

# Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory  
Committee - EES

# 739

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**Request to be heard?:** Yes

**Full Name:** Gregory Malcolm Mace

**Organisation:**

**Affected property:** [REDACTED] East Bairnsdale Vic 3875

**Attachment 1:** Document\_2.pdf

**Attachment 2:**

**Attachment 3:**

**Comments:** Submission uploaded see attachments Document 2 pdf

## Working on Tables

To the Inquiry and Advisory Committee Members

I am forwarding this submission about the E.E.S. for the proposed Fingerboards Mineral Sands Mine Project, which I strenuously oppose on a multitude of levels. In particular, I will be forwarding video and photographic evidence of the degraded state of the waters in the Gippsland Lakes. I have been visiting the Gippsland Lakes for over 50 years and have been a resident of Bairnsdale for the last 20 years.

Over this period as a visitor and resident I have enjoyed the Lakes and surrounds in a recreation and employment capacity. Alarm is probably too soft a term to describe the feeling I have experienced over the rapid decline in water quality of the Lakes. The use and misuse of one of the largest lake systems in the world has accelerated the degradation of water, land and habitat. At the present time we may have the opportunity to reverse some of this damage. With care and diligence, salinity, habitat restoration and water quality issues may be mitigated. Fresh water flow into the Gippsland Lakes system is paramount for the continued health of the system and has a flow on effect right across the board, recreational, industrial, agricultural and residential.

Kalbar, the proponents of the Fingerboard's project, initially estimated they would require 5 gigalitres of fresh water, now reduced to 3 gigalitres, to safely operate the mine. Even this volume of water (equivalent to the total usage of water by industry, agriculture and public use for domestic households) would put a great stress on an already stressed ecosystem. As yet, Kalbar still has not identified with clarity exactly where they will source this volume of fresh water from. The main source still seems to be the Mitchell River during "high flow periods". On this point alone, the E.E.S. document fails to address one major, critical point. That point is that it may only be possible to harvest the 3 gigalitre volume required once in a three to five year period. My question still remains the same. Will Kalbar be able to operate safely if they cannot access a sufficient supply of clean fresh water, albeit at the expense of the Lakes system, residents of Gippsland, industry and agriculture, how can they possibly have a storage large enough to safely operate?

I will be concentrating my presentation on water primarily as "Water is Life" and without a reliable source and supply of fresh water I and many others see a bleak future for the East Gippsland Region. To allow one entity, "Kalbar" to consume an equivalent amount of such a precious life-sustaining resource is beyond the realms of decency in a modern "democratic" country such as Australia.

As a shortlist for my presentation, these subjects will be addressed and evidence will be available at the hearing.

- Health of the Gippsland Lakes System – past and present – and indeed the future with projections and modelling of a 3 gigalitre withdrawal of inflow.
- Evidence of wildlife/habitat degradation due to salinity and blue green algae blooms over the last 5 years, as proven in the Murray Darling mismanagement disaster of 2019.
- E.P.A. guidelines to discharge rates allowed into the Lakes System during "certain weather events"
- Socio-economic statistics comparing the use of 3 gigalitres of water by Kalbar to alternative renewable, environmentally sustainable projects.
- Tourism statistics concerning the use of the Gippsland Lakes and surrounds should Kalbar's mine impact the system temporarily or only for 20 years.

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- Health issues that may be experienced due to the presence of the mine in regards to overuse of our precious freshwater resource. Inclusive is the right to clean potable water of a sustainable nature.

Gippsland is blessed with the Mitchell River which supplies the major urban areas in East Gippsland. Also, it must be noted that rainwater tanks and the Glenaladale water storage facility are in the immediate, possible dust-affected zone of the Kalbar project. Contaminated water equals sickness in the population, both town and country.

Thank you for the opportunity to tender my submission in brief. Hoping to be able to speak to these points with further evidence to substantiate my objection to the establishment of an open-cut mine at the Fingerboards.

Regards

Gregory Mace