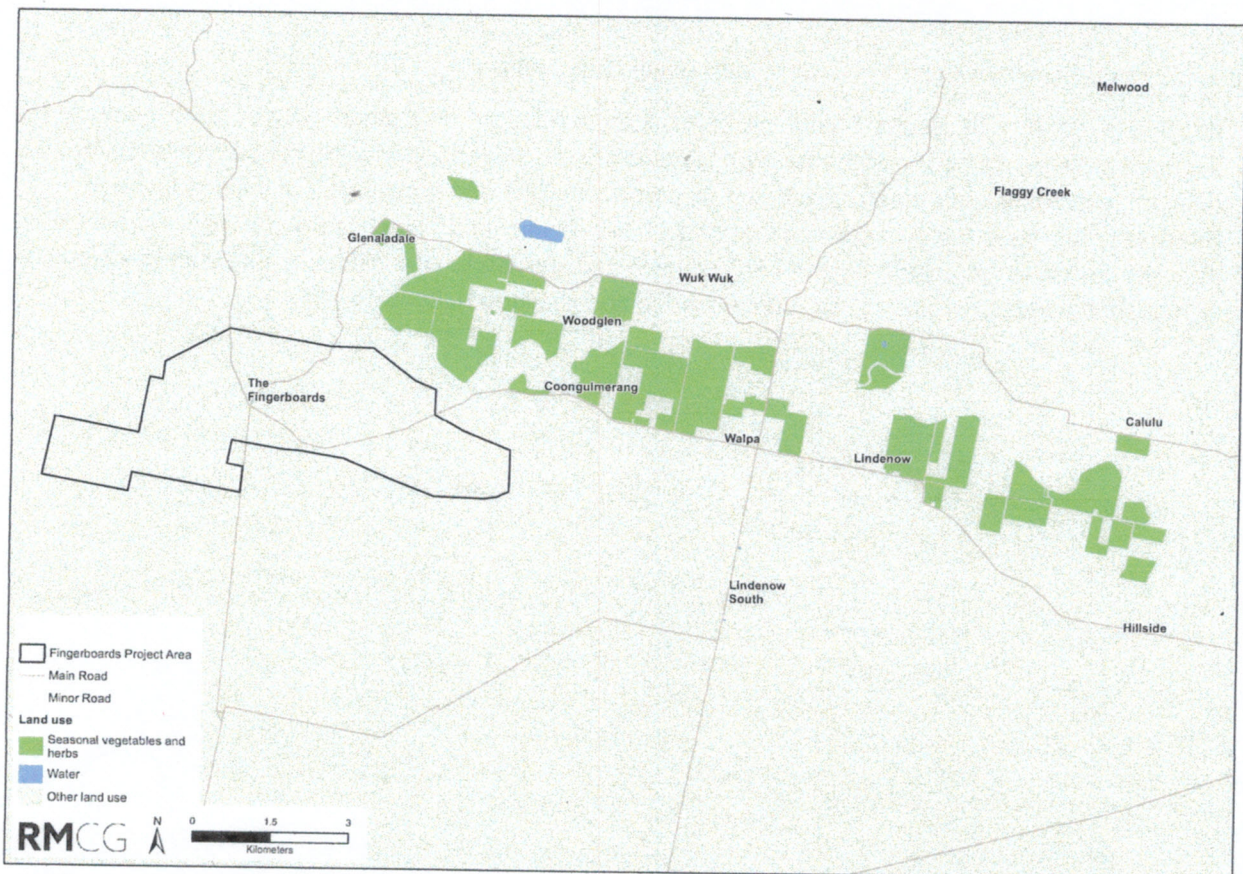
