

IAC Inquiry into the Fingerboards mineral sands mine proposal

Presentation notes by Michelle Barnes – 16 July 2021

PLEASE NOTE:

THIS WRITTEN COMPONENT OF MY PRESENTATION IS DESIGNED TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH MY POWERPOINT DOCUMENT. WRITTEN NUMBERS (FOR EXAMPLE, 'FOURTEEN') REFER TO POWERPINT SLIDE NUMBERS.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF GUNAIKURNAI PEOPLE

I want to acknowledge the Gunaikurnai people as the custodians of the land we're on today, and of the Country Kalbar want to destroy. When you hurt Country, you hurt them.

Given we've just had NAIDOC week & the theme was 'Healing Country', the topic of bulldozing this cultural landscape for an open-cut mine even being up for discussion is an irony not lost on me.

Of the Gunaikurnai people, I particularly acknowledge the Brabralung Clan whose Country the mine project area is proposed on, covering the Mitchell River and the magnificent country surrounding it, including Bairnsdale; the Brayakaulung Clan – custodians of Providence Ponds & the Perry River which will be degraded or destroyed by the mine in their headwaters; and the Tatungalung Clan around Lakes Entrance, Ninety Mile Beach, Lakes Victoria & Wellington, Raymond Island & Lake King (The Gippsland Lakes) whose Country will suffer the terrible and long-lasting consequences downstream of this mine.

Gunaikurnai people and GLAWAC have made their opposition to this mine loud and clear (refer to my and other submissions for more detail). That should be the bottom line - end of story. But sadly in the society we live in, with its racist structures and processes, it's not the bottom line, and the community are having to fight tooth and nail against this proposal.

Sovereignty of Gunaikurnai people in Gippsland has never been ceded. The Gunaikurnai and their Country have suffered continual waves of colonisation since Europeans first came here – massacres, dispossession, damaged cultural assets, destruction/degradation of country and water, inter-generational health, housing, and economic disadvantage, racism, discrimination...

Remarkably at Glenaladale, a significant amount physical Aboriginal cultural heritage has survived the years of European colonisation & occupation. This heritage which tells the stories of thousands of years of culture is valued greatly by Gunakurnai people, and indeed now also by non-Indigenous people in East Gippsland. These irreplaceable cultural heritage assets should be protected and respected by all Australians and the international community. There's no question about whether any of the Cultural Heritage within the mine footprint can survive Kalbar's 45 meter deep open-cut mine with its bulldozers and heavy machinery, it's appetite for knocking down ancient trees

(some of which are scarred, some of which may have had people buried in them, all of which provide essential habitat in this fractured landscape), it's appetite for killing animal totems, smashing artefacts, crushing geology....
NO ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE WILL SURVIVE KALBAR'S MINING OPERATIONS.

Having survived so much adversity, it is unconscionable to consider Kalbar's violent, entitled proposal to desecrate MORE heritage. Would we bulldoze other cultural assets for a mine – the Sydney Opera House, Notre Dame, Taj Mahal, the Pyramids of Giza? I don't think so. Let Rio Tinto's tragic desecration of Juukan Gorge be a parable for what NOT to do here.

Quote from Casey Ritchie – Koorie Youth Council

INTRODUCTION

I live high on a hill overlooking the Gippsland Lakes near Bairnsdale, about 20km east of & downwind of the proposed mine site, and I'm raising my son here. We frequently experience raging westerlies which would blow life-threatening dust here from Glenaladale if the mine were approved. I run a photography business which relies on the natural character of East Gippsland and the community which thrives within it. I live here because I love and *need* to be immersed in nature. In my experience, East Gippsland offers the best of this in comparison to anywhere else in Victoria.

If the mine is approved, I'll likely re-locate because I'm not prepared to take the risk of the toxic fine dust blowing here. If I feel unsafe 20km away, imagine how people living right next to the mine feel. I don't want my family sharing the roads with a daily cavalcade of B-double trucks laden with radioactive heavy mineral concentrate. My son's school bus travels right through Lindenow every weekday, and through the dangerous roundabout in Sale referred to yesterday by John Wheeler! The idea of those kids being on the road with all those trucks makes me sick. I don't want to leave my home – East Gippsland is home, it's where I feel a deep sense of belonging. Sense of place is inextricably integrated with human spirit, mental health & wellbeing on every level.

