

**Karen Fleischer – IAC Panel - Submission 830 – Video & Angela Boucher Sam Short
Total 40 minutes**

Background

My husband John and I grew up in the district. John has lived in Paynesville all his life. I have lived there since my 1978. We went to the local schools as did our children.

As such, I have been involved in several community-based organisations in the Bairnsdale, Paynesville and Gippsland Region.

- Adult Community and Further Education Regional Council Gippsland (12 yrs concurrent ministerial appt & 9 yrs seconded)
- Bairnsdale Chamber of Commerce and Industry (President – 2017 - 2019)
- Business Network Institute – Bairnsdale Branch (Founding member, 2016 - 2019)
- I have served as a treasurer at a kindergarten
- Primary school parent club President
- Secondary school committee
- Committee member for the soccer clubs – in and outdoors
- Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Victorian Branch as the Gippsland Regional Director (2003 – Current)

CBCA Books are not only good books for children and youth, but many of them are also great books for adults, be it a parent, educator, or book club member. It the social issues in the novels and the content of the information book that really hit home with me and also, the books enabled me to have a relevant and real time meaningful connection to the community.

It is widely said in the community that the mine project is a competitor to local produce industries. It is also widely understood that if proposed mine water usage is directed to farmers, it would create long term jobs not just ones that have a 15 to 20 years lifespan.

Children are our future

My kids brought their friends home to our house. Often their parents where people who my husband and I went to school with (they were mini versions of the parents).

Now those children and one of my children are having their children. At times, I have told myself not to get involved in voicing that the mine is not wanted or needed, but then when I look into the eyes of infants and toddlers, I feels sad at this attitude.

I am very mindful that the Lindenow preschool and primary schools could be at risk of exposure to dust. The same applies to kids playing cricket or other forms of sport at The Glenaladale Cricket Ground. If the mining venture goes ahead, many people are thinking that parents would not want to put their kid's health at risk by sending them to the local school Camp, holiday resort and bed and breakfast within the close proximity of the proposed mine. I recently to the owner of family's former farm and they said that they would have to close down and move if the mine was to proceed. I did not see where these financial environmental events occurrences are factored into Kalbar's EES.

Environment

Children are our future. We are custodians of this land for them. Their health, a clean environment with a sound water supply for drinking and produce is vital for their next generations. Protecting water supplies for domestic and current commercial usage, as well as the earth and the fauna and flora cohabiting land in our backyard for future generations is something that I know a fair swag of the community feel strongly about.

Up Stream Effect

I am speaking here today also on behalf of Angela Boucher and Samantha Short. Angela and Samantha would like to make it known that they are very concerned about up effects stream effects on the Gippsland Lakes from the proposed mine. They contributed to the making of the video to the panel. Their support letters are included.

My personal views are that is everyone duty to ensure that the Lakes system welfare is at the forefront of core business. It is felt by most of the community that a mineral sand mine at Glenaladale would add to current environmental stresses of the Gippsland Lakes.

Being aware of how far dust travels, I believe that there is no such thing as a “dust free open cut mine”, it is an oxymoron. So regardless of the intent of the operating company, regardless of the mitigation controls put in place, over a 20-year period with assured days of extreme weather variation it is impossible to ensure that tonnes of fine dust exposed by open cut mining will not be deposited on the land directly downwind, the vegetable fields of the Lindenow Flats.

Many everyday community members and business owners feel that it is a nonsense for the Victorian Government to protect the food bowl from mining exploration or exploitation and yet allow the prospect of this mine to proceed immediately upwind, immediately upstream, of that food bowl. Dust cannot be fully suppressed. This is another oxymoron.

Community

I am really saddened by the conflict that this venture has caused in the community. Neighbours seemly have become divided. I am thinking that this panel has heard stories of unacceptable social behaviour from people who are against the Glenaladale Mining venture. Without wishing to insight the matter, some of the stories appear to intent to cause further conflict between neighbours and divide the community. As someone who is not employed, has never derived an income from the land, does not stand to have a financial gain from a mining venture (I have no shares in the mine) and, as someone who although a member of Mine Free Glenaladale to obtain the latest news and to form a personal opinion. This has resulted in me meeting some knowledgeable caring people who have varied personal and professional backgrounds. One of these people is Kerry Knight. Kerry was mentioned as a contact to source critical knowledge on sound pollution from heavy machinery. I contacted Kerry. In the blink of an eye, she forwarded factual DATA about noise and dust pollution Kerry spent a couple of hours researching and came up with a long list of resources to valid that noise constant heavy machinery noise cause stress to humans, fauna, and flora. Animals, such as cattle dogs, have highly attuned hearing. “Several studies suggest that prolonged exposure to loud noises can cause hearing impairment or even total loss in humans, flora, fauna as well as environmentally.

As someone who does not belong to any political party, I implore you to take head from the locals who have no vested interest from the Mining Proposal and help restore our quality of life back to this region.

Proactive and Responsible

I commend East Gippsland Shire Council for being responsible with ensuring that the overall safety, health, and economic welfare of this community is at the forefront of their core business. It is murmured in some pockets of the community that Council is being irresponsible spending funds re this project, however, many people feel that Council is taking a reasonable position to ensure that in the long run, the economic spend from the East Gippsland budget is not facing ongoing future demands by putting out spot fires.

My personal concerns are many. I am mindful of the effect of wildfires like in the summer of 2019/2020. Imagine the dust being blown all around the region from such a fire in a local mineral sand mine. I will leave that one up to the experts, but as Global Warming appears more prevalent, taking all those environmental issues into place must be accounted for in the project.

I have been speaking with residents who live in the area around their concerns a minerals sand mine and the exposure to Fine Particular Matter Dust from mining. There are many environmental learnings that have not been explored after the recent Fine Particulate Matter Exposure study from the coal mine fire. The Hazelwood Health Study has been referenced.

I am not alone in expressing this opposition, it is very much what I am hearing in the wider community. I am the former manager of Paynesville Neighbourhood Centre (PNC). Many of the members were active in the Lock the Gate Campaign. They also were proactive with voicing their concerns about the Fingerboards Mineral Sands Mine project at Glenaladale. These men and women have written to members of parliament, joined protests and purchased signs.

Many different people from all walks of life be it young people, working families, young business professionals as well as long-term residents and business and industry professionals are genuinely concerned about what could happen and the potential disasters.

I once again thank you for the opportunity to speak about the potential impacts of the mine and the Centrifuges for the following reasons:

Farming is the backbone and lifeline of this community. There are too many variables in the Fingerboards Mineral Sands Mine that can financially and socially impact on the many and varied small, medium, and large businesses that sit within Farming. Farming is not one model. An impact statement would take many years to compile, and it is not something that a lay person like me can speak factually too with authority other than having lived in the region for most of my life.

I am mindful that our tourism industry could be affected and also existing long-term businesses such as One Harvest (VEGCO) and Patties Foods. If only the Victorian Government had invested funds in these areas instead of putting us through so much. If fair to think, that during the recent times of drought, floods, bush fires and COVID such as economic spend would have been a more solid use of Government funds.

In closing I would like to say that my heart goes out to the Lindenow and Glenaladale communities and the MANY OF HUNDREDS OF LIVES who will be socially, emotionally, physically and economically disadvantaged if this mine is approved. This is a highly dangerous location for a mine and there are too many environmental risks that cannot be resolved.

In closing

As I was writing this summation, I realised how under prepared I was to articulate the broader issues. I would really like to thank the panel for the opportunity to voice the communities' concerns.

Yours truly

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Karen Fleischer