

# Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory  
Committee - EES

# 761

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**Request to be heard?:** No

**Full Name:** Matthew Christopher Roberts

**Organisation:**

**Affected property:**

**Attachment 1:** M\_EES\_submissio

**Attachment 2:**

**Attachment 3:**

**Comments:** See attached submission

Dear Enquiry and Advisory Committee members,

I am writing this submission about the EES for the Fingerboards mineral sands mine project as I am extremely concerned about the damage to waterways, our rivers and the Ramsar listed Gippsland Lakes. My other concerns are the detrimental effects on the existing industries within our local area and the destruction of our economy and the impact on our land values and housing prices. I have been following the development of this proposal for many years and are becoming more and more concerned of the consequences if it should be allowed to go ahead.

I live within 60kms of the proposed site and will potentially be even more affected by this if the mine goes ahead and the rumoured expansion of operation is extended to nearby Mossiface with a secondary operation less than 5km from my principal place of residence. I have lived in East Gippsland for 23 years, I moved here from Melbourne as the vast natural landscapes and the beautiful waterways were a major attraction to me. I am raising my young family here and cannot imagine living anywhere else. I love taking my kids kayaking on the rivers and lakes, exploring places of natural wonder and Indigenous cultural significance such as the Den of Nargun in the Mitchell River National Park where we like go for day hikes. I cannot fathom the potential risks to our natural environment should this project be allowed to proceed. I want to see the beauty of our region protected for generations to come. What will I tell my children when this once magnificent environment is destroyed?

I do not have any faith in the EES process, there are major flaws; mainly that it was developed by the proponent to advocate for the project and it plays down or deliberately ignores detrimental aspects of their proposal.

One of my biggest concerns about this mine revolves around water. The fact that the mine will use at least 3GL of water per year is unacceptable given the competing uses of this water. The existing horticulture and agriculture industries should not be made to give up capacity of their water licences for the use of dust suppression and mining practices. The horticulture industries on the Lindenow flats contribute \$155 million dollars per year to our local economy and provide food security to the whole of Victoria. The protection and survival of these existing industries must be given precedence.

Even though the Government has encouraged the vegetable growers to increase the use of water through grants to build more dams this will only restrict the flow into the Lakes system and is designed to lessen the impact of the water usage of the mine upstream. The sole loser will be the environment with less flow into the Lakes.

500m from the Mitchell River is a ridiculous location for a mine, there is too much at stake here. The threat to water quality cannot possibly be mitigated in my view. There will come a time when the toxic dust gets into the waterways and the tailings dam which they have failed to explain the intended construction of cannot possibly hold up in the event of a flood which this region is renowned for. The frequency and ferocity of these floods are only going to increase due to climate change.

When the dam is compromised by flood the toxic and radioactive waste will inevitably end up flowing downstream to the Mitchell and Perry Rivers. The Mitchell River runs downstream through the significant and unique Mitchell Silt Jetties and into the RAMSAR listed Gippsland Lakes. The impact on the aquatic ecosystem and the wildlife that abounds the area that rely on the fresh water for survival will be significant. This is detrimental to the essential preservation of our environment and the habitats provided to so many animals. The groundwater, aquifers and bores will also be impacted by radioactive toxic waste that will seep from the tailings dam.

Even with the admission that the waste will include radioactive substances we still don't know the full analysis of the ore body as despite repeated requests Kalbar have not disclosed this. I hate to think of the potential impact on the health of our community.

Our area relies heavily on the economy of our tourism, our already significant and growing recreational and fishing industries. The risk to these industries far outweigh any positives that Kalbar can bring to our region. Who will want to come and holiday nearby to a toxic wasteland?

If this mine is allowed to proceed we will not be able to reconstruct the mined landscape and gullies which have been formed over thousands of years. The complex geology, topography and hydrology will be destroyed for the sake of a 15 year span of a sand mine. Can you guarantee rehabilitation at all? Unfortunately the mining industry has a very poor track record in this regard.

I fear for the long-term economic impact on the value of our land and house values. I have invested in properties in Bairnsdale as part of my superannuation. The prices might be temporarily driven up due to the influx of mining workers from out of the area (because despite what Kalbar say about it increasing jobs for locals, this won't be the case) but what will happen when the mine gets wound up and the loss of other pre-existing industries is even more evident at the end of the 15 years. Just like happened in Emerald QLD, and other places around Australia, the housing prices will plummet after the original boom and people could be left liable for mortgages that far outweigh the value of their investments.

The Amendment to the East Gippsland Planning Scheme has been made without community consultation. Why isn't this a matter for the East Gippsland Shire Council to determine? It is unacceptable to allow compulsory acquisition of private land to be used by the mine for infrastructure outside of the original boundary of the mine for; water pipelines, bore pumps, bore field, roadworks, new power lines, easements, rail siding and vegetation removal. This is a disgraceful abuse of power over the families and farmers that live in the immediate vicinity of the mine.

Please show us that you value our way of life and that of future generations, the cultural significance of the area to our local indigenous people the Gunaikurnai, the unique beauty of our natural environment, the habitats and balanced ecology for all living organisms and the existing industries of East Gippsland by preventing this mine, in this grossly inappropriate location, to go ahead.

Thank you to the members of Enquiry and Advisory Committee for the opportunity to make a submission.

Matthew Christopher Roberts.