I feel very humbled to be in the company of so many powerful community voices expressed through this process. Please take every one of the strong, brave, knowledgeable voices against this proposal as an appendix to my own

presentation. The resilience and determination shown by the community to stop this mine is inspirational, and I think Kalbar had vastly underestimated it. If the mine is approved, the prospect of war is palpable. People here passionately love the land, their Mitchell River and lakes, their farms, their forests & fauna, lifestyles, their children. They want to keep their jobs, and they won't stand by and watch a destructive short-term mine ruin all of that.

I can't cover everything today – much detail & expertise has been covered by the amazing submitters before me. I'll focus on a few key areas & glaring examples of the environmental, cultural, social, and economic pain this mine would bring upon our region & community if approved.

START POWERPOINT

(Refer to PowerPoint for additional written info - use in conjunction)

ONE FRONT PAGE

TWO THIS IS GUNAIKURNAI COUNTRY

Quote from Casey Ritchie – Bairnsdale Koorie Youth Council – 11 December 2018

To accompany my acknowledgement

THREE IN A NUTSHELL

Summary of why Kalbar's proposal is an ill-conceived and dangerous idea.

FOUR MITCHELL RIVER

Our region's lifeblood – largest unregulated river in Victoria. Has the right to continue flowing freely delivering water & ecosystem services to all who rely on it. Every creek within the mine footprint will be dammed meaning less environmental flows entering the Mitchell River.

FIVE REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY

East Gippsland Water flow diagram – note Glenaladale water pump station right next to mine, Woodglen storage basins & aquifer storage bores within 3.5 km.

This might be 'regional water supply 101' – you'd think it'd be obvious, but to some, apparently not. You can see the region's entire water supply is RIGHT NEXT TO THE MINE. Woodglen storage dams are UNCOVERED. I can't understand in what world this could be ok.

SIX WATER

East Gippsland Water Media Release during drought in Feb 2019.

Mitchell River environmental flows, winter fill storage for regional water supply. Can't afford a mining company to take out more water!

Our farmers are struggling to get enough access to water as it is. Why should a foreign owned mining company come here and get their greedy hands on our most valued resource? Water is more precious than gold.

SEVEN PERRY RIVER & PROVIDENCE PONDS

Further to the information presented on the PowerPoint, Providence Ponds contains great examples of the Critically Endangered (EPBC) *Gippsland Redgum (Eucalyptus tereticornis subsp. mediana) Grassy Woodland and Associated Native Grassland (GRGGW)* - refer to GRGGW EPBC Policy Statement 3.22, pg. 9

West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority's 'Strategic Directions Statement' for Providence Ponds and the Perry River catchment aims to create long-term priorities for significant key natural assets.

Rehabilitation of the Perry's Chain of Ponds has been embraced by local farmers & the community – there's a lot of pride in what they're achieving. Mining in the Perry's catchment is completely incompatible with this existing landscape value, flying arrogantly in the face of the community's hard and heartfelt work.

Refer to submission 488 for more detail on biodiversity values of Providence Ponds.

EIGHT GROUND WATER, GDE'S & REDGUM COUNTRY

This country is rich in water, and the ecology which accompanies it. Mining is totally incompatible with this landscape.

NINE PIX OF INUNDATED COUNTRY

Following recent rain event, areas including roads in the Glenaladale area were inundated. Kalbar's HMC laden trucks will use these roads – not safe.

TEN PIC OF SPRING-FED DAM

This GDE spring-fed dam on the Coleman farm WILL be mined by Kalbar. Many other spring-fed dams will also be mined, for example on the Stephenson farm just north of the Fingerboards, and on the Johnson farm.

These GDE's are potential habitat for the Giant Burrowing Frog, which has been recently identified in the Fingerboards area by Brendan Casey (refer to his presentation to IAC, as well as ABC Gippsland story 13 July, 2021 about GBF confirmed as having been found within proposed mine footprint.)

Kalbar haven't managed to find any GBF's – they haven't been looking. It's in Kalbar's interests NOT to find them. Kalbar claim they will relocate the GBF if found, but relocation of this cryptic species has NEVER been successful.

ELEVEN THE EES WAS SCANT ON GDE'S

* Saplings Morass impacts ignored by EES. Australia's largest population of EPBC & FFG-listed Swamp Everlasting – not considered.