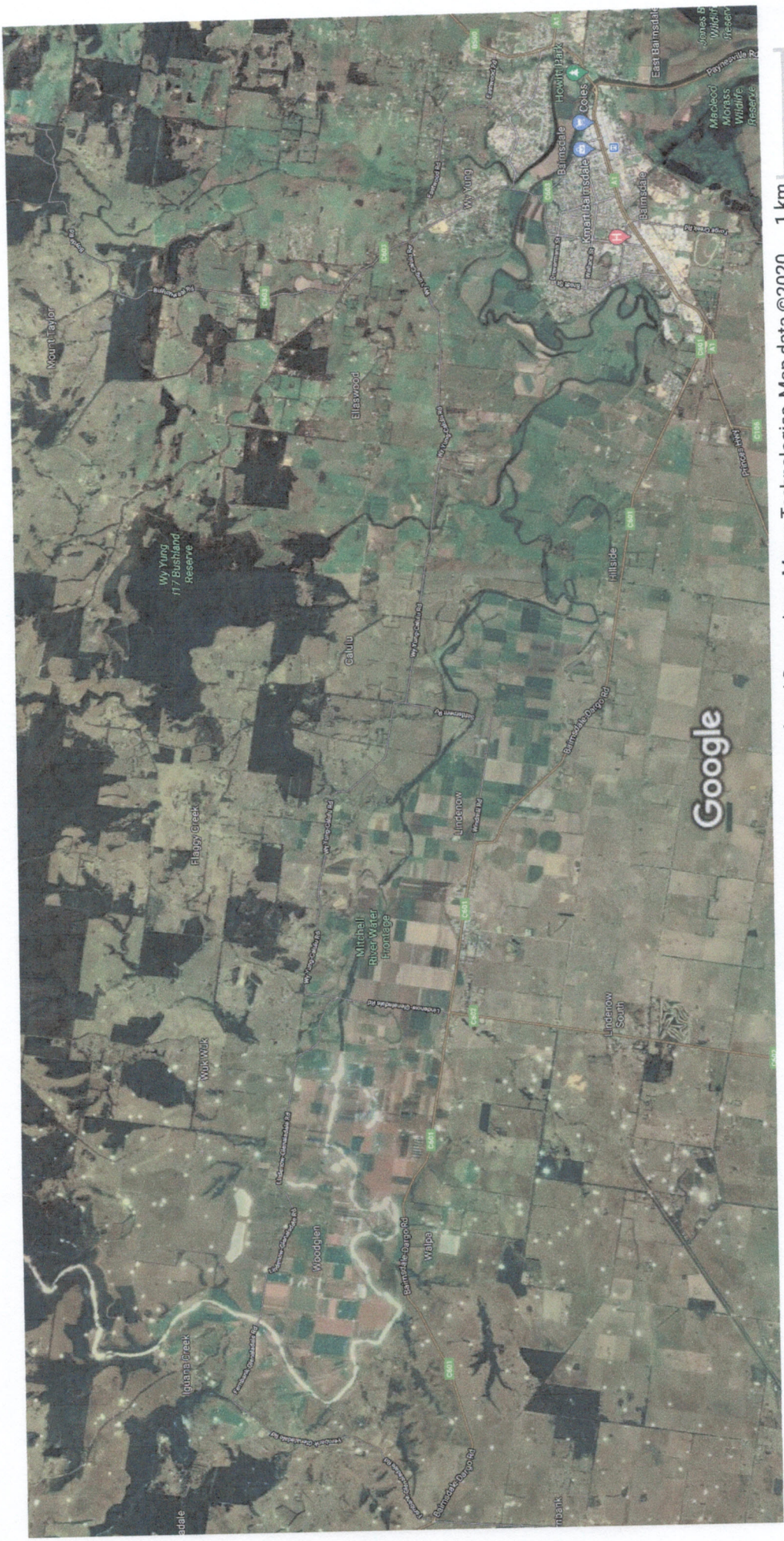


