

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

433

Request to be heard?: Yes

Full Name: Stephen Curry

Organisation:

Affected property:

Attachment 1: Stephen_Curry_Ka

Attachment 2: Stephen_Curry_Ka

Attachment 3:

Comments: See attached submission

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee members,

My name is Stephen Curry and I am a resident of Melbourne. My family and I are regular visitors to the Gippsland Lakes and surrounds and it is without doubt our favourite place to visit in Victoria. In fact, we firmly believe it's one of the great holiday destinations in Australia.

It was with extreme disappointment and genuine concern that I was recently informed of the proposed Kalbar Fingerboards Mine site which, based on my subsequent research of the project, will be located right in the heart of the Gippsland Lakes area. As I'm sure you're aware, this stunningly beautiful and ecologically vital area is protected by the RAMSAR convention. This convention is designed to protect wetlands of International importance.

It is astonishing to me that considering this fact, along with this area being in the heart of Victoria's food bowl, that any notion of a mine of this nature could even be considered, let alone encouraged by anyone other than those few who stand to make an enormous short-term profit out of a venture as ecologically ignorant as this.

The 3 billion litres of water annually required to run this mine will come from the very same environmentally delicate river and lake system that RAMSAR was designed to protect. Not only will the farmers in Victoria's food bowl suffer from this, they will also be inundated by the residual dust created by the mine, which will hinder vegetation and it is abundantly apparent that this will have a negative effect on the hard-working locals who are simply trying to provide food for their families as well as the rest of Victoria.

It is a fact that the tailings dam will contain chemicals which are impossible to prevent from seeping into the water basin and indeed the land itself. The residual flocculant from these tailings will eventually leach into the river and lake system. The Silica dust will also be deposited into the river system and will absolutely cause a negative effect on its very ecosystem. And this is compounded by the fact that the Woodglen water storage facility, which provides the DRINKING WATER FOR THE AREA, is a mere 3.5 kilometres downwind from the mine. How can anyone reconcile with the inherent risk of the very water that we and our children are drinking being contaminated by the residual dust of this incredibly ill-conceived project?

There is a commonly-held sense of suspicion around mining companies and their activities. Whilst some of this can be unfounded and overtly generalist in nature, a lot of it is justified. It appears, from talking to many of my friends in the area, that the issue has taken a predictably divisive tone. As so often happens, a select group of locals has been offered the enticements of employment on the project, thereby seeding this division. Numerous of my friends have lost work and indeed acquaintances over simply voicing their very valid and well-researched concerns, only to be dismissed and belittled as fantasists, alarmists or (the inevitable put-down) 'Greenies'.

It seems almost fanciful to me that the ever-important EES (Environmental Effects Statement) investigating all of the risks and potential outcomes to the environment necessary to establish any mining project, is CARRIED OUT BY THE MINING COMPANY THEMSELVES. Yes- they are their own ombudsman. How is this reasonable? Why has there not been an independent EES carried out by a completely impartial entity to establish that the MINING COMPANY'S EES passes the sniff test? The community has had the 8000 page EES 'made available' to them to casually peruse. Kalbar have given the community 40 days to do so. That's 200 pages a day of scientifically-based research (much of it nigh-on impossible for the layperson to comprehend) for 40 days. This, in my opinion makes a complete mockery of the notion of community consultation. As ever, it appears that the mighty dollar may win out over the safety and very livelihoods of the people who will be living there long after the mine has packed up, left their indelible and destructive legacy behind and started digging somewhere else.

I have been informed that there is a Public Hearing Phase in relation to this project starting in February 2021. I wish to indicate my desire to speak at this hearing, to voice my concerns as a person who possesses a genuine and long-standing respect for the surrounds and indeed the people of East Gippsland.

Sincerely
Stephen Curry.