

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

823

Request to be heard?: No

Full Name: Anne Crowe

Organisation:

Affected property:

Attachment 1:

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 to voice my concerns about mining in this location. Although Kalbar Operations Pty Ltd have stated that they have the support of residents in the local area I would like to convey that I am one resident who strongly opposes this mining venture. I firmly believe that mining in this region would be detrimental to the health and well-being of local residents, it will have a lasting and negative impact on our natural environment, in particular the Gippsland Lakes and will come at a cost to the local agricultural and tourism industries. I do not oppose mining per say and it is not just a case of 'Not in my back yard', I am opposed to mining in the close proximity to any populated region and for the above reasons I strongly oppose mineral sands mining in this proposed location.

The health and well-being of the population is dependent on clean air, a source of clean water and a quality food supply. Mining in this area will pollute the air with dust particles possibly containing harmful chemicals. Dust is generated when excavation and crushing takes place in a mine and that dust is then dispersed throughout the surrounding districts with the possibility of causing respiratory diseases and other health issues. Living in the country is a choice not to be subjected to air pollutants, a mineral sands mine in the area will take away that important health advantage of country living.

Lindenow is often described as 'the food bowl of East Gippsland' and as a local I frequently source locally grown produce. Once a mine is operating in the region I could no longer feel confident that the local produce is not contaminated by the dust dispersed by the operations of the mine. At this stage it has not been disclosed exactly what contaminants will be contained in the dust from the mine, therefore, I firmly believe it is the responsibility of the panel to ensure this information is fully disclosed and closely examined because of the risks to our air, water and food supply.

Apart from the dust produced by the mine there will be a tailings dam that will contain mine tailings waste and chemicals used to treat the tailings. The risks of any tailings dam is considerable and foreseeable given the many examples of dam failures, locally and world-wide, where leaching or overflow from the dam has occurred. Given that this region is subjected to flooding and, due to climate change, we are seeing more extreme weather patterns around the world, a major flood would see the contents of the tailing dam being released into our river and lake systems, resulting in both a catastrophe for human, plant and animal species. The dangers posed by tailings dams cannot be underestimated and I definitely do not want to live under the threat of one leaching toxins into the waterways of this region. I would like this panel to consider the consequences of a tailings dam spill, as I'm sure that no guarantee can be given that this is not a possibility.

Clean air, fresh, uncontaminated water and quality food supplies cannot be guaranteed if this project were to proceed.

As well as these above concerns being detrimental to the residents of this local area it will also greatly affect our natural environment. Poor air quality and contaminated water supply will have a devastating effect on all living plant and animal life. With 13 square kilometres of land being mined a lot of trees and habitat will be lost. Fauna and flora species will be lost, not to mention the unsightly mess made to our landscape. Offsets cannot address this loss. History has shown that full rehabilitation and restoration of mining sights rarely occurs and there is little to indicate that it will, in the case of the Fingerboard mining project, be any different. Such promises have been made before to no avail.

I do understand that this is project will generate money into our community and many of the private and business sectors will benefit. But at what cost to the community over all. If food production declines due to contaminants in the air and water supply, how many local farmers will lose their livelihood, their family farms and their way of life as we know it today.

Over 3 billion litres of water will be required by the mine annually for processing and to control dust. According to irrigation data if that 3 GL of water was redirected to the local horticultural industry, 3 times more jobs could be created than proposed by the mine. Surely that has to be of greater benefit to the local community. I ask the panel to consider this as a more economic and healthier option for our local water supply.

This region depends on tourism to generate wealth within the community. The Gippsland Lakes are the major attraction for boating enthusiasts, fishing and other water sports. ALL local businesses benefit from tourism. But will tourist still come to this area in pursuit of recreational activities when the area has a cloud of contamination, produced by mining, hanging over it.

I have lived in this area for 65 years and have always felt so very privileged to live in such a pristine environment. I feel grateful every day for what this environment offers me, fresh air, clean, fresh water to drink and to pursue all sorts of recreational activities within and around. Bush walking is always such a pleasure and a wonderful experience. People in this community are generally healthy, happy, active, as well as friendly and community minded people. It is an understatement to say 'I love where I live'. However, I have a real fear that mining undertaken at Fingerboards will have a detrimental effect on my health and well-being, that of the community and environment.

Finally I would like to restate that my objections to mineral sand mining at Fingerboards are due to the negative impact it will have on the health and well-being of the community, the environment, as well as agriculture and tourism within the area. The dangers imposed on this community, if the mineral sands mining were to go ahead, are very real and I wish to impress upon this panel to seriously consider the concerns that I have raised and do everything within their power to ensure that this mining operation does not proceed.

Yours Sincerely,

Anne Crowe