

# Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory  
Committee - EES

# 502

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**Request to be heard?:** Yes

**Full Name:** Andrew Sheridan

**Organisation:**

**Affected property:**

**Attachment 1:** ESS\_Submission.d

**Attachment 2:**

**Attachment 3:**

**Comments:** See attached Submission

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee members,

**Re: Submission in response to the EES for the Fingerboards mineral sands project.**

I grew up in Bairnsdale and, after establishing a farm in the Latrobe Valley, returned to this area to farm and raise a family in clean green East Gippsland away from the dust of the coal mines. I live in Wuk Wuk, choosing to live here because of the peaceful, natural beauty, close to the Mitchell River NP where I hike regularly. I drive through the Lindenow flats each day and marvel at the fertility and the output of this special part of Australia.

Our farm is directly down-wind from the proposed mine. I have had 35 years of experience in living in close proximity to a mine and the effectiveness of dust mitigation and rehabilitation and its impact on people and animals. I have serious concerns about the process used to develop the EES and about the impact of the mine on the people and animals, living and working downwind and in particular on the impact on food production.

The EES presents an overwhelming amount of information for the community to absorb and understand. It is not possible for individuals to fully comprehend the risks and potential omissions or inaccuracies because of the sheer size of the EES.

I believe that the 'Loss of Agricultural Value' has been significantly underestimated. It does not take into account the loss of value in the actual or perceived contamination of produce grown on the Lindenow flats. In addition, Omeo Dryland gross margins have been used to calculate the baseline. These are not representative of the area. Large scale, irrigated gross margins should have been used for a true comparison, particularly given the area and the amount of water that is required for the project.

I have serious questions about the validity of surveys. Native veg, background dust, bird and animal assessments were all done during a major drought and in some cases at the wrong time of year giving a false impression of the potential impacts.

Having lived and farmed on the downwind edge of the Loy Yang mine for 35 years, I have firsthand experience of EPA monitoring of mining licenses and dust suppression of coal, overburden, and topsoil dumps. Despite good intentions and various strategies to reduce dust, when the wind blows, the dust lifts. This occurs regularly and results in animal welfare issues (eg. increased incidence of pink eye in cattle), contamination of products (wool downgraded) and an unsafe workplace. Work has to cease on some days because of the dust. Luckily for us this is just a labour cost. For vegetable growers, it could mean the loss of harvest. I would imagine that, given the soil types in the proposed project area, it would be much more difficult to control the dust.

I have also had first-hand experience of farming rehabilitated land at Loy Yang. The land was rehabilitated at great expense, using much more forgiving soil types than exist in the project area. The outcomes are variable, but the best result is a return to 50% of original carrying capacity.

I am a supporter of mining and economic activity but not in this location. It would be impossible to find a worse location for a mine like this in Victoria - immediately above and upwind of the most productive soil types in Australia.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Sheridan