* SLR said, 'Risk assessment should consider loss of aquatic habitat through loss of containment (hazardous materials/chemical spills) on species other than the Australian Grayling. For example, state listed aquatic flora, GDE's, ecological communities'

(Pg. 37, SLR report on the Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project prepared for East Gippsland Shire Council, Nov. 2020)

* Anecdote: Mound springs in the central Australian desert near Lake Eyre are drying up as ground water has been progressively sucked out of aquifers by BHP's unchallenged right to groundwater. Each of these springs has a unique ecology – some species particular to individual springs - the loss is forever. The GDE's here could also dry up due to sheer lack of water availability caused by Kalbar's thirst for draining aquifers and diverting groundwater. See: <https://www.smh.com.au/environment/sustainability/south-australia-s-disappearing-springs-raise-questions-for-miner-bhp-20201117-p56f6m.html> (screenshot excerpts below)



Boopechie Springs, Finnis Springs Station.

RMIT environmental engineering expert Gavin Mudd has studied the mound springs closely for more than 20 years and said there was no doubt the extraction of so much groundwater had contributed to a reduction in flow pressure. Some had dried up entirely.

Although the Arabana submission to the inquiry acknowledges water users such as pastoralists and petroleum companies, it largely focuses on BHP's water use and the unique South Australian laws that grant it a virtually unchallenged right to groundwater.



A mound spring near the shore of Lake Eyre in South Australia.

But the Arabana people fear the extraction of tens of millions of litres of water from the basin each day by mining, petroleum and pastoral industries threatens the existence of the springs by reducing flow pressure in the aquifer to the extent that the springs dry up.

TWELVE GIANT BURROWING FROG FOUND AT FINGERBOARDS

Excerpt from Zoos Victoria *Fighting Extinction – Giant Burrowing Frog*

<https://www.zoo.org.au/media/3068/giant-burrowing-frog.pdf>

Media release – 13 July, 2021 re Brendan Casey recording multiple GBF calls on private property near the Fingerboards @ Glenaladale, within the proposed mine footprint.

For GBF story, also refer to recording of ABC Gippsland interview with Brendan Casey – 13 July 2021 – already supplied to the IAC

Herald Sun article, 14 July, 2021 >>

Frog in throat of mine

Plan caught on hop

EXCLUSIVE
IAN ROYALL

THE rare giant burrowing frog could stand in the way of a proposed \$200m mineral sands mine in East Gippsland.

The frog, listed as vulnerable, has been detected in habitat near the Mitchell River, northwest of Bairnsdale, the site of the planned Fingerboards open-cut mine plan by Kalbar Operations.

Farmers and residents have told an environment hearing into the project that the landscape would be harmed by the proposed mining, which would be non-stop for years.

The mine would extract and process about 170 million tonnes of ore enriched in zircon, titanium minerals and rare-earth minerals.

Kalbar said the Fingerboards project would create 200 jobs, with another 200 in associated supply services and industries.

Construction of the mine would generate about 200 jobs with the same number employed directly by the mine for its 15 to 20-year operation, the company said.

A two-month environment effects inquiry into the controversial project will end later this month.

Research volunteer Brendan Casey told the inquiry that a population of the frogs, considered vulnerable, had been identified on private land at the Fingerboards location.

But he added that the mining company "does not consider the species exists within the proposed mine area".

Aaron Organ, of the Ecology and Heritage Partners consultancy, claimed that there was a "low likelihood" of a resident giant burrowing frog population in the project area.

Kalbar said more than 30 specialist studies had been conducted into the potential environmental and socio-economic impacts of its mine project.

Fourth-generation vegetable grower Kane Busch, of Busch Organics from Hillside near Bairnsdale, told the inquiry the mine was merely for a short-term monetary gain.

Busch Organics grows beetroot, broccoli, beans, celery, cabbage and leek on the Mitchell River Flats.

"One needs to consider how long farmers have worked this land before today, and how long they will continue to do so for generations to come," Mr Busch told the inquiry.

"Now compare this to the aggressive and short-term impactful and irreversible damaging operations of an open-cut mineral sands mine."

More than 600 documents have been tabled to the inquiry since it began in May.

The latest hearings have been conducted in Bairnsdale and continue this week.

Closing statements are expected to be made on July 22. The inquiry and advisory committee will then have eight weeks to submit its report to the Planning Minister.

