
Request to be heard?: Yes

Full Name: Tom Crook

Organisation: East Gippsland Conservation Management Network

Affected property:

Attachment 1:

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee members, we write this submission to express our concerns over the proposed Fingerboards mineral sands mine. We strongly oppose the mines development and request, in the interests of sound environmental management, human health, our local economy and respect for the wishes of Traditional Owners, you to please prevent it from occurring. As a community environment group with a long standing interest in the conservation of East Gippsland's rare plants and animals, we believe the inherent loss of biodiversity values which will result from this projects development are unacceptable and should not be permitted to occur. Biodiversity values such as large hollow bearing trees, which take hundreds of years to develop simply cannot be replaced or adequately supplemented after they are destroyed by the proposed development which will result in the loss of these critical habitat elements from the project area and resultant impacts on a range of threatened species, such as the Masked owl, which our groups has invested significant resources and public money trying to protect and manage. We also have serious concerns around the impacts to several ground water dependant ecosystems and other rare plants which could result from changes to ground water hydrology due to insufficient understanding of the relationships between various aquifers, aquitards and extraction regimes. The potential impacts on other environmental values, including the Gippsland Lakes, Mitchel and Perry River systems as evidenced from various other mining developments around Victoria and elsewhere give us little faith that restoration activities will ever take place and if they do we contend they will occur in a highly sub-optimal fashion, without guarantee and adequate funding and result in a significant net loss to the natural environment and conservation values both on and off the site. The process by which public consultation has been allowed and sought is woefully inadequate, provides no real option to make a meaningful contribution due to the timeframes and is heavily skewed to development approvals. As such we have little faith in the processes being used to provide safeguards in the absence to significant process reform. Furthermore Flora/Fauna species recorded in area which will be adversely affected include; 9 rare or threatened flora species , 10 species listed as rare or poorly known on Advisory List of Rare or Threatened Plant in Victoria. 3 nationally listed species (dwarf kerrawang, swamp everlasting, Gaping leak orchid) 42 rare or threatened terrestrial fauna species , 11 native fish species, freshwater turtle, platypus and others will be destroyed if the mine is allowed to proceed. It is also of great concern to our organisation that the mine proposal effectively ignores the wishes of Traditional Owners, the Gunaikurnai and their expressed desires to care for and protect country as detailed in their 'Whole of Country Plan'. THX