

# Supplementary Expert Witness Statement (Biodiversity) for the Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project, Glenaladale, Victoria (Independent Advisory Committee)

Prepared for:

**Kalbar Operations Pty Ltd**

February 2021



Author:

**Aaron Organ**

# 1 SUPPLEMENTARY EVIDENCE

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## 1.1 Introduction

This statement relates to my ecological expertise in relation to the centrifuges that are proposed as part of the project to replace the temporary tailings storage facility (TSF) outlined in the Environment Effect Statement (Kalbar 2020). This statement is supplementary to my expert witness statement on ecology matters dated 4 February 2021. I have been instructed by White and Case on behalf of Kalbar Operations Pty Ltd (Kalbar) to prepare a supplementary expert witness statement relevant to my ecological expertise in relation to the centrifuge proposal documented in Technical Note TN01 titled:

*'Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory Committee Technical Note. Implementation of centrifuges for water recovery and tailings management (18 January 2021)' (Kalbar 2021).*

## 1.2 Potential Impacts and Response to Centrifuge Proposal

The EES Groundwater Assessment assumed an 80% recovery of water from the fine tails slurry, while as outlined in Kalbar (2021) a recovery of 83% is now expected due to the centrifuge process. This reduces the borefield water requirement from the 3 GL/year to 2.9 GL/year, while any risk of seepage is removed as the material is completely dewatered to a state that will only retain capillary moisture that will not seep into the environment. Therefore, it is my understanding that the centrifuge proposal will result in a reduced potential impact to aquatic environments, including the Mitchell River.

As stated in Kalbar (2021), during the fine tailings dewatering process:

*'trucks must haul overburden material around the TSF area into another open void in the pit. This haul distance increases the exposed area of the pit, as well as associated dust noise generation. A method of tailings management that accelerates the commencement of backfilling operations and rehabilitation will have a corresponding reduction on truck haul distance'.*

As such, the proposed centrifuge tailings is anticipated to reduce traffic and potential impacts to ecological values associated with vehicular collision (fauna road mortality) noise and dust, and will mean that areas can be rehabilitated quicker than with a TSF. A conceptual layout of the centrifuge plant positions is provided in Kalbar (2021) (Figure 8), and based on this layout the centrifuges will be located within the project area / footprint that were accessed as part of our detailed ecological investigations (Ecology and Heritage Partners 2020a). Proposed internal haul roads will also be located within the project footprint that was previously assessed during the detailed ecological investigations.

Based on the information provided in Kalbar (2021), the centrifuge proposal does not alter the results of the ecological impact assessment for the project and conclusions outlined in the detailed ecological investigations report, the Offset Management Strategy, or the EES (Ecology and Heritage Partners 2020a, 2020b, Kalbar 2020), including any additional direct or indirect impacts to:

- The extent of native vegetation removal, and the required biodiversity offsets under the State *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation* (DELWP 2017) and the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act);

- Terrestrial and aquatic fauna habitats, including hollow-bearing trees, Mitchell River, Gippsland Lakes Ramsar site and Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems; and
- Significant flora and fauna species, and ecological communities.

### 1.3 Author's Declaration

I, Aaron Organ, have made all the inquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate and that no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been withheld from the Inquiry and Advisory Committee.



----- Date: 08/02/2021

## REFERENCES

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- DELWP 2017. *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation*. Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Melbourne, Victoria.
- Ecology and Heritage Partners 2020a. Detailed Ecological Investigations for the Proposed Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project, Glenaladale, Victoria. Unpublished report prepared for Kalbar Operations Pty Ltd by Ecology and Heritage Partners Pty Ltd.
- Ecology and Heritage Partners 2020b. Biodiversity Offset Management Strategy for the proposed Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project, Glenaladale, Victoria. Unpublished report prepared for Kalbar Operations Pty Ltd by Ecology and Heritage Partners Pty Ltd. April 2020.
- Kalbar 2020. Environment Effects Statement for the proposed Fingerboard Mineral Sands Project. Report by Kalbar 2020. August 2020.
- Kalbar 2021. Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory Committee Technical Note. Implementation of centrifuges for water recovery and tailings management. Report by Kalbar 2021. January 2021.