If approved, mining could start by mid-2022. The mining will be a 24-hour, 365 days a year operation.

ian.royall@news.com.au

THIRTEEN UNBURNED NATIVE VEGETATION REFUGES – PRECIOUS RARITIES

Over 80% of East Gippsland was burned during the 2019 – 2020 bushfires. Unburned native vegetation refuges are now more crucial than ever before for the survival of native fauna. Native vegetation remnants in the mine project area play an important role in this picture. To clear them is unconscionable. The loss of over 788 mature hollow-bearing trees would be tragic.

FOURTEEN REMNANT NATIVE VEGETATION IN & NEAR THE PROJECT AREA *(example pix)*

Query: Kalbar collect seed from wild populations of endangered grassy woodlands – what impact could this have?

FIFTEEN NATIVE VEGETATION VALUES IN & AROUND KALBAR'S PROPOSED MINE PROJECT AREA ARE TOO PRECIOUS TO MINE!

They are visually beautiful, ecologically rare and endangered, and provide essential habitat.

SIXTEEN SENSITIVE RECEPTORS ARE REAL PEOPLE

At the time of the EES release, Kalbar calculated there were 49 residences within 3 km of the project boundary. When MFG did their own independent investigation, they found 82 residences plus one school within the same area. Kalbar had under-reported sensitive receptors by 40 percent. It has been suggested they misrepresented the figures to make it look like fewer people would be impacted.

Begin photo tour of the lives & faces of some residents of Glenaladale area.

SEVENTEEN – TWENTY-SIX

Jeff Johnson

Jeff & Lyn are 4th generation farmers here – the family has been here since 1878. Jeff has walked, worked on and loved this land for his entire life.

They own & farm 385 ha for beef cattle. 80% of their property is within the proposed mine footprint. They lease a further 117 ha from family, some of which falls within Kalbar's mining licence extension application. The land they own, and the leased land will be their children's inheritance.

Their son Gavin lives in the area and helps Jeff on the farm all the time. He has an active interest in the farm and intends to keep running it when his parents retire in the future.

Jeff's daughter once told him, 'Dad you're so lucky – you live in a place where most people like to holiday.' That sums up the beauty of this area.

If they ever wanted to, the Johnsons have the potential to subdivide part of the land, at a current value of between \$22,000 – \$27,000 / ha.

Jeff says, 'If a mine went in, it wouldn't be worth anything. It'll destroy our kids' inheritance.'

The Johnsons' farmhouse has a clear view of the plateau above the Mitchell River proposed for annihilation by Kalbar's mine. This is such beautiful countryside. For them to have to sit here and watch that happen, it's unthinkable and cruel. It won't be safe for them to stay here if the mine gets approved - noise, vibration, light, truck movements and 6.1 kg of toxic dust per 10,000 litres of water per year deposited on their household roof catchments, and indeed across any land surface.

TWENTY-SEVEN – THIRTY-FOUR

Rick Coleman

Rick & Susan own 720 acres at Glenaladale, 300 of which are within the project area. Kalbar want to buy the top title of 400 acres. They are vehemently opposed. Kalbar have been disrespectful towards the Colemans from the get-go, and even abused their own processes as you heard in Rick's presentation.

They have been through much stress and trauma over preceding years with the 2014 Mt Ray bushfire which destroyed their home, and the death of Rick's mother, whose estate they haven't been able to resolve due to the mine. The anxiety piled on top of this by Kalbar isn't ok. I worry about the mental health impacts on people who've already been through so much.

The Colemans are slowly rebuilding their home while living in Rick's mum's residence on the property which is 900 meters from the proposed mine pit. It's been hard to finish their rebuild, as they've had to sink so much time and energy into fighting Kalbar. They haven't rebuilt the fences which burned down in 2014 within Kalbar's proposed project area. Rick says, 'We haven't been able to develop the property and don't want to spend money on it, only to watch it be bulldozed.'

The property, including the very areas Kalbar want to mine, contains incredibly significant natural values. Large areas of remnant vegetation, and a substantial spring-fed dam will be destroyed. Kalbar haven't surveyed the remnant vegetation due to lack of access, although they did get legal access to barge their way on to drill, embarrassingly getting the drill rig bogged and causing damage to Rick's paddocks.

THIRTY-FIVE – FOURTY-TWO

John Hine

Farms 200 ha on the Woodglen flats, 500 meters from the mine pit. He produces broccoli, broccolini, sweet corn, cauliflower and maize for grain.

