

# Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory  
Committee - EES

# 478

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

**Full Name:** Jennifer Ann Smethurst

**Organisation:**

**Affected property:**

**Attachment 1:** Fingerboards\_Sub

**Attachment 2:**

**Attachment 3:**

**Comments:** see attached document

October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Dear Members of the Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory Committee (IAC),

**My letter comes from the heart – Please do not allow the proposed Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project to go ahead.**

I am a fifth generation Gippslander and I'm passionate about maintaining the stunning and unique Gippsland environment that I've grown up in. I spend my time living between properties in Churchill and Lakes Entrance. Gippsland is an incredibly unique environment that supports a wide and diverse range of flora and fauna as well as supporting many individuals and their families in their chosen home lives.

The Fingerboards/Glenaladale area of East Gippsland:

- is a pristine food source, with the Lindenow Valley being the main supply of fresh produce for Victoria.
- it is a culturally significant and sensitive area for the Gunai Kurnai People.
- the water of the Mitchell River supports a diverse ecosystem that stretches from the mountains through to the Gippsland Lakes waterways via the Mitchell River Silt Jetties.
- the Mitchell River Silt Jetties have been created over thousands of years of silt deposits and are the longest digitate delta in the world! They are fed by the Mitchell River and are the beginning of the Gippsland Lakes.

There is so much at stake. The Gippsland Lakes is an oasis for wildlife and are an ancient, relatively untouched waterway. They are protected waterways and the whole of the Lakes is a national park. How would we feel if we let this beautiful place become polluted? And, not have the annual water flow into it that it currently needs to stay healthy.

- The mine will require over 3 billion litres of water each year to operate. AND this will be coming from the Mitchell River.
- Removal of over 700 large mature trees. Flora and fauna species are threatened.
- The Woodglen Reservoir where domestic and commercial water is stored for the whole Shire is 3.5kms downwind from the mine. This poses contamination risks on Bairnsdale's drinking water and those on tank water living near the mine
- There will be a tailings dam 90 hectares in size (nearly 1 square km). It will contain mine tailings waste and flocculants which have warnings on safety data sheets about being harmful to aquatic life.
- The pre-existing residential and agricultural land use needs to be recognised for this area. Noise from a mine operating 24 hours a day 7 days a week will be untenable and very stressful for both humans and animals.

The Fingerboard/Glenaladale area currently has the mining company, Kalbar, planning an open cut mineral sands mine 500 metres from the Mitchell River. Run off from the mine is highly probable, and Kalbar has admitted to radio-active toxic dust being produced from the mine. WE DO NOT WANT THIS MINE.

- What will the farmers do without the same access to water or if the Lindenow Valley becomes contaminated by toxic dust?
- One farm in the Lindenow Valley supplies 45 tonnes of lettuce to McDonalds every week. So if this proposed mine goes ahead, when you go to McDonalds instead of being asked "Do you want fries with that?" expect to be asked, "Do you want thorium and other carcinogens or would you prefer silica which is a cause of respiratory disease?" Because that is what will be in the dust blown from the mine on to those crops.
- The \$155M/year Mitchell River Valley vegetable industry that employs up to 2,000 people is as close as 500m downwind from the mine. Will any farmers be able to sell their crops, meat or livestock if

their produce is contaminated and they are known to be in a toxic mining area? The answer is most likely a NO.

And, to borrow the words of Shelley Nundra, who wrote:

“What it threatens to do to the various aquifers and ground & surface water is a horror story. Those impacts can reach the Gippsland Lakes which is a ground water dependent ecosystem. The Mitchell's flows will be reduced - both by surface water and its shallow aquifer recharge, while the direction of flow around important aquifers can be affected along with water quality. This will affect all other users. If the tailings dam fails (which they CAN'T guarantee won't happen) the environmental impacts will be EXTREME, gouging out the delicate Perry River system and its Providence Ponds reserve whilst also depositing huge amounts of silt and toxic tailings which will smother vegetation and kill fauna. Providence Ponds preserves one of the best remaining sections of the now rare 'chain of ponds' channel morphology landforms. This system will be DESTROYED. A tailings dam failure would also affect the Mitchell River, as it is perched in the headwaters of both the Perry River and a Mitchell tributary. Sick stuff. How could anyone propose this? Four gullies and creeks which flow directly into the Mitchell and represent almost 1% of its total catchment would be MINED and damned. That's right - actual heavily dissected water courses flowing directly into the Mitchell only a few hundred meters away obliterated. These gullies contain some of the only vegetated remnants in this riverside landscape, containing important and rare EVC's. The Perry Gully will be left permanently filled in with tailings and mine waste. Kalbar reckon they're going to 'reconstruct' the mined landscape and other gullies. What a joke. You can't reconstruct complex geology, topography, hydrology and their interrelationships once they've been ripped from the ground and mushed up to extract radioactive heavy mineral concentrate.”

Members of the Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory Committee (IAC) – PLEASE don't let this open cut mine be aloud. There is far too much at stake for our Gippsland home.

Your sincerely,

Jenny Smethurst