

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

178

Request to be heard?: No

Full Name: Jennifer Rosemary Bull

Organisation:

Affected property: [REDACTED]

Attachment 1: Submission.doc

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: See attached submission

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee members,

My submission opposes the Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project.

I have lived in East Gippsland for 30 years. I work as a mental health nurse, and have owned and run an organic vegetable farm. My three children have all completed their schooling in the area.

My first objection is to the environmental destruction of the site that will occur, and the immediate and long-term impact on the ecology.

My second objection regards the loss of sensitive Aboriginal cultural heritage, sites and artifacts, which no amount of mitigation can return.

My third objection is due to the impact on human health caused by contaminated dust and water. This will be an immediate risk and a risk that will be present for generations of Victorians to come.

We already have "the highest rate of vertebrate mammal extinction in the world" (CSIROscope).

Animal habitat over an area of 13 square kilometers will be destroyed. The EES technical studies have not comprehensively surveyed the area.

How can we know what the impact on the local fauna will be?

If the Mitchell river becomes contaminated, the flow on effect to the ecology of the Gippsland Lakes (which include RAMSAR listed wetlands) could be catastrophic.

Contamination will be caused by leaching from the tailings dam and planned releases during flood events. Both of these occurrences are documented in the EES.

The mine requires 3 billion litres of water annually to operate which will be redirected from surface water, groundwater from the Latrobe aquifer and a borefield to be established. This withdrawal of water from the environment has to have an impact on the fragile ecology which may not be recognized for years.

The EES proposes land restoration as a mitigation for the devastation it will cause.

"Mine Closure and rehabilitation is controversial in Australia. It is estimated the country has over 60,000 abandoned mines that remain hazards, with only a handful having been reclaimed." (Mine Australia – digital article March 2020)

I believe the risk of inadequate land restoration practices is too high.

The mine site is located on an area of identified Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity, and contains artifacts and a scarred tree.

According to the EES the preliminary predictive model has several limitations. The EES states it has incomplete knowledge of the "cultural,

emotional and spiritual attachments that Gunaikurnai Traditional Owners may have to the activity area.”

There appears to be very limited information available.

What a disaster to destroy the area just because we weren't aware of how important it was.

Just because there are no registered places or objects of historic significance within the activity area is not evidence of non existence. The first people of this area were infected with deadly

disease, slaughtered and displaced, and the current generation is still dealing with the horrific multigenerational effects of the trauma.

Is it ethical to destroy potential areas of cultural significance that may contribute to their healing?

The vegetable industry is only 500meters downwind from the mine. Heavy metals and radioactive materials could contaminate any dust from the mine. The local water supply is 3.5kms downwind from the mine so also will be impacted by dust from the mine.

The lure of 200 jobs is miniscule in comparison to the amount of jobs that would be created by increases in tourism to our environmentally rich and diverse country, and ongoing sophistication and diversification of the vegetable market.

All in all, a mine can only destroy an area.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Bull