

# Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory  
Committee - EES

# 417

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

**Full Name:** Jacinta Richardson

**Organisation:**

**Affected property:**

**Attachment 1:** Jacinta\_Richardso

**Attachment 2:**

**Attachment 3:**

**Comments:** see attached submission

Dear Inquiry and Advisory Committee Members

I am writing this submission about the Environmental Effect Statement (EES) for the Fingerboards mineral sands mine project.

My family and I are Lindenow residents and we strongly object to the proposed location of the mine. The identified and potential impacts on the local environment are extensive, irreversible and unacceptable.

Despite being described as modified and degraded (p.7 EES), the proposed mine location supports significant ecological values. Many of these will be directly impacted by the development and others placed at significant threat.

Eleven ecological vegetation classes (EVCs) occur across the proposed area and every one is classified as endangered, vulnerable or depleted (p. 7 EES). Even with the implementation of mitigation measures, the mine will result in the loss of 14.54 hectares of Forest Red Gum Grassy Woodland of which there is less than 650 hectares left anywhere in the world. The project locality also contains the full extent of endangered Plains Grassy Woodland within the East Gippsland Lowlands Bioregion. The project requires removal of more than a third of it, along with over 70% of the vulnerable Valley Grassy Forest occurring within the locality. The nationally listed critically endangered Gippsland Red Gum Grassy Woodland will be heavily impacted by the project with 'little capacity for the community to absorb losses and recover from impacts' (p.84 EES). Once these vegetation communities are gone there is no getting them back. We owe it to future generations to preserve the remnants that remain.

The proposed mine location sits within 500m of the heritage-listed Mitchell River and the Gippsland Lakes Ramsar wetland which supports tens of thousands of waterbirds and is of international importance. Altered water regimes in the rivers flowing into the wetlands (of which the Mitchell River is a major one) are considered a major threat to the Gippsland Lakes wetland. The mine will require 3 billion litres of water annually to be diverted from the Mitchell River, for up to 15 years. It seems doubtful that the impact of removing such a large volume of water will be insignificant, as predicted by the ESS (p.97).

Redcourt Lane, one of Victoria's sites of biological significance (biosites) occurs within the project area. A further 4 sites of state significance and 7 national sites of significance occur within 5 km of the site (p.79 EES). The mine site also occurs within 5km of what has been the only known breeding population of Giant Burrowing Frog (*Heleioporous australiacus*) in Victoria for the past 20 years. The EES acknowledges that 'the mine is likely to have an impact at a Project locality level (i.e. within 10 kms of the study area)' (p.91 EES), so all of these important sites are likely to be affected by mining activities.

Unacceptably, the project will also require the removal of over 800 trees: 373 large trees and 461 scattered trees (p.9 EES). Most of these trees are in excess of 100 years old (p.54 EES) and 135 of them have a diameter of 1 metre or more. Trees of this age and size are rare and provide wildlife habitat that is irreplaceable. It often takes 100+ years for trees to develop the hollows that so many species rely on. Scattered trees in particular are crucial in modified landscapes such as that of the proposed mine site. They provide critical 'stepping stones' between vegetated areas, support large numbers of wildlife (including the threatened Yellow-bellied Sheathtail Bat which has been detected

at the mine site) and are so valuable to ecosystems they are considered 'keystone' structures, with positive ecological effects disproportionate to the small area they occupy. Offsets will not prevent the loss of these critical structures in our local environment or the animals that will die as a result of their removal.

These are only some of the unique natural values of our local area that will be either directly impacted or threatened by the Fingerboards mining project. Individually these values are too important to risk. Collectively, allowing their loss would be nothing short of irresponsible.

I respectfully request that the proposed Fingerboards mineral sands mine project be rejected due to unacceptable levels of environmental damage and risk.

With thanks

Jacinta Richardson