

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

271

Request to be heard?: Yes

Full Name: Glenister James Maher

Organisation:

Affected property:

Attachment 1: EES_submission_G

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: See attached submission

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee members;

I would like to raise my concerns regarding the Glenaladale Mineral Sands Mining project Environmental effects statement (EES).

I have attended quite a few of the Kalbar meetings and voiced my concern for the aquifers, the Environment, the farming, the liveable climate and the agricultural production.

I was 18 months old when my family arrived in Meerlieu and the adjacent district of Fernbank. I have established many friends and relationships with associates and likeminded farmers and business people. We live 20 km from the proposed mine site so it is not right in my backyard but in that of many good people. It does however sit on the main drain through our farm which is known as the Boisdale aquifer. This is why it is important to protect this liveable area.

I have been a farmer for 45 years and a freight contractor as well. I have carted 'carp' to all the Cray ports in South Australia, for bait.

What a way to deal with an environmental pest.

Wool and grain were a major part of the job so I have had the privilege of being on farms all over Victoria, South Australia and Southern New South Wales; none have the liveable climate we enjoy. A few frosts, a few 40 degree days and the rest liveable. Tourism does abound and the foothills are the launching place for Dargo and the ranges. I enjoy the run to Dargo and there are always plenty of visitors there. There is a beautiful valley leading out of the foothills hosting an increasing population and agricultural production as it grows and expands past Lindenow and towards Bairnsdale.

This is not the appropriate place for a Mineral Sands Mine.

The Mitchell River sustains water supply for agriculture and the main population centres of Lindenow, Bairnsdale, Eagle Point and Paynesville. The aquifers provide additional water and sustain the broader agricultural community between rain events. We cannot afford to have either of these water supplies contaminated.

The proposed mine site rests on ground above the Mitchell River and above the aquifers. It also has the potential to negatively impact on the Perry River. The Perry River and its 'chain of ponds' is the last of its kind in the region and the native vegetation from the Perry Bridge to the mouth of the river grows to the banks. (The Avon River has been seriously compromised by sand mining).

There is a serious risk of the contaminated water from 'tailings' dams or other mining activities compromising these iconic rivers.

We have severe and momentous flood events in the region and the flood waters roar down from the mountains and the Mitchell Valley becomes a flood plain.

I do not believe the proposed dams in the 'gullies' would hold or that the integrity of the tailings dams would be maintained during these severe weather events.

Tunnel erosion is already a challenge to the stability of the landscape in the proposed mine site area and to dam gullies and to believe they will be stable is flawed. Kalbar claims that water management dams would be empty before a flood event. The most unpredictable event in East Gippsland is a flood event as we know from personal experience.

The proposed sand mine does not belong in this environment.

I spent 18 months on the 'Consultative Committee' for the Boisdale aquifer and believe I have a reasonable understanding of the nature of aquifers in the area and the movement of ground water.

The Consultative committee worked hard to come to a sensible outcome for the management of the aquifer and it was considered by the Minister at the time Ms Sherryl Garbutt, on Randell Knot's recommendation to change the terms of reference to extend the time frame to allow the Consultative committee to complete our task and come to a sensible conclusion; which we did.

SKM were the Geologists /Hydrologists advising the Consultative committee and Gordon Walker (SKM) assured us that the Mitchell and Perry River systems were the recharge sites for the Boisdale aquifer. At no stage does the EES make any such reference.

Sale City draws its water from the Boisdale aquifer as do all the farms above it. Sale City has small reference in the EES.

Kalbar claims that the Boisdale aquifer does not extend past the Princes Highway; this claim is absolutely incorrect.

As well as the Mitchell River, Kalbar is proposing the access the Latrobe group of aquifers for water. The Latrobe aquifer is already oversubscribed. It currently supports the mining in the Latrobe valley, as the coal fields wind down the surplus water should be returned to the environment to address the issue of 'over subscription'.

The previous mining companies which held the mining rights rejected the development of the Mineral sand mine due to environmental and financial concerns, these have not changed.

Mining activities will release radioactive substances and 'rare earths' that are currently safely held below ground. When brought to light they become an environmental risk. No matter how careful we are **dust** permeates everything.

The EES acknowledges the danger to human health within 2 kilometres of the mine site due to contaminated dust. However our area is also host to variable, excessive

and strong winds which have the potential to bring a dust storm from Lindenow to the other side of Bairnsdale in about 10 minutes. These winds do not drop their burden until they are losing velocity. This wind activity is not constrained by a line drawn on a map.

I believe that contaminated dust is a real health concern; not fully reflected in the EES and rationalised numerically at 'Kalbar consultations'.

I am talking about real people and their health and wellbeing.

At a Kalbar consultation meeting it was stated that dust is always a problem in vegetable production. When I challenged this statement and pointed out that dust does not usually contain toxic mine dust I received an apology. When I challenged the key presenter he admitted that he had not even visited the mine site. He had no visual knowledge of the environment: its landscape, its fragility on the escarpments, the geography of the terrain or the extent of the agricultural production area. His recommendations were based on documented mineral sand mining activities from other environments.

There are no Sand Mines in Australia being undertaken in an environment as diverse, productive and populated as the area under consideration in the EES.

In summary

Residents are concerned for their health and well being and the future of their children.

The vegetable farmers are concerned.

The users of the aquifers are concerned.

The people of the Gippsland Lakes are concerned.

The tourism industry is concerned.

Other mining concerns rejected the proposal.

The proposed water use would create a greater economic benefit to the region returned to agriculture.

The EES is flawed and inaccurate.

Allowing the proposed mine to proceed will not encourage the recycling of the precious metals. This will matter in generations to come.

There is no shortage of these products yet; leave them safely under the ground.

The Mitchell River Valley is not the place to host a mine site.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my reasons not to develop a Mineral Sand Mine in the Mitchell River Valley.

Regards

Lou Maher

26/10/20