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Request to be heard?: No

**Full Name:** Louise Hutchinson

**Organisation:**

**Affected property:**

**Attachment 1:**

**Attachment 2:**

**Attachment 3:**

**Comments:** Dear Committee, I am writing to oppose the proposed Kalbar Mineral Sands project. I grew up in the Mitchell River Valley and lived there again as an adult with children of my own. The change in the river over this time has been disheartening. The increasing regulatory of decreased flow rates resulting in stagnant waters is obvious. My family owns a number of properties in this valley, as well as property near the proposed bore water field, all of which are reliant on water for production of vegetables and stock. Food production drives the local economy and food is a more essential commodity than minerals. The long-term economic benefits of the sustainable local horticultural district far outweigh the short-term profits that would be gained from the destructive mining proposal. But it's not just the impacts on the agricultural industry that concern me. The Gippsland Lakes is the largest estuary in Australia and a Ramsar listed wetland. The concern for their health was first raised when I was a child in the 1980's when suddenly there was an increase in the frequency of major algal blooms. The Victorian government has recently acknowledged the stressors on the lakes system and is introducing a complete commercial fishing ban in 2021. Fishing has not been the only man-induced pressure on the lakes system. Sedimentation from upstream erosion – recently an extreme visual reminder of the impacts from recent bushfires, pollutants from waste water and fertilisers just to name a few others. Any downstream impacts from pollutants, decreased water flow or winter flushing could impact on these internationally significant lakes and the associated tourism industry. The tourism sector of East Gippsland is a significant part of the economy and still growing. The impacts from a 15 year project cannot compare with the longevity tourism offers. Similarly I am uncomfortable with the proximity of a few kilometres to the Mitchell River National Park. I oppose this project and urge the committee to consider the bigger picture of what the impacts might be on the agricultural sector, tourism industry and the environment.