Figure 5-1: Land use for vegetable production in the Lindenow Valley¹⁵

¹⁵ Adapted from Victorian Land Use Identification Scheme, 2016



Imagery ©2020 CNES / Airbus, Landsat / Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2020

(Attachment 3.)

acreage farms of mostly elderly people trying to enjoy their retirement. There are a huge number of these properties incorrectly labelled. Why? (Attachment 4.)

30. Kalbar states, 'If the project is approved, Kalbar is committed to continuing stakeholder engagement and maintaining open communication to ensure the project meets the reasonable requirements of all stakeholders. Does this mean the continued threats and bullying of landholders by Kalbar will continue? Does this mean Kalbar will actually open the doors of their office? Although still in attendance at their office the doors have been closed since March 2020. Is it any wonder that they have NO SOCIAL LICENCE?

31. State significant Forest Red gum Grassy Woodland, 11.57 hectares, ERADICATED.

Large trees, 763 with at least 76 having a diameter of 1.2 metres or more and another 130 scattered trees, ERADICATED.

Three state significant flora species, 53 with a moderate to high likelihood to occur, ERADICATED.

Native vegetation, 188.50 hectares, ERADICATED.

Known habitat of hollow bearing trees, ERADICATED.

Habitat for the nationally significant grey-headed flying fox, state significant yellow bellied sheath tail bat, masked owl and powerful owl, ERADICATED.

Wetland habitat ERADICATED.

How can this be acceptable?

Are you aware that a large part of the mine footprint has never been surveyed?

32. 'There will be significant impacts of clearing of vegetation'. Where are the offsets? Will they even be in East Gippsland? Why are these offset areas not listed?

33. 'Abstraction of water from the Latrobe Group Aquifer could reduce groundwater levels within the aquifer'. Have all farmers that use this aquifer been notified by Kalbar of their intentions or do you rely on all these farmers reading a 10,500 page document?

34. Comments regarding groundwater such as;

'Other users could be affected'

' Could reduce ground water levels with the aquifer'

' Seepage of water from the tailings stored in the mine void'

' Is not expected to impact'

' Have a measurable impact'

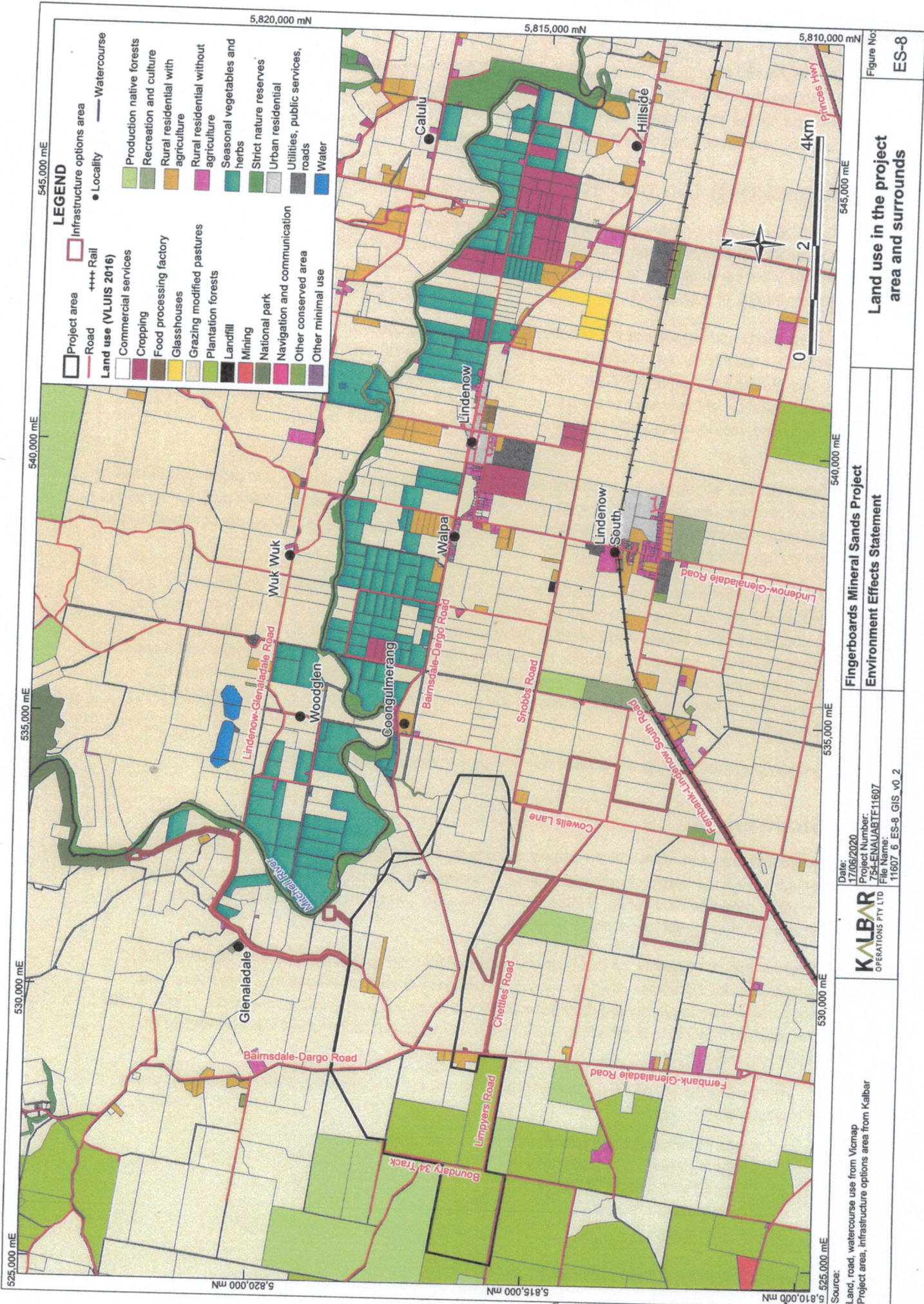
' Marginally above relevant criteria'

' Tailings seepage is predicted'

' Not significantly impacted'

Does this not concern you?