Family are 4th generation farmers in the area.

John has 4 kids and 10 grandkids, all living in the area. One son works on the farm with him every day, and lives nearby with his 4 kids. His daughter, her partner and their two kids, 10 and 6 years old, live just around the corner and run a dairy – 'they just love their farm', John says of the kids.

John says, 'all the grandkids spend time on the farm at least once a week – they swim in the river and help on the farm.'

He says of the mine, 'The amount of stress it's placed on us is just huge in the last 7 years. Trying to run a multi-million dollar business while fighting this STUPID mine is really hard. This is a ridiculous bloody project in this location. Putting a mineral sands mine next to the farming and river and the tourism – you gotta be kidding.'

'Two to three days a week I've put into this for the last 3 years – I do it because I'm passionate and I can't let people down. I do it for the community and the

area – I cannot let it be ruined. We should never EVER have gotten this far down the track.’

‘We will NOT be able to farm next to an open-cut mine – microscopic dust will ruin our business. If even ONE of the farms on the flats below the mine gets contaminated, we’ll all be put in the same basket, and it will devastate our industry.’

FOURTY-THREE – FOURTY-NINE

Sharon & Neil

Live 2.4 km from proposed mine pit. Run a successful business in Bairnsdale.

They LOVE where they live and won’t be able to stay if the mine is approved – too dangerous.

Over the years they’ve renovated their historic weatherboard home – a labour of love and a fair dose of blood, sweat and tears!

They love their horses. Neil has spent many hours over the years restoring horse drawn buggies in his shed. He’s well respected in this field and sells some of these restored beauties as well. Neil races his beloved horses and carts at meets around the country – his many ribbons are proudly displayed in the equipment shed.

This couple wouldn’t be able to continue the lifestyle which defines them if they had to move to town. Suburban life for Sharon and Neil? I don’t think so.. They’d envisioned living out the rest of their days here – enjoying the peace, continuing their valued place within the close-knit farming community of Glenaladale.

SIXTY – SIXTY-ONE

Tim McKenna & his 3 kids

Tim runs a dairy farm with 170 milking cows, producing around 5000 litres of milk a day.

Tim's family have farmed this land for 4 generations. Their property is less than 2km from the proposed mine pit. There is absolutely no way they could safely stay here or continue to run the business if the mine went ahead.

Tim and his wife need to spend money on the farm in order to improve it and make money. Yet they are stuck in limbo, not knowing if this mine is going to be approved. They can't make future plans, and it's been this way for 7 years.

Tim brims with pride when he tells me his father built every one of the 6 large irrigation dams on the property. Those dams and that huge investment have seen the dairy business survive severe droughts in 2006, '07, '08 and 2017, '18 and '19.

Tim says, 'Dad was obsessed with conserving water. He went on a dam spree from 1993 to 2001. It was a real effort, and very costly.'

If built, the mine will affect all the water on Tim's property, and there'll be less run off to fill the dams.

I'd like to ask anyone wanting to get a job out of this mine, 'How can you justify wreaking havoc on these kid's lives? Breaking their parent's hearts when they'd have to abandon the family dairy.. Four generations of history, employment, love and life gone? You think your short-term mining job is more important than these people who already earn their living on this land?'

To quote my submission, 'aggressive entitlement to gain a job at any cost when others will suffer is an invalid argument and un-Australian.' (pg. 4)

SIXTY-TWO – SIXTY-NINE

Tony Power

Lives 2km from the proposed mine pit. Has lived here for 28 years. Tony loves the peace and serenity, and to be creative. He's been involved in the arts scene in Bairnsdale & District since he moved up here. He's about to turn 80!

Tony added to an existing machinery shed and transformed it into a workshop and studio. He's constantly creating amazing artworks from a variety of materials, including wood. He currently has a piece in the East Gippsland Art Gallery.

Tony says, 'If I get forced to leave, I'll end up in a retirement village in town, and I definitely don't want that.'

'I applied to the Shire a few years ago about subdividing my 6 acres and they told me I couldn't do it because it was agricultural land – so how come a mining company can now come in and use it for an industrial purpose?'

Kalbar have never been to visit or consult with Tony about how their project will impact him. It won't be safe for him to stay if mining starts nearby and his property value will be massively depreciated. How will he fund his move into town?

