

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

749

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

Full Name: Teresa Antoinette Mary Schutte

Organisation:

Affected property:

Attachment 1: submission.docx

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: See attached submission.

29/10/20

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee members,

I am writing in response to the EES conducted by Kalbar for the Fingerboards Mineral Sands Mine Project. I have lived in Fernbank and around Bairnsdale and surrounding areas my whole life.

These are the reasons below I do not believe the Fingerboards Mineral Sands Mine Project should go ahead at Glenaladale, East Gippsland:

- The pre-existing residential and agricultural land use needs to be recognised for this area. Noise from a mine operating 24 hours a day 7 days a week will be untenable and very stressful.
- The Mitchell River. If this river was to be compromised it would be devastating to the community and economy of East Gippsland. It feeds into the Gippsland lakes system that attracts thousands of people to the area every year for swimming, kayaking, fishing, camping, hiking, bird watching, walking, biking, four wheel driving, hunting, photography, family holidays and so much more. Where will you go on your holiday if the borders stay shut and the lakes are ruined because of this mine?
- Largest lake system in the southern hemisphere.
- The ecological vegetation class Plains grassy woodlands is listed as critically endangered under the EPBC act. And there is only 1% left in Victoria of what was here originally and Kalbar have said that they will be definitely destroying a large portion of that if the mine is approved. Are you willing to let this EVC become extinct? This EVC and the area surrounding supports animals such as the critically

endangered Swift parrots if which there are less than 1000 pairs left in the wild. They depend on large hollow bearing trees which are to be removed if this mine is approved.

- 13 square kms on a plateau which is above the Heritage listed Mitchell River and the vegetable fields of the Mitchell River Valley is to be mined up to 45m deep. If there is runoff there are risks of the river being contaminated, impacting on the crops, fishing, agriculture, the health of the rivers and the Gippsland Lakes (an important Ramsar-listed wetland).
- Kalbar's geochemistry report lists a number of radioactive and cancer-causing substances that will be present in the dust generated. Dust can travel far so this potentially could effect the entire district. The mine is too close to where many families live, farm, work and go to school, it is a highly inappropriate area.
- The \$155M/year Mitchell River Valley vegetable industry that employs up to 2,000 people is as close as 500m downwind from the mine. Will any farmers be able to sell their crops, meat or live stock if their produce is contaminated and they are known to be in a toxic mining area? The answer is most likely a NO.
- The Mitchell River, the source of water to irrigate those vegetables and make ice to transport them is 350m downwind (between the mine and the vegetable fields).
- Kalbar needs over 3 billion litres of water annually for processing and dust suppression for 15 years. This shows how much water is needed to control the dust which will potentially pose major human and animal health risks.
- Kalbar's high need for water could lead to earlier and tighter restrictions on users reliant on water from the Mitchell River (such as the horticulture industry) and is likely to impact the health of the Gippsland Lakes from reduced fresh water.

- There are concerns that jobs in tourism and agriculture are at risk from potential contamination of the river and crops.
- Could other jobs be created instead? Based on irrigation data, if the 3 billion litres of water Kalbar requires annually was redirected to growing vegetables, 3 times more jobs could be created than Kalbar's proposal. These would be long-term sustainable jobs to grow food. According to National Farmers Federation statistics, every job created in agriculture leads to 4.2 indirect jobs. From Kalbar's website, 1 mining job leads to 1 indirect job.
- All aboriginal cultural heritage sites will be destroyed including unregistered scar trees and burial grounds.
- Unknown Aboriginal cultural heritage sites are stated as being highly likely to be present and will be impacted. Given the massive excavation down to 45m, it will be impossible to avoid destruction of artefacts and heritage. Mitigation measures will not avoid the obliteration of cultural heritage.
- There will be a tailings dam 90 hectares in size (nearly 1 square km). It will contain mine tailings waste and flocculants which have warnings on safety data sheets about being harmful to aquatic life.
- The Woodglen Reservoir where domestic and commercial water is stored for the whole Shire is 3.5kms downwind from the mine. This poses contamination risks on Bairnsdale's drinking water and those on tank water living near the mine.
- Removal of over 700 large mature trees. Flora and fauna species are threatened.

- Full rehabilitation rarely happens. Will progressive rehabilitation actually occur (example is Douglas mine at Balmoral in Western Victoria where a toxic waste dump was left behind)? The risks of no rehabilitation are high if the mine goes into 'care & maintenance' with the tailings dam and 19 dams on gullies/creeks being abandoned. Rehabilitation bonds have been shown to be grossly inadequate to cover costs.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Yours sincerely,

Teresa Schutte.