

# Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory  
Committee - EES

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Request to be heard?: No

**Full Name:** David and Rosie Abbott

**Organisation:**

**Affected property:**

**Attachment 1:** Submission\_re\_Fi

**Attachment 2:**

**Attachment 3:**

**Comments:** See attached submission

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee members,

We are writing this submission about the EES for the Fingerboards Mineral Sands Mine Project, which we strongly oppose because of concerns about the effects on our East Gippsland natural environment, our agricultural/horticultural industries, our economy including tourism, and our future health. East Gippsland residents will gain minimal benefits, but will be the ones who suffer any adverse affects. We believe the negative events are almost certain to occur.

Over the last forty years, we have visited this region for camping and hiking (in particular in the Mitchell River national park and environs), and for sailing on the Gippsland Lakes. For the last fifteen years, we have lived in Paynesville, beside Newlands Backwater on the Gippsland Lakes. We particularly love the relatively easy access to parks, wilderness and water, and the mild climate encourages year round access to all these outdoor activities. We also enjoy our local food and wine, with fresh produce from the Mitchell River flats a unique resource in our region.

We are very concerned about the detrimental affect of the proposed mine with possible contaminated dust and water run-off from tailing dams or general flooding, poisoning our Mitchell River and its silt jetties, and the Gippsland Lakes. This would be an enormous blight on our East Gippsland economy with loss of agricultural and horticultural enterprises, as well as loss of tourism, which is another of our major economic businesses. As local residents, we appreciate the lack of traffic and noise as we explore our forests and parks north of Bairnsdale. The ambiance is a major part of our and our visitors' outdoor experiences. So we are also concerned with the noise from the mine, the increased traffic and transport through these 'back blocks' and the noise of a new railway siding echoing across to the Mitchell River national park. Previously, we lived in the Latrobe Valley, we know what it is like to have the constant background noise that comes with mining activity, and the dust that settles in the surrounding kilometres. We also know about air quality and the effect dust from mining can have on human health, and this worries us too. All these things are addressed to some extent in the EES, but our experience is that even with the best intentions, safety measures put in place, and promises of rehabilitation and rejuvenation of diversity, usually fall far short of promises on paper. And once the damage is done, it is too late. The tourists have gone home, the lakes have deteriorated and the Mitchell River has degraded or run out of water, leaving the agricultural industries and us residents high and dry.

We are also concerned that the project includes compulsory acquisition of private land for infrastructure such as pipelines, pumps, roadworks, powerlines, etc, which all include further vegetation removal, spreading noise and visual scars across the landscape we currently value. Why isn't this a matter for the East Gippsland Shire to determine?

The mineral sands in our region are a precious resource, but they are not going anywhere, so why the rush to dig them up and ship them off to China or elsewhere? If we are going to

compromise our environment and risk damaging local industries, why not use the resource to support our own manufacturing industries in Australia? We believe a quick grab for money and a possible 200 local jobs (we can't help being sceptical about this) is not a reason to jeopardise what we have. This resource is valuable, too valuable to be squandered and sold off cheaply now.

The region and the nation are highly likely to suffer the negative impacts for our lifetime and that of future generations, on the tourism industry, agriculture, and on the vital environmental heritage of wilderness and lakes. These are a priceless national heritage for many future generations, for the dubious benefit of a short-term mining enterprise.

Thank you for making the opportunity to make this written submission.

David and Rosie Abbott