It certainly does me.



LEGEND

Project area	Infrastructure options area
Road	Locality
Rail	Watercourse
Land use (VLUIS 2016)	
Commercial services	Production native forests
Cropping	Recreation and culture
Food processing factory	Rural residential with agriculture
Glasshouses	Rural residential without agriculture
Grazing modified pastures	Rural residential
Plantation forests	Seasonal vegetables and herbs
Landfill	Strict nature reserves
Mining	Urban residential
National park	Utilities, public services, roads
Navigation and communication	Other minimal use
Other conserved area	

Figure No: ES-8

Land use in the project area and surrounds

**Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project
Environment Effects Statement**

Date: 17/06/2020
 Project Number: 754-ENAU/ABT11607
 File Name: 11607_6_ES-8_GIS v0.2



Source:
 Land, road, watercourse use from Vicmap
 Project area, infrastructure options area from Kalbar

(Attachment 4.)

35. Surface water comments such as;

‘Several project activities could affect the availability of surface water for licensed and other users.’

So the farmers are to use what to water their vegetables and their stock?

‘Availability of both surface water and runoff into the Mitchell River along with the quality of surface water affected with spillway discharge of mine contact runoff during rain events.’

The Mitchell River, a Ramsar Listed Wetlands, will suffer extreme stress, how will it ever be able to recover?

When this occurs and it will, who will be held responsible?

What happens to the tourist industry that East Gippsland relies on so heavily?

‘After mining the Perry Rivers flow will be reduced by over 50%.’

What happens to one of the longest chain of ponds in the world when the water flow is halted?

The aquatic life, the farmers that rely upon this river downstream and the whole of the lakes system will be affected.

How can this be acceptable?

Kalbar states ‘The failure of the temporary tailings storage facility would be extreme destruction of aquatic habitats, scour/sedimentation into the Perry River.’

Failure of tailing dams are rare says Kalbar and yet year after year we see these failing on our TV or computer screens.

NEITHER KALBAR NOR THE DECISION MAKERS CAN PLAY GOD.

THIS TAILINGS DAM WILL BE A TICKING TIME BOMB AND IT WILL FAIL.

WHO WILL TAKE RESPONSIBILITY?

36. With regard to Air Quality;

Who are these sensitive receptors Kalbar mentions in a number of these reports?

