

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

564

Request to be heard?: Yes

Full Name: Carolyn Cameron

Organisation:

Affected property:

Attachment 1: Public_Submission

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: see attached submission

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee members,

I am writing this submission about the EES for the Fingerboards mineral sands mine project and I strongly oppose the mine for the reasons outlined below.

I have lived in the Glenaladale area for nearly 20 years and have lived in my current residence a farm adjoining the project site for nearly 8 years. One of the reasons my husband and I purchased our property was to raise our three children in a quiet rural area. We certainly did not choose to raise our children in a mining landscape. To us it is and unacceptable and unpleasant noisy, aesthetically displeasing and dusty environment, that is being undertaken by an inexperienced and inept mining operator that has done nothing but deliberately mislead the community from the day one. This mine proposes several unacceptable and unjustifiable risks to the environment that have not been clearly and confidently addressed in the EES but rather glossed over with limited explanation of how impacts will be mitigated. What it does contain is a multitude of errors such as spelling mistakes, and incorrect information around the location of mine! One would have thought given the detrimental impacts of an industry like mining that attention to detail would be paramount. Such is it though of the nature of Kalbar Resources, or is Kalbar Operations, or just Kalbar Pty Ltd, the continuum of ownership change, ever changing CEO's and directors leaves me unsure. The lack of continuity with which the community and stakeholders has had from Kalbar staff certainly questions their ability to fit and appropriate operators of a mine. The question of a social licence is a matter that has been discussed heavily amongst the community and I am personally without doubt that they do not have one. The proponent has misled landholders, broken confidentiality, spoken ill of one landholder to another, intentionally mislead or implied information that is factually incorrect and trespassed onto properties. At one stage the proponent by chance had a consultant with the same first name as myself, the proponent lead community members to believe that I was in fact working for them. Whilst I was able to clear up the matter when questioned by local community members it is this type of "dirty tricks" that the proponent has continuously undertaken over the years. It becomes exhausting and mentally draining after so long for community members to always be clarifying matters. If the proponent is not held accountable for a lack of integrity during this period, then what faith can the community have that they will operate with integrity if they were to become operational. They have shown what type of behaviour and standards they have; it is unlikely to change, thus resulting in ongoing stress and mental fatigue on the community. This proposal impacts on so many people within the community, simply put, it is of deep concern to me that the impact that this mine will have on the well being of the community that I love and am a part of. I have personally seen the stress and impact that this process to date has had on those who land the proponent wishes to take from them. The health impacts of stress are well documented and fear greatly that this will increase if such a mine goes ahead. The proponent has always understated the number of houses within the project area and within the surrounding sensitive receptor area. This proposal can impact a significant number of people.

The major impact on myself and my family will be the noise. Whilst the proponent informed us, we could have sound equipment at our property this did not eventuate, (perhaps they forgot?? Or it was not important??). they also informed me at a drop-in information session that the noise would not impact our property because noise does not travel in a diagonal direction. I questioned such a statement and was told noise data and modelling would be emailed to me. Again, this did not eventuate (too hard?? Or perhaps modelling suggested otherwise??). The impact of noise is something we have temporarily experience since moving to our property. The blue gums adjoining us were harvested in 2019. This was two small harvesters and every morning we were awoken by the noise and every day from inside our house we could hear the machinery. The company harvesting was considerate to our existence and intentionally began there morning work at a location furthest from the house, despite this we still heard the machinery, and it disrupted our lives. It is likely that given the operational plans, as previously described that the noise level was not above the EPA noise standards but none the less, for that period of time we could continually here the noise and found the constant background noise bothered us. We did not “get used to it” as the proponent suggests we will with the noise of the mine operation going 24/7 365 days a year!

This project also presents several impacts on the environment which are of particular concern to me.

Dust and contamination from the dust. The model in the EES shows that the dust on windy days, which locals know all to well can travel as far as Bairnsdale and beyond. We know that some of the substances being mined for have radio active properties there fore the risk of these substances plus others substances travelling through the air, settling on water tanks, the ground on which children play and other various locations may have future health impacts. The area being mined, and surrounding district is when considering air borne particulars of a potentially dangerous nature is highly populated. This is an extremely large number of people to expose such a risk too. History has taught us that substances once considered safe turn out not to be. Furthermore, the proponent has not fully disclosed the complete analysis of the ore body. Given their disingenuous nature of the proponent I am deeply concerned about what we have not been told.

No support from local plan. I was previously a member of the now dissolved Lindenow and District Progress Association. The association was the key drive and main community contact for the East Gippsland Shire Councils “community plan”. There were 2 iterations of these plans written for the Lindenow and District (covering the Glenaladale/Fingerboard area) and at no point was a mine even mentioned or considered as a part of the future or progress for the area. The presence of the ore body was known but never was it considered as an option, not by the previous owners of the licence and certainly not by any community member or stakeholder., local shire included!

Impact on existing industries. The immediately area is of agricultural land use. This does not appear to be recognised as much as it should be. The proposal will take

away agricultural land and the flow on effects from this land use. Why is the destruction of an industry that has successfully existed for hundreds of years occurs only to be replaced by a short-term gain industry such as mining? The other major existing industry that will be impacted is the vegetable industry. It will be impacted by the competition for water, competition for jobs and impact on the image of the local industry. The modelling shows dust contaminants will spread across the vegetable growing areas. Such areas that are also underrepresented in the EES. The vegetable industry will be impacted, which will in turn have a direct effect on my family as it is our main source of income. It will also significantly impact the local economy far more than what the mine is predicted to provide. Extended impacts will occur on the local tourism industry, the natural and magical branding of the region will be tainted by the dirty, greedy image of mining. Tourists travelling to an important and popular destination will be impacted by the size and destructive nature of mining.

Water availability, usage and contamination risks. This proposal requires a significant amount of water which if provided to the local vegetable industry would support more jobs, on a permanent basis than what this proposal is offering on a short-term basis. It seems illogical, that if such water quantities are available why wouldn't the water be made available to an existing, thriving and sustainable industry. The water used for irrigation on the Lindenow Flats, where the vegetables are grown comes from the Mitchell River. The proposed mine is on the other side of the river on top of a plateau. There are risks of the river being contaminated, impacting on the vegetables and on the functioning of irrigation equipment. The proposal also contains a tailings dam, which will contain tailings waste and flocculants, tailings dam failure are common in mining and one this size has the potential to impact both the Perry and Mitchell River systems impacting on water quality and aquatic habitat.

Compulsory acquisition of land. This is a complete injustice and unfair treatment of local landowners. Simply put it is unacceptable to allow compulsory acquisition of private land for mining or for mining infrastructure. Some of this infrastructure is outside of the project footprint/boundary. Mining infrastructure in other situations is a matter for local shires and planning regulations. It seems in this case the proponent knows from discussions with local landowners that they will not be agreeable to the infrastructure and therefore the proponent is using the EES and compulsory acquisition as a mechanism for obtaining the land they need. Furthermore, it appears based on information in the EES that the proponents have in some cases not shown any consideration to the location of roads and infrastructure and impact that they will have on current land uses.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission and I sincerely hope that the concerns of my submission and many other like me result in this proposal not progressing.

Kind regards
Carolyn Cameron