

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

344

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

Full Name: Jenny and John Leggatt

Organisation:

Affected property:

Attachment 1: Response_to_Envi

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: Se attached submission

28.10.2020

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee members,

I am writing to you today to voice my very deep concern and disapproval of Fingerboards mineral sands mine project proposal. If this mine goes ahead it will have devastating consequences on many different fronts and levels, for our immediate local communities here in Fernbank, Glenaladale, Lindenow including the whole of Bairnsdale and surrounds, East Gippsland and beyond. The impacts of the mine will mean that lifestyles will be compromised, our Lindenow Flats food bowl could be contaminated and our precious water supply jeopardised.

As a local person who has lived in the area well on 30 years it is disappointing that this mine can go ahead. People who live in East Gippsland have made a very informed choice on why they have chosen to live here. This is an area of natural beautiful, tranquillity, a place to have freedom, to raise children so they can enjoy the outdoors and be part of a local community. My husband and I moved back to the area (husband was born in Bairnsdale) when we started a family, moving from the city precinct, giving up jobs that were well paid, for an easier lifestyle choice and to raise our family. Firstly we lived right on the Gippsland Lakes for 14 years and then chose to move to Fernbank purchasing land on the Fernbank-Lindenow South Road so we could live a quieter lifestyle, enjoy open fields, beautiful outlooks to the mountain ranges, a place to potter on the land and have a go at hobby farming. Our municipal rates notice defines our land as residential rural/rural lifestyle. It disappoints me to know that if the mine goes ahead that our lifestyle could be completely compromised. We are so close to the project and the proposed infrastructure option area. The Fernbank East rail siding is only 3 kilometres by road but as the crow flies just over one kilometre. We will be able to visibly see the B Double trucks driving to the railway line on the private haulage road and hear their rumblings of coming and going, not to mention the extra trains that will be needed to transport the sands.

One of my main concern for my family is the level of the noise of the transport of the mineral sands to the rail siding and the rail loading activities. This does not however exclude the noise made by the mines during construction and general operating noise.

The main reason we came out to Fernbank was to have a quieter, healthier lifestyle. The ability to enjoy the outdoors and to hear the birds, the wind in the trees and to have our own little farm. If this mine goes ahead it will intrude into our space. We didn't choose to live near a mine and to be impacted by it. This is an extremely valid point and needs to be considered. We know the noises that we hear whilst living on our land right now. We hear the daily 6.00am train from Bairnsdale travelling to Melbourne, the occasional chain saw from neighbouring farms, the dogs barking when a fox is running through our properties, the birds chirping in the trees, the few cars that pass by our place. This is all within what we expect to be normal. Can you say for certain that the levels of noise generated by the mine will not impact on us? What will it be like to have 80 plus B double trucks rattling and vibrating just off our property, possibly 24 hours a day? That is not to say the increase of trains coming and going to accommodate the mine.

The EES statement states that the noise levels during operations have recommended levels at all sensitive receptors during the day, evening and night (pg17 in the summary report). It states that the B double trucks won't move during the night but in the next point directly below it states that 'if' rail loading activities were to happen during the night the noise level will not meet the recommended levels. Does this mean that the B double trucks have the possibility of rail loading

activities at night? Can you ensure that this does not happen? Who will be responsible to keep Kalbar Mines and any consequent new owners in later years, to account of the times that they will transport the mineral sands? What recourse will the people of Fernbank, Glenaladale and surrounding areas have if Kalbar Operations Pty Ltd doesn't comply within the hours specified. Can you ensure that the hours of 'transport' are defined so everyone knows what to expect? Ultimately will our current lifestyle be compromised by noise? Who will be able to ensure that this does not happen? This does not exclude the potential of vibrations that may be felt due to the mines operations and construction. The same points apply.

Another concern that directly impacts on our local community is the mental anguish this is causing residents in our area. Many properties in my local area have been approached and continue to be approached for the exploration of water by Kalbar. This has brought a division in our community as neighbours against neighbours have different view points. One neighbour may agree to have the exploration go ahead because of the monetary benefits, while once respected neighbours, fall out with others because of their choices. Once we were a very close knit community ready to help and assist each other especially during the fire season. I dread to think what will happen if we are faced with a fire and who will support each other in the future. The regular phone tree checking in on each other will definitely now be much more limited. Is this the way to build community spirit, supporting each other? There is a general nervousness on what will Kalbar do next? The next stage appears to be the exploration of the land for the potential increasing of the sandmines, right on our doorstep. Our next door neighbour refused to allow Kalbar to explore not for water but for possible sites for mining just a few weeks ago. The proposed private haulage road is going through a neighbouring property. The response of the owner was that he was going to make a lot of money out of this, not thinking beyond his own needs. Adding to this he does not live on the property where the haulage road will go through. He lives 8 kilometres away where he will not be impacted at all. This is all leading to unrest in our otherwise harmonious community.

The supply and amount of water is another concerning issue that is integral to the mining operation. Over the period of the life of the mine it is anticipated that 3 billion litres of water will be required. This will impact on the farming, businesses and households in our local area who are reliant on the water supply. Considerations need to be made on how our local residents and farmers will not be compromised. How will this be monitored? Who will hold Kalbar to account? What happens if in time, local residents find that the water supply is not the same quality and that it has been contaminated or compromised by the mining operations? What happens if the Mitchell River dries up and isn't able to flush out the Gippsland Lakes. Blue green algae will be rampant, and this will have a flow on effect on the tourist industry for East Gippsland.

For my direct local area there are quite a few properties who have put in bores to help with the watering of cattle and for crop growing. Many have the notion that this will also help when we are threatened by bushfires. In the sixteen years we have been here we have been under bushfire threat at least 6 times. If our underground water supply is compromised it may be to the detriment of the safety of properties in this locality. How will we know that our water supply will not be compromised? Which body of authority can give us this reassurance? Will we have enough water to accommodate our needs?

Finally, the air quality of our beautiful area will be changed due to the mining and have direct impact on the people and businesses in our local area. It is noted in the studies that there will be particles suspended in the air from the mining process. How will this be monitored and controlled? The

health of every individual who lives in the location of the mine can and will be impacted. The mine is too close to where many families live, farm and work. Will our cancer rates and lung disease increase due to the mining like in the Latrobe Valley where industrial sites were the reason for increased cancer rates? How can Kalbar assure us that this will not be the case? How will our government assure us that we continue to live in a healthy environment and that we will be protected? We chose to live in East Gippsland for a healthier lifestyle, but I am unconvinced that this will be the case in the future.

Can you make a promise that our lifestyle will not change? Can you ensure that my grandchildren will have the same opportunity as my children had of being able to be outside and explore all what the country lifestyle has to offer. Will we have the confidence to be outside when the wind is blowing and that the residue of the mining will not be in the air? Will we have the confidence to eat the local produce from the Lindenow Flats? That is not including our own produce from our veggie plots. Will our fresh water in our own tanks be contaminated by radioactive substances in the air? And ultimately would you choose to live in this area knowing what we are about to face? Seriously please be so very mindful of the landowners who live in this area, the small voices. It is easy to decide if you are not faced with the sand mine directly and do not live in the area. Out of sight and out of mind! Please consider all people who will be affected by this decision. I trust that you will see all points of view and make your decision accordingly taking in all perspectives.

Thank you for allowing me in making this submission. It is appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Jenny Leggatt. (John my husband fully endorses the sentiments in this letter as well).