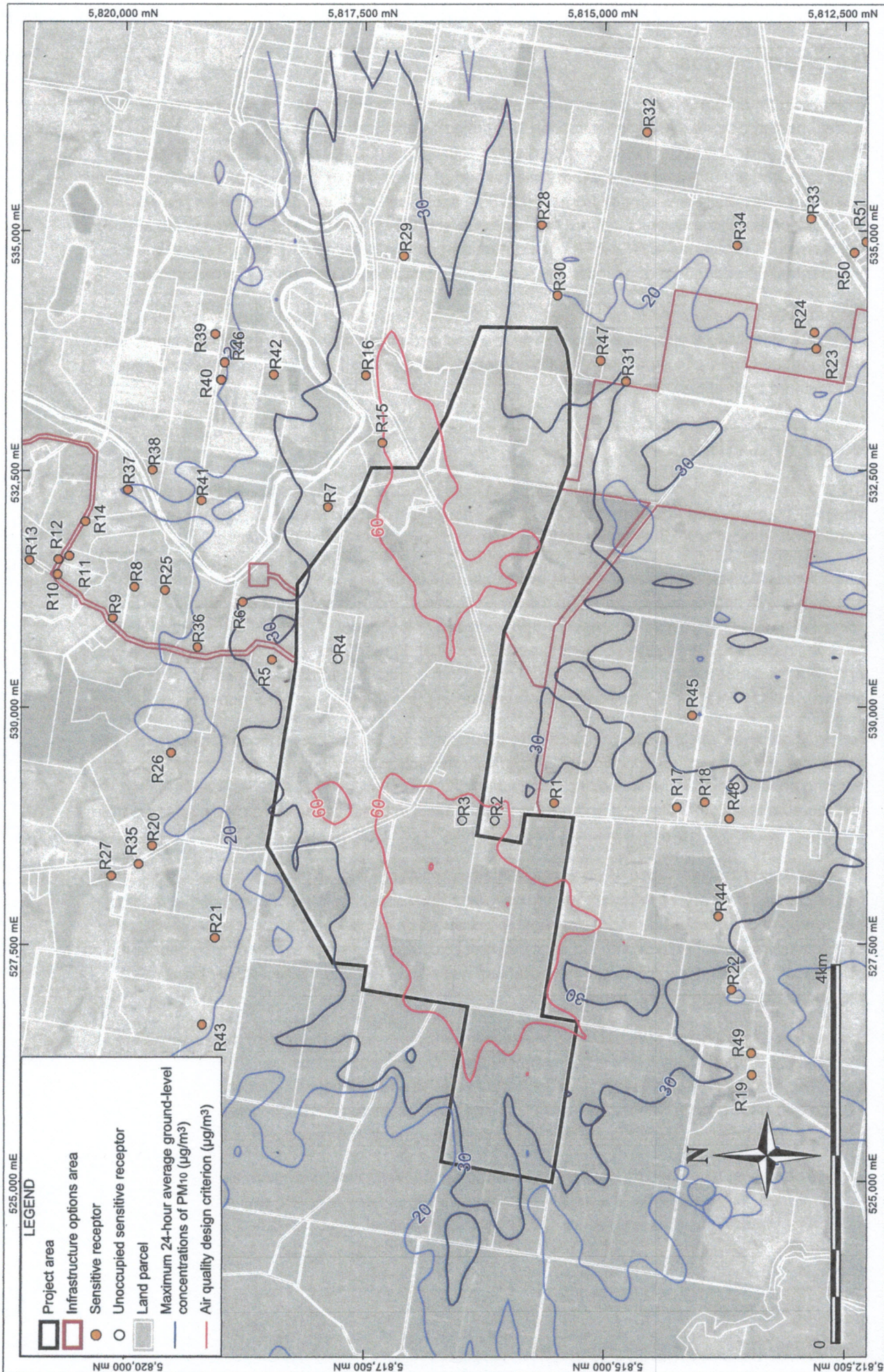
How many have been contacted for air quality or for that matter, any of the reports that mention them?

I have yet to find any resident in the area that has been contacted by Kalbar or notified that they have been classed as a sensitive receptor.

Why are only half of the residences shown on Kalbar’s Figure No. ES-10 ? (Attachment 5.)

Why was a true figure of the population not given anywhere in this EES?

Will all sensitive receptors have monitors placed on their properties?



(Attachment 5.)

If not, why not?

37. And there is the noise. I struggle to find words.

Glenaladale sleeps quiet and calm, nocturnal animals enter my garden and enjoy the silence of the night.

But I read that sleep disturbance will exist day and night. Apparently native fauna species are not expected to be significantly impacted, vibration and not mentioned anywhere is the vibration and noise the 6 massive generators that will power the site for god knows how long.

Why are these generators not mentioned in the noise report?

What noise levels do they exceed?

Obviously not mentioned for a reason?

In 2017 twenty six Clubs and Pubs in Melbourne were given in total \$270,000.00 in sound proofing grants in a bid to appease surrounding residents due to noise from live music.

What is the Victorian Government or Kalbar going to do to appease residents when the noise levels become unbearable?

Is it easier to ignore the plight of country people to that of city folk?

38. Regarding radiation. I would suggest that both Kalbar and the advisory committee read a paper written by G.S. Hewson and B. M. Hartley and although an older report, radiation is still radiation and paints a very different story of the risks associated with mineral sands mining and radiation. A very different story to Kalbar's.

39. The Roads, Traffic and Transport states that the project will 'increase the risk of road accidents'.

Obviously essential services will be stretched. Police, Ambulance, CFA, SES.

Have all these agency's been made aware of the added work load associated with a mine?

Although Kalbar states pedestrian safety will decrease? One assumes Kalbar in fact means increase with up to 80 heavy vehicle movements per day through Lindenow South.

The Lindenow Primary School is located on this road along with many homes, all located very close to the roads edge. Two hundred road movements a day do not include the vehicle road movements as of today.