SEVENTY – SEVENTY-FIVE

Bob & Maureen Farnell

Live 2km from proposed mine pit. They have owned their place for 20 years, having moved up here for their dream retirement 12 years ago.

When asked how he feels about the mine, Bob says 'We've gotta drive through the damn thing to get into town. We're going to be impacted by the noise and dust. Our life is going to be put to a real test. '

At some point they may need to sell their place and move into town due to health issues, but if they can't get a fair price for the property, Bob says 'We may not be able to afford it.'

What then? They're trapped breathing in life-threatening toxic dust, losing sleep due to noise, drinking contaminated tank water. Kalbar's mine proposal is tantamount to genocide.

SEVENTY-SIX – EIGHTY

Matt Stephenson

Immediate family owns around 800 acres at the Fingerboards, all of which is in mine footprint.

Family has been here for 8 generations, since the 1870's.

Matt has 6 kids, ranging in age from 6 – 25, and 3 grandkids. His younger 4 children regularly spend time on the farm. Matt's father has lived here his whole life.

Matt has planted around 8,000 trees on the property and is still going strong. He is passionate about restoration ecology, fencing off gullies & returning areas to quality native vegetation.

The property has around 3 spring-fed dams and 8 other dams. Some of the dams will be totally excavated by mining, while the remainder will be absorbed into Kalbar's water storages and sediment traps. The Perry Gully will be totally taken out by the mining process and dammed to prevent it entering the Mitchell. Should there be a failure of this structure, the impacts on the Mitchell River don't even bear thinking about.

'Giant walls will be placed on ALL the creeks and tributaries – Kalbar will mine them all' says Matt.

EIGHTY-ONE – ONE HUNDRED AND TEN

NO SOCIAL LICENCE – photo tour

Community Rally - Glenaladale Recreation Reserve - May Day 2021:

- Gunaikurnai Welcome to Country
- Rally in general

Community opposition, market stalls & protests in and around Bairnsdale over the last few years.

900 OUT OF 910 SUBMISSIONS TO THE EES OPPOSE KALBAR'S MINE!

ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVEN – ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTEEN

A SAD TALE

This is a tale about Bob. He is an elderly farmer who until recently lived in the Glenaladale community. He lived on his own, being considered vulnerable by his neighbours. He was an easy target. When Kalbar came to town, they

wanted his land at the Fingerboards, and began a campaign of sickening harassment and intimidation. Yes, they picked on a vulnerable old man.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-28/glenaladale-mine-divides-community/9805510>

I met Bob back in 2018 at one of the communities' vibrant gatherings at the Glenaladale Hall. He was a truly lovely and entertaining old gentleman. His distress at the way Kalbar were watching his every move - could see his house from where their manager was living - was immediately evident. Kalbar used intimidation tactics - loud music and noise were aimed directly at his residence to wear him down and destroy his peace. He couldn't rest, relax, or sleep, and lived in constant fear.

The story of what was happening to him was revealed to me as I got to know more Glenaladale locals over the following months, and it was just heartbreaking. I will share a couple of stories passed on to me by Glenaladale residents who knew Bob well. They were privy to these events first-hand. There were many nights where he was just so fearful of being home alone, he would visit a neighbour's house, shaky & tearful, not wanting to return home.

One story that really shocked me follows. Kalbar had been trying to coerce Bob into signing some paperwork. He didn't want to do it and was understandably avoiding them and the stressful harassment. Someone had been watching Bob's movements and advised Kalbar's then land manager that Bob had driven into town to buy his groceries. Kalbar employees then allegedly went to the supermarket where he was shopping, entered the store, and confronted him while he went about his daily business. Is this what an old person deserves after working hard all their life? This was his reward? Elders should be respected and revered in society – but apparently not by Kalbar. Their entitled, casual invasion of privacy, and indeed human rights horrifies me.

Here's another anecdote about Bob, this time directly quoted from one of his friends in the Glenaladale neighbourhood:

'On the Monday of the Queen's Birthday weekend 2018 we received a phone call to tell us that Bobby had been taken into Bairnsdale by some neighbours, to I think his sister's home.

He was very distressed due to Kalbar harassing him over the weekend trying to get him to sign some sort of paperwork regarding his property. He had become quite fearful. He remained in town for a number of days.

A solicitor wrote a letter to Kalbar from Bobby to stay away from him and his property. Eventually Kalbar won that fight and found a new home for Bobby in Bruthen.

