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The rally was organised by Mine-Free Glenaladale, a community group formed in response to Kalbar Operations Pty Ltd's mine project.

One of the rally organisers and a speaker at the event, Debbie Carruthers, called on the Victorian government to listen to the concerns of the community and reject Kalbar's mine proposal.

Speaking after the rally, Ms Carruthers said much of the community's opposition to the mine was centred on the radioactive and potentially cancer-causing substances to be mined, with uranium and thorium some of the heavy metals of concern.

"Airborne dust containing heavy metals and silica are health risks to humans and grazing animals with dust travelling long distances," she said.

"The veggie industry in the Lindenow Valley, a major food bowl for the country that can be seen from here and is only 500 metres downwind from the mine.

"When that dust lands on those crops, the viability of that industry and thousands of direct and indirect jobs will be at risk.

"Our wild and heritage-listed Mitchell River is only 350 metres downwind.

"It is a major source of drinking and irrigation water and is important to our fishing and tourism industries."

Ms Carruthers said there were also concerns about the Gippsland Lakes Ramsar-listed wetlands, as well as the large amounts of water required for the mining operations.

"They will need five billion litres of water annually for 20 years if the use of centrifuges, which have never been used in mineral sands mining, is unviable," she said.

"That water is needed for more sustainable uses."

The Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project focuses on a high-grade area of the Glenaladale ore body, about 20 kilometres north-west of Bairnsdale.

Kalbar Operations says it proposes to extract about 170 million tones of ore to produce about eight million tones of heavy mineral concentrate over 15 to 20 years.

Heavy mineral concentrate is the valuable heavy mineral that has been extracted from the ore but has not yet been processed into final mineral products.

Kalbar says the mineral products - zircon, ilmenite, rutile, and rare earths - are in high global demand for use in communications, transport, medical technology and renewable energy.

The company hopes to begin construction this year, and begin operation in 2022.

The government-appointed Inquiry and Advisory Committee has been hearing submissions in response to the environmental effects statement since Monday, with the first six to nine weeks of video conference followed by local submitters being heard at a venue to be determined in Bairnsdale.

The Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory Committee must submit its findings and recommendations to Planning Minister Richard Wynne within 40 business days from the completion of its public hearing.

For more information, go to the its [website](#).



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