What will be an acceptable number of injury's or deaths due to a Mineral Sands Mine?

Long Weekends, Christmas, Easter, Cup Day, Labour Day, Queen's Birthday. Where are the vehicle movement's studies for these holiday periods?

How many will die?

Will a mining company take responsibility for the deaths on our roads?

I think not.

40. Kalbar, under land use and planning, state 'Land in the project area is not identified as being of strategic significance for agriculture or forestry.'

Strangely before the Mount Ray bushfires Bluegum Plantations thrived along with Pine Plantations that have been grown in the area for many years and still both do.

As for agriculture, tell this to a farmer of five generations.

Has anyone done the true research on the value of the Glenaladale farmers or the outlying farms? Or has this been yet another desk top study of very little fact?

Have you seen the price of beef and lamb in the supermarket recently?

In the East Gippsland Advertiser 6th March 2017 southern Rural Water stated the Lindenow Valley was one of the most productive horticultural areas of Australia. They estimated the district was worth \$500 million per year in agricultural production. That production fuels supply-chain prosperity in food processing, distribution and retail – the OECD cites farming's multiplier ratio is about 2.7. (Attachment 6.)

Why would you risk this industry for a mine?

One would think sustainability is paramount. Unlike a mine that is very likely to run out of puff within a few short years like so many others.

41. The Plates ES-4, ES-5 and ES-6 (Attachment 7) are a mockery of what the landscape will actually look like. What is not seen is the lights 24/7, what is not heard is the noise 24/7, what is not seen is the wildlife that frequents the area, the cows and sheep that scatter the landscape, the old growth trees and the Redgum plains.

Why would Kalbar not highlight these important omissions?

42. Kalbar states 'the project will result in the disturbance and destruction of cultural heritage sites and artefacts'.

I AM SPEECHLESS.

Why did Kalbar choose to not acknowledge the traditional owners at their community meetings?

Until reprimanded by the community Kalbar had never acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the Land.

43. Socioeconomic is when a mine comes to town and some see nothing but the all mighty dollar with promises of gold and silver. While others care for their neighbours, environment, cultural heritage and sense of place.

KALBAR HAVE NO SOCIAL LICENCE. NOT NOW, NOT EVER.

Water brings benefits to region

Adby 6th March 2017

Recent developments in the Macalister Irrigation District (MID) and East Gippsland region as a whole have highlighted the importance of this area to national food production.

Already one of the most water-secure agricultural regions in Australia the area of Central and East Gippsland is proving to also be one of the most versatile.

Traditionally a prime irrigated dairy region, the soils of the ancient flood plains of the MID are also highly suited to intensive horticultural production.

Also in the region is the verdant Lindenow Valley, one of the most productive horticultural areas of

Australia.

Southern Rural Water (SRW) estimates the district is worth \$500 million a year in agricultural production. That production fuels supply-chain prosperity in food processing, distribution and retail – the OECD cites farming's multiplier ratio is about 2.7.

Over the past decade, SRW has undertaken a series of modernisation projects throughout the MID, including channel automation, storage works and outlet rationalisation, to help secure the future of food production in the region.

The major MID2030 upgrade is now well underway, with the completion of the \$32M Phase 1a this June. This phase has included several sub projects

and associated on-farm works.

The combined upgrades to date have saved approximately 12,000 megalitres of water through better efficiencies and reduced run-off.

The next stage is \$60M Phase 1b projects covering the Tinamba system, which will be funded equally between SRW, Victorian and Federal Governments.

The works start this winter and will run through to 2020. They will include 38km of pipeline and channel automation and are expected to save another 9600 megalitres.

The SRW system works have been complemented by farmers improving their own irrigation systems, including farm plans and projects

funded under Macalister Irrigation District Irrigation Efficiency Incentives Program, which is managed by West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority and Agriculture Victoria and funded by the Victorian Government.

Farmers are reporting increased flow rates, better on-farm water use, less run-off and improved irrigation times.

Macalister district dairy farmer, Iain Stewart, said the right on-farm infrastructure optimises these new efficiencies.

"Not only does this help protect against seasonal variability but it also extends the growing season and supply to major customers such as

supermarkets and national food chains," Mr Stewart said.

"Increasingly, farmers are looking at highly efficient surface irrigation or pressurised irrigation systems – such as centre pivots – to help boost pasture and/or crop growth and take away some of the risk of seasonal dry.