I think he was paid \$560,000.00 for his 120 acre property. Another property later on received \$3,000,000.00 plus for less acreage.'

So in the end, the bullies won. They wore Bob out - corroded his peace, mental health, resilience and safety. Aggressively ripped his land out from under him and relocated him far away from home. It was a cheap and sleazy victory for Kalbar's thugs. They should be ashamed of themselves, but that would require a conscience. If this is the way Kalbar treat human beings, I fear the environment is in for a similar ride.

KALBAR – A SHADY CORPORATE CITIZEN

Some brief examples of Kalbar's dodgy behaviour

* This week's announcement that Kalbar intends to advertise the application for their mining licence extension at Glenaladale is another stunt in their cruel war of attrition, executed perfectly to exhaust the community. They couldn't wait till the hearing was over and humanely give people a breather – now another punch in the guts. We'll have 14 days to prepare responses to ERR. Sustained, ill-timed pressure on landholders and the community in general is torturous. But that's the tactic! This mine proposal is *already* ruining lives.

* In May 2021, a mirky relationship was revealed between Kalbar's main investor, APPIAN and the company contracted by East Gippsland Shire Council to (independently!) assess centrifuges, AUSENCO.

There is a serious, credible allegation that Kalbar / Appian manipulated the situation to effect AUSENCO to change the findings of their centrifuge impact report to downplay their impacts, in favour of Kalbar's proposal – a proposal from which Appian and Kalbar will benefit. As a result, the Shire withdrew the AUSENCO report from their EES submission, making it impossible to challenge the centrifuge option using an expert report. When did Appian engage

AUSENCO – was it after the Shire had already contracted them? If so, this would be a deliberate perversion of the course of independent inquiry & should be investigated. Under the Mineral Resources Sustainable Development Act, a person or company of bad character cannot hold a mining licence.

(See tabled document 326)

* Kalbar tried to charge people hundreds of dollars for hard copies of the EES, breaching the rules which clearly said it must be supplied for free. This happened to me. With my persistence, it was eventually supplied for free – but not before Kalbar had tried this on me. Were others wrongfully charged?

* Kalbar's *misleading* market surveys

Phone surveys. I was one of the people lucky enough to receive an automated phone survey from a group named 'Community Engagement'. It asked a series of leading questions, along the lines of whether one supported business growth and new industries in East Gippsland, the sort of questions a reasonable person would answer yes to. No mention of the mine.

AFTER many similar questions, right at the end of the survey, it asks if you've heard of the mineral sands mine proposal. I was immediately suspicious when questions about economic growth in the region were posed, because I've been following this issue, but I imagine the average person would've been lead right down the rabbit hole, inadvertently giving Kalbar's mine the big tick of approval. This manipulative, misleading survey wouldn't give rise to authentic results. To attempt the misappropriation of unsuspecting citizens is unethical.

I rang the number back, where I was served with a recorded message about their upstanding compliance with various Acts, an invitation to leave a message with my questions or concerns, and the promise of a call back. Despite leaving many messages, a call back was never received. Here's the number: (03) 90016717

In-person surveys. Kalbar recently set up written surveys in front of Cheap As Chips in Bairnsdale with similar misleading questions. Plain clothes people manned the desk, with no declaration of who the survey was for. People were bribed with \$20 notes and shopping vouchers to fill it in. Seriously? They need bribery to gain uptake of their surveys? Perhaps the flimsy phone survey was a flop.

Online survey. More bribes! People were enticed with an offer of \$10 being donated to a community organisation of their choice.

* Kalbar UNDERESTIMATED the amount of water required to operate their tailings dam yet didn't tell anyone till after the EES was completed. Was this a sneaky ploy to slip centrifuges in after the fact, a ploy to re-introduce their tailings dam when centrifuges fail? A tailings dam that requires an obscene and potentially unavailable amount of water and may never have been approved by the IAC or the Minister.

It appears Kalbar can do what they like, regardless of whether there's been any assessment. How does this process we're all engaged in justify or allow that? Where are the ethics?

So let me get this right. This IAC process is assessing the adequacy of the EES which doesn't actually assess how the company will now use water under the centrifuge model, or the impacts of those centrifuges? This is starting to sound a little Monty Python-esque.. except it's our lives they're playing with.

