

# Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory  
Committee - EES

# 522

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**Request to be heard?:** No - but please email me a copy of the  
Timetable and any Directions

**Full Name:** Meredith Urie

**Organisation:**

**Affected property:**

**Attachment 1:** EES\_submission.d

**Attachment 2:**

**Attachment 3:**

**Comments:** See attached submission

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee members,

I am writing this submission as a response to the EES for the proposed Fingerboards mineral sands mine project.

Firstly I would like to register my scepticism about EES process. As the various studies and reports are paid for by the proponent, there is an obvious and unavoidable bias. Also the cumulative size of the documents, and the time allowed for examination and comment by the public, does not pass the 'fairness test.'

**I strongly oppose the location of this mine and consider that it should not proceed on the grounds of my current understanding that:**

- **Some of the impacts cannot be adequately mitigated against**
- **Even after mitigation the residual risks to the people, industries and places of East Gippsland are far too great to be acceptable**
- **The people who bear by far the greatest burden of risk are NOT the people who would stand to benefit most**

I have publicly expressed my opposition to this mine in the past and have donated to the fighting fund of 'Mine-Free Glenaladale'. Since then I have attended Kalbar information sessions, read parts of the EES which are most relevant to my interest and sought answers to questions by directly emailing Kalbar (at the time of writing, 29<sup>th</sup> October 2020, I have not received a response to my questions which were sent to Kalbar via email on 21<sup>st</sup> October). I will continue to keep an open mind, however I have NOT been reassured to date that this mine is a safe, beneficial, fair or wise proposal at this site and I remain strongly opposed to it.

I am a current resident of Eagle Point, however I was born in Bairnsdale and was raised on a farm at Fernbank and attended Fernbank Primary school for 6 years. The proposed mine is just a few kilometres from my old home and while I no longer have financial interest in our family property, I have an emotional connection to the area and the people who still live there.

As a former nurse, former councillor and Mayor of East Gippsland Shire Council, and current board member of Bairnsdale Regional Health I have a strong interest in public health and wellbeing and the future directions of our Shire.

**Some of the impacts cannot be adequately mitigated against:**

- Valuable native vegetation destruction including removal of 700 mature trees
- Destruction of culturally significant landscape and heritage with artifacts and the risks to others nearby (Mitchell River National Park).
- Incremental withdrawals of water from the Mitchell River (to help provide the 3GL p/a needed) reduce flows into the Gippsland Lakes and increase likelihood of earlier restrictions for current users of the water.
- Regulation failure: Many reported current and historical events (changes in ownership of the proposed mine, failures of other mines, lack of experience of Kalbar to operate a mine) has left me with no trust that in the event of some problem or catastrophe, that whoever is in charge of the mine at the time will be held responsible for fixing the issue (if indeed the problem CAN be fixed).
- Radioactive dust causing detrimental health impacts, inability of local farms to operate, inability of people to work/recreate outdoors in the locality. Unexpectedly high levels of dust could be a result of higher than expected winds, during transport and/or unloading of material onto trains.

**Even after mitigation the residual risks to the people, industries and places of East Gippsland are far too great to be acceptable**

- The residual risk of contamination of waterways, watertanks, stockwater, vegetation including vegetable growing in the Mitchell River Flats, just 500M away, downwind.
- Predicted ongoing changes to our climate which in the last bushfire season created unprecedented conditions. **The effects of future changes to climate are not able to be precisely quantified.** They are likely to include storms, floods, winds and droughts of increasing frequency and severity, increasing the risk of contamination from radioactive dust, failure of dams and increased pressure on water supplies in the case of drought.
- The ongoing fear of some level of failure of the essential monitoring systems and the lack of trust at the ability of the mining operator to rapidly register and effectively deploy appropriate mitigation strategies will cause long-term anxiety for local residents, farmers and visitors.

**The people who bear by far the greatest burden of risk are NOT the people who would stand to benefit most**  
The people who may stand to benefit most from this mine are the State Government (revenues), the broader Gippsland area (opportunity for jobs, suppliers etc) and the shareholders of the company which owns and operates the mine (profits).

*\*\* I have placed a question with Kalbar asking them to specifically quantify the benefits to people of East Gippsland (as opposed to the people of Victoria) but have not received a reply after more than one week)*

The East Gippsland people who bear the large burden of risk are the local farmers and residents who will live in fear of future job losses, the vegetable growers who will be in constant danger from imminent contamination over the 20 year period of the mine's operation, the farmers and other residents who will be displaced (due to the traffic/noise/lights/risks or actual negative effects on health) and find that they are not compensated.

It is intolerable that these 2 groups do not align.  
This proposed mine therefore does not pass the 'Fairness' test.

As a final point, I also find the compulsory acquisition of land currently in private ownership for a variety of mining infrastructure outside the proposed mine boundary should have been included in the mine footprint and should have been a matter for East Gippsland Shire Council to consider and determine.

In conclusion, for all the reasons provided, I would like to register in the strongest terms, my objection to this proposed mineral sands mine and urge a decision to NOT allow it to proceed at this location.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission,

Yours sincerely

Meredith (Mendy) Urie MBA, MSF  
28/10/2020