

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

532

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

Full Name: Donna Pendergast

Organisation:

Affected property: [REDACTED]

Attachment 1: Submission.pdf

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: See attached submission

Donna Pendergast

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LUCKNOW VIC 3875

To Whom It May Concern

For a long time I haven't thought myself as someone who could submit to this inquiry. I am a single mother, living in Bairnsdale – 20km from the proposed project site, working in homelessness services. Who am I to comment on a mine? However, as the deadline for the submissions arrives, I am compelled to add my own voice to the many others who will say it much more eloquently than I.

Here are my concerns about the project that have come from the many topics already covered in news outlets, advocacy groups, and the EES.

1. Location

- a. Situated only 500 metres from the Heritage listed Mitchell River
- b. The Woodglen Reservoir where domestic and commercial water is stored for the whole Municipality is 3.5kms downwind from the mine area.

2. Water Use

The mine requires 3 billion litres of water per year to operate, which they are going to source from the river through a series of dams. This river is also relied on by our farmers for irrigation of our food bowl.

3. Air quality

13 sq Km of open cut mine which will release radioactive toxic dust particles into the atmosphere, just upstream of a multi-million dollar agricultural industry. With prevailing wind directions (in records from 1943 to 2017 at least) being easterly (from the west), this pushes toxic dust over our food bowl in Lindenow, into the rivers and therefore into the lakes poisoning the fish, and over the towns of Bairnsdale and surrounding areas. That concerns me.

4. Damage to Indigenous Culture

The Mitchell River is home to over 12000 years of GunaiKurnai history. It is a meeting place, and home to a stone shelter that dates back to the last ice age. In light of what Rio Tinto's disregard for cultural sites, it is clear that mining companies take a "forgiveness is easier to ask for than permission" and are willing and able to bear the public outrage, fines and weak-handed government response that comes when they destroy Indigenous cultural sites. Kalbar considers destruction of all the Aboriginal sites and artefacts over the 1,675 ha of the Fingerboards project area worth exactly \$0.00million. (Information from their economics report)

5. Significant cultural and ecological destruction

It is proposed by Kalbar that over 700 large mature trees will be removed within a 13 square km mining footprint. Given our current climate crisis (and there is one, make no mistakes of that) we have a duty and obligation to our CHILDREN to preserve the natural world as much as we can. The destruction of 700 trees is too much. It is a travesty.

6. The EES is riddled with mistakes

In their own EES there are contradictions from one page to another. And in one section, they

don't even know where the mine is to be located, in the Socioeconomic Impact Assessment they state the mine is 30km North of Dargo. I'm pretty sure that's halfway up a mountain. Have Mt Hotham been asked to contribute their submission? It sounds like it's right in their back yard! Clearly, these "experts" writing the EES don't know how to read a map, or perhaps never even looked at one, they've obviously never set foot on the land they're discussing.

7. Tailings Dam Construction.

I'm from Benambra – 2hrs up the mountain where there was once a mine. I know the issues that came up with the tailings dam there. No one wants to talk about that. That mine didn't sit on a river that feeds agriculture, fishing and tourism industries!

I have a lot of concern about the lack of detail in the EES for the tailings dam construction which stores mine tailings waste and chemicals used to treat tailings. It's to be located on high ground above both the Perry and Mitchell Rivers. There is always a risk of leaching from the dam, having it this close to rivers is unsafe. If there is a 100-year flood, tailings waste could be released into the rivers, harming aquatic life and aquifers.

8. Damage to the Food Industry

The Lindenow Flats agriculture area supplies over 30% of Victoria's fresh food produce. Will they be able to continue to sell (or even grow) their food with access to water restricted, and everything covered in a fine red dust that is more than likely radio-active? It is too dangerous! Mining and Farming CANNOT co-exist.

I am honestly thinking of selling and moving away if this mine goes ahead. I work in a local community health organisation in homeless support, moving will impact my livelihood, and the education of my son who is settled in his school. But at the end of the day I believe this mine will result in health issues for anyone living here, and I don't want to take that risk.

The biggest issue I have is this: A disclaimer by Coffey (the firm pulling the EES together for Kalbar) is repeated throughout the documents.


"It is not possible to make a proper assessment of this report without a clear understanding of the terms of engagement under which the report has been prepared, including the scope of the instructions and directions given to Coffey, and the assumptions made by the relevant Coffey consultants who prepared the report."

How can ANY assessment be made until this is cleared up?

Please DO NOT approve this mine. The Public have spoken. There is a history in Australia of Industry setting its eyes on an area and then going through a superficial process of public 'consultation' before doing whatever the hell it wants. That is what this process feels like. Public outrage and opposition has been clear. Kalbar are not wanted here.

Please support the farmers, the fisherman, the locals whose land will become worthless once they are living next door to a noisy mine that blows radio-active dust all over their land. Stop this before it begins. You only have one chance to do the right thing.

Regards,


Donna Pendergast