Kalbar should be made to re-write the flimsy EES to assess these impacts. But even then, it wouldn't matter, because the vast majority of people here who know about the mine DON'T WANT THIS MONSTER IN THEIR ENVIRONMENT. That's the inarguable bottom line.

Some in the community may still be unaware or have very limited awareness of this proposal, with no idea of the magnitude of what's about to be imposed on them: a dramatic assault on their health, water supply, and livelihoods. An end to the lifestyles they currently enjoy in and around the lakes, mountains, oceans, beaches, rivers and forests of East Gippsland. Needless to say most will be outraged when they wake up to find paradise gone and their children sick.

SCHOOLS & DUST EXPOSURE

Within easy reach of westerly winds blowing east from Glenaladale are 14 schools & kindergartens: *Lindenow Primary School, Lindenow South Primary School, Woodglen Primary School Annex, Lindenow Kindergarten, Bairnsdale Christian Community School, Foundations Early Learning Centre, Nagle College, St. Mary's Primary School, East Gippsland Specialist School, Bairnsdale Secondary College, Wild Cherry School, Bairnsdale West Primary School, Westdale Kindergarten, BJ's Early Learning Centre.* Not far from these are a further 10: *Bairnsdale Primary School, Gippsland Grammar, Gippsland Grammar Kindergarten, Lucknow Primary School, Lucknow Early Learning*

Kindergarten, Wild Cherry Kindergarten, Bk's Early Learning Centre & Kinder, Cubby Care Early Learning Centre, Bairnsdale Childcare & Kinder, Eastwood Early Learning Centre.

Think about the impacts of toxic dust (radioactive substances, silica etc..) on thousands of children

EES PROCESS

I'm dismayed with Victoria's flawed, seemingly rigged EES process, where there is NO penalty for providing intentionally misleading documents and evidence. Proponents can have a field day! The EES Act is part of a government licencing process, in this case, a mining licence. It should be a totally independent process. So how can we expect any justice for the environment?

CONCLUSION

This is not an anti-mine campaign – indeed many submitters spoke about how they were not anti-mine *per se*. This is not a NIMBY campaign. This is a proactive fight for the life and future of an entire region - a campaign about social, environmental, cultural and economic justice.

This is about inappropriate mining. YOU COULDN'T FIND A MORE OFFENSIVE LOCATION FOR AN OPEN-CUT MINE! It would be laughable if it didn't run the risk of being approved – instead it's frightening.

The prevention of open-cut mining next to our one and only Mitchell River will benefit all Victorians and the environment we rely on to survive. It keeps us healthy.

Your decision shapes the futures of all East Gippslanders. Please apply the Precautionary Principle to advocate for future generations - for those not born yet, who don't get any say in this. Don't gift them the toxic legacy of short-sighted greed.

Do we want jobs at ANY cost (including many more jobs being lost as we've heard), or jobs which embody responsibility to the environment, future generations and everyone else in the community? Jobs must co-exist with the natural systems which sustain life – *our* lives depend on it.

Can the few who want a job out of this mine look John Hine, Tim McKenna, or Jeff Johnson in the eye and say 'My job will be worth more than *your job, your heritage, your home*'? But then Kalbar is just playing with these people too – the promise of jobs that may never eventuate, pitting community member against community member. These are well known tactics.

This mine will benefit FEW while hurting and disadvantaging MANY.

It won't be a hole in the ground within a vacant landscape 'somewhere' out there. This is a *PLACE* – it has spirit and soul, it means something to people, it holds a unique mix of life. If *PLACE* comprises the many and diverse elements coming together to make a location intrinsically what it is (including community), the unique *PLACE* of Glenaladale as we know it will cease to exist. It is surely inconceivable and unconscionable to wipe an entire *PLACE* off the map, isn't it?

The brave people who've fought so hard to stop this mine inspire me every day. Their struggle is for all of us.

Kalbar don't have permission to mine and pollute MY sense of place.

PLEASE END OUR NIGHTMARE >>

REJECT KALBAR'S DANGEROUS, AMATEUR, INEQUITABLE,
ENVIRONMENTALLY RECKLESS, UN-AUSTRALIAN,
UNWANTED, NOISY, DUSTY, THIRSTY, UGLY, LIFE-
THREATENING MINE PROPOSAL 😊

YOU CAN'T PUT A MINE OF THIS MAGNITUDE INTO **THIS**
LOCATION AND EXPECT IT TO EVER BE THE SAME AGAIN

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