"Adding water security to a property adds certainty."

To coincide with these recent projects, it has been decided to run another Gippsland Irrigation Expo on March 15 at the Sale Showgrounds. The event is exclusively focused on irrigation, showcasing the latest irrigation technology to aid farmers to make decisions around the future of their irrigation practices.

(Attachment 6.)



Photo credit: Ecology and Heritage Partners (08/06/2016)

Plate ES-1
Lowland Forest within the project area



Photo credit: Ecology and Heritage Partners (06/05/2016)

Plate ES-2
Valley Grassy Forest within the project area



Photo credit: Ecology and Heritage Partners (09/06/2016)

Plate ES-3
Plains Grassy Woodland within the project area

44. A bushfire management plan will be prepared and implemented for the life of the project, as stated in the EES.

Will there be a fire ready contingent on site 24/7?

Or will Kalbar expect the local CFA crews to be on the ready for both mine fires and local fires?

Will Kalbar expect the local CFA to be supportive?

A Fire Danger Rating Board sits at the intersection of The Fingerboards, Glenaladale, advising locals and tourists to the area the Fire Danger Rating for a 24 hour period.

Where will this board be moved to and who will manage it or will it just be removed at the risk to all who travel in the area?

Where will the CFA water tank, again at The Fingerboards, be located with access for all CFA crews that require top up water for fire trucks during fire season?

In one of the most fire prone areas in Victoria, will Kalbar be of any assistance to the CFA during a major fire event? I think not.

45. Kalbar states the presence of the project in the region has the potential to influence property values nearby and in the broader landscape. With Kalbar's purchases in the surrounding area hitting the 3 Million dollar mark for some properties I'm sure that all the residents within a large radius of the mine look forward to the same opportunity to sell their properties to them. After all who wouldn't want to live in close proximity to a mine?
However Kalbar does not commit to whether this is an increase or a decline in property values.

46. I have had, like many others, baseline studies done on my property at my own expense and will have no hesitation if this mine was to proceed to take those responsible to a court of law on any changes to these base line studies, both, before, during and after the life of the mine.
This would also include any changes to The Mitchell and Perry Rivers and The Gippsland Lakes.

47. Regarding human health, Kalbar states receptors health will not be affected?

Noise 24/7.

Vibration 24/7.

Dust 24/7.

Lights 24/7.

Trucks 24/7.

Processing 24/7

Generators 24/7.

Risk to local drivers on the road 24/7.

Oh and stress levels associated with the project may be elevated!

Well at least Kalbar got that right.

THEY ARE ALREADY VERY MUCH ELEVATED.

48. And so after 20 years Kalbar pack up their bags and finally leave Glenaladale.

Or do they continue to mine the EL's they hold with no requirement for an EES in Glenaladale?

This is a serious concern for any landholder.

How can technical studies, by technical consultants, appointed and payed for by Kalbar be able to then put disclaimers against their reports?

Who is then responsible for the accuracy of these reports?

Who will be held responsible?

Who will adequately protect the environment?

Why is there nothing in the Act that say's that Kalbar have to tell the truth in their EES Submission, which Kalbar can easily changed to suit the reader.

I have kangaroos that frequent my paddocks,
I have wombats that visit my home,
I have eagles that soar above my property,
I have rare orchids that grow in my backyard,
I have the quiet of the bush,
I have clean fresh water from the rain,
And I have city people making decisions on my behalf.

In the Herald sun 23rd of November 2016 premier Daniel Andrews said the Government was committed to supporting farmers, their produce and the environment regarding fracking in Victoria.

Will Mr Andrews and the government continue to support farmers now threatened by this proposed mine?

Don't let this decision be the worst Victorians have ever seen.

Don't let the article written by Andrew W. Eastwood be our future. (Attachment 8.)

I look forward to presenting at the panel hearings in 2021.

Sharon Clerke.

A glimpse into the future - 28 September 2030

A CAPACITY crowd of 100,236 will fill the Melbourne Cricket Ground today to watch the 2030 AFL Grand Final. This is only the fifth time in the past decade that the stadium has been filled, following the 2020/21 COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the commencement of the mass immunization campaign in 2022, when adequate supplies of the University of Queensland vaccine were made available, the AFL and the Victorian government were finally convinced that "herd immunity" had been reached in 2026, enough to allow full seating at the MCG.

