

# Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory  
Committee - EES

# 267

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**Request to be heard?:** Yes

**Full Name:** Rosemary Constance

**Organisation:**

**Affected property:**

**Attachment 1:** Rosemary\_Maher

**Attachment 2:**

**Attachment 3:**

**Comments:** Submission uploaded below

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee members,

I am responding to the EES for the proposed Mineral Sands Mine project at Glenaladale because I oppose the mine.

I currently live 20 minutes drive from the Mitchell River Valley and lived for many years in Lindenow South, only 10 minutes from the proposed mine site. In my holidays I worked on the Lindenow flats. I am now a Regenerative farmer.

I recently visited the proposed mine site and was disturbed by its proximity to the agricultural activities of the Mitchell river flats. The vegetable farm I toured is at the base of the escarpment where the proposed mine would be sited. I believe the potential for negative impacts to affect the people; the landscape, the Mitchell River and the Perry River, and the economy of the area are not worth the risk should the mine proceed.

I also find it difficult to accept the potential benefits to the region of the mine as propounded by Kalbar when Rio Tinto Pty Ltd past Tenant holders of the Glenaladale Mineral deposits determined not to mine as did Oresome Australia Pty Ltd.

Both mining companies decided not to proceed.

My understanding is that these decisions were based on financial and environmental constraints.

Why would Kalbar consider this proposal?

I also believe that Kalbar have not behaved with integrity.

They have identified approximately 30 households as directly in the 2km zone with the potential to be affected by the serious negative impacts of the poisons carried in the wind. If the zone is taken from the external boundaries of the mine it is my understanding that there are approximately 80 households that would be directly affected.

These are not abstract numbers but real families. Not only will people living in the operational zones of the proposed mine be affected by the 'dust' and its possible negative health impacts but also the noise levels and increased heavy vehicle access to the proposed mine have the potential to impact negatively on their mental health and wellbeing.

In the EES Kalbar dismisses these concerns.

People are already experiencing high levels of anxiety in relation to the proposal particularly in relation to the dust contamination and its inherent negative impact on people's health.

Many of these families have been living and working in the Mitchell Valley for generations and have invested substantial resources to progress their businesses, the benefits of which flow to the wider community.

The agricultural industry of the Mitchell Valley and particularly the vegetable industry are a corner stone of the economic success of the East Gippsland Region.

Produce from the Mitchell River Valley is exported nationally and internationally.

It creates an extensive social and economic benefit through its production and supply chains, locally and regionally.

I believe that contamination by the proposed mining activities has the potential to severely interrupt the supply chains for agriculture. I do not believe washing will remove the dangerous residues from produce contaminated by mining activities as suggested in the EES. Would you want to eat produce contaminated by radioactive dust?

Kalbar have acknowledged that radioactive substances as well as rare earths will be mined. Radioactive substances contained underground when disturbed by mining have the potential to be carried across the surrounding environment by wind activity.

We have had roads buried by sand in our area and while driving during the massive wind storms driven across from the Mallee Region in the past; I was enveloped in darkness, there was a great thump, the car lurched and I had to stop. Briefly I thought it was a bomb! That was the power of the wind its dirt burden.

Living in the area we are all aware of the ability of veering winds to lift and move tons of soil when the landscape is bared which the proposed mine will do. Hosing mullock heaps may inhibit but will not stop soil movement due to our voracious winds.

I am concerned about the health risks associated with the radioactive substances and other substances which would be released by the activities of the proposed mine.

We have soil tests undertaken on our property; the results are determined by the testing framework requested.

What did Kalbar ask to be tested?

Were the health risks clearly identified?

What was the full analysis of the ore body?

I request the Panel to ask for a full response to these questions.

This information needs to be fully disclosed and carefully examined.

I believe the Panel has a duty of care to ensure that the community is not exposed to increased health risks including lung diseases as a result of the proposed mining operations.

Kalbar has identified 3GL as the water allocation required for their mining operation. (The scoping study undertaken by Oresome Australia Pty Ltd identified a water requirement of 4.6 GL- 6.2GL)

My understanding is that Kalbar proposes to take the majority of the water from the Mitchell River and pump additional ground water to manage mining operations.

The Mitchell River already has tight water allocations and current license holders often have reductions in their water allocations based on river flow.

The ability of the river flow to meet the pumping capacity for the proposed mine is questionable.

Where is the water going to come from?

The EES assumes the water can be retained in holding dams. Questions also need to consider the security of the dam itself.

Locally a large dam designed to collect excess water flow from the Mitchell River during flood has had problems with leakage. My understanding is that the weight of the water compressed the foundations of the dam; the liners stretched and were compromised. The dam leaked.

Sited on the escarpment my assumption is that all dams will need to be clay lined. This is essential, particularly for the tailings dams to reduce the potential for water and impurities to seep into the rivers and aquifers. All dams have the potential to leach water.

Will the dams be lined with clay?

Where will the appropriate clay come from?

There is also a high risk that extreme weather conditions will cause the dams to breach thus increasing the negative impact of major flood events. It is proposed to dam off 9 gullies which currently drain into the Mitchell River. The volume of water from these and/or the tailings dams if breached during a major flood event would be disastrous.

How good are the proposed engineering structures; how robust and safe are the dams?

The second option to access groundwater is also questionable.

Our aquifers are fully allocated. There is already fierce competition for water. There are billboards along the Princes Highway from Rosedale which state 'Water for Agriculture'. I have been advised that no application to Gippsland Water for an extraction license has been sought by Kalbar.

From where will Kalbar purchase 1GL of groundwater water?

Who will sell water rights when their own agricultural practise depends on the resource?

The EES does not fully recognise the fragile nature of the landscape surrounding and within the mine area or the complex biodiversity of the area.

I do not believe the impact of the proposed mine on the Providence Ponds Catchment and Perry River has been honestly acknowledged either. The Perry River is a unique 'chain of ponds,' supported by shallow aquifers which are dependent on ground water and susceptible to contamination by mining activities through both wind and potential leaching.

The proposed water use for the mine if allocated to agriculture would create much greater economic benefit for the region than the mine and avoid the social and environmental degradation inherent in the Kalbar proposal.

As Landholders we are constrained by complex regulations if making changes to landscape function.

We would not be allowed to destroy vegetation stands or water courses without intense oversight by the relevant authorities.

It appears that Kalbar operates on the assumption that these planning requirements will not be an issue.

What role has the East Gippsland Catchment authority played in the EES process?

Why has the Lindenow and District Community Plan been ignored?

What role has the East Gippsland Shire played in the EES process?

What consideration has been given to the impact of the proposed mine on the Gippsland Lakes and the Ramsar site?

I have attended numerous meetings where Kalbar representatives have presented the case to develop a Mineral Sands Mine at Glenaladale. They did not convince me that the proposed mine would have significant public benefit for the East Gippsland Community.

I believe that the risk to people, agriculture and the environment is too high to endorse the further development of the proposed mine.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Yours sincerely

Rosemary Maher

19/10/20