The early years of the 2020 decade have been memorable in East Gippsland for reasons other than the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following government approval of the Kalbar mineral sands mine on the Mitchell River near Bairnsdale in late 2021, the impact on the town of Bairnsdale and the East Gippsland region has been devastating. Despite widespread opposition from the local population, the mine reached full operation in early 2026.

Since that time, the population of Bairnsdale has fallen by 15%, the Mitchell

River flats vegetable industry is now operating at 30% of its peak in 2020, fresh water flows into the Gippsland Lakes have all but disappeared, and tourism to the region is now virtually non-existent because of the annual algal blooms in the lakes, the heavy metal contamination and the regular deposition of toxic radioactive dust on the Bairnsdale region with the prevailing west wind.

Vegetable farmers on the Mitchell River Flats recently took action in the Supreme Court to stop Kalbar outbidding them for available water, claiming this had led to terminal decline in the vegetable growing industry and the loss of many hundreds of local jobs.

Spokesperson for the Stop Kalbar Environmental Disaster Group (SKED), who asked to remain anonymous, recently toured the mine with local State and Federal politicians.

"We knew this thing would be big," said the spokesperson, standing on the edge of the mine crater. "It's bigger than the Hazelwood Coal mine, and they still haven't

filled that. We could fit the whole of Bairnsdale into this crater, including the St Mary's Church spire, and we wouldn't see the top of the spire, given the depth of this hole. It's forty-five metres to the bottom down there, which is three times deeper than the Gippsland Lakes. If I didn't know better, I'd reckon a meteorite had done this."

"We told you about this ten years ago, when you had a chance to stop it," the spokesperson told the local Members of Parliament.

"We knew about the 80 B-Double trucks a day, which now clog up our roads. We knew about the radioactive dust, which has made all the surrounding farms uninhabitable and all but finished the Lindenow flats vegetable industry."

"We knew about the water, and the 4000 million litres the mine would use every year. All this was in the Environmental Effects Statement, which the government accepted despite the expert advice about the risks."

Because of the extent of the disaster, the community

of East Gippsland has finally started to fight back. The number of residents nominating for the recently-established legal class action against Kalbar is steadily growing.

"This is separate to the action taking by the Lindenow growers," the spokesperson said. "There is now very good data about the impact on the health and prosperity of the East Gippsland population as a result of this mine."

"Since the Bairnsdale Hospital was relocated to the east of the town due to the noise and dust from the constant truck movement on Forge Creek Rd, the new hospital has had to provide an increasing number of beds for acute mental illness presentations and respiratory conditions. Cancer rates in the community have increased, as have the number of births with genetic abnormalities."

In the 2020 EES, Kalbar outlined its plans to monitor the risks associated with the mine. But the EES was light on about action that would be taken if acceptable limits were exceeded. The mine has

been closed down once for exceeding these limits, and then for only 24 hours.

"This is the equivalent of telling the factory worker with her arm caught in a machine that the machine will be turned off when it's up to her shoulder," the spokesperson said. "Too little, too late."

The local community has placed some hope in the recent Federal Government inquiry into the financial viability of the mine. The government is concerned that the mine has been closed for extended periods, not because of poor monitoring results but because of depressed markets.

The Federal Treasurer recently stated under parliamentary privilege that the ownership of the company responsible for the mine remained obscure, in addition to the product from the mine being shipped to China for processing.

"Kalbar claimed initially that this project would have a Net Market Value of \$300 million per year, with only \$10 million dollars of mining royalties flowing to the Victorian government,"

the Treasurer said. "We may be faced with the prospect of this company going into liquidation and the Australian taxpayer being left with the cost of rehabilitation."

"This should never have been allowed to happen," the SKED spokesperson said, gazing into the chasm below. "There's a capacity crowd at the MCG today. You could fit more than 200 MCG's into this hole — and what's it brought us? Nothing but grief."

"On top of the 2020 bushfires and the COVID pandemic, Kalbar is the third great disaster that has almost destroyed this town in the past 10 years."

FOOTNOTE:

If any part of this article alarms you, please take action.

Take time to respond to the Kalbar EES (found on the Kalbar website www.kalbarresources.com.au), or simply send an

email to Minister Richard Wynne at richard.wynne@parliament.vic.gov.au expressing your opposition to the mine, for any of the reasons outlined in the article.

Also, be very careful with your vote in the forthcoming East Gippsland Council elections.