

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

671

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

Full Name: Ryan Jaffe

Organisation: Pack Raft Australia

Affected property:

Attachment 1: PackRaftAustralia

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: see attached submission



29th Oct, 2020

Dear Committee Members,

Pack Raft Australia opposes the approval of the Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project due to direct economic, environmental, cultural heritage and food security impacts.

Pack Raft Australia operates a nationally recognised outdoor recreation business, supplying durable goods in the growing Outdoor Recreation sector. Our business specifically caters to customers in the growing paddle sports and backcountry camping sector. Our business operations have a national reach, supplying equipment sales and rentals, with a head office in North Melbourne, Victoria. Our business has experienced an economic growth rate of between 30-40% per annum/year on year since starting operations in 2014, with the paddle sports sector growing in popularity both here in Victoria and throughout Australia as a recreational pursuit.

The Mitchell River and the Mitchell River National park region are one of the most popular wilderness paddle trips available in the state of Victoria. The Mitchell River is Victoria's largest remaining wild and free flowing river system and sees both private and commercial tour paddling trips year-round. The most popular section of river begins near Dargo, passing through the Mitchell River National park and on into to the Gippsland Lakes area. The proposed mine site encroaching within 500m from the banks of the Mitchell River will have direct impacts on paddlers passing through this region with both visual impacts from the open cut mine, potential atmospheric exposure to irradiated dust from the mine, audible noise from mine operations, general disturbance from the mine and potential water pollution to the river system. Further, we believe the scale, increased heavy vehicle traffic and proximity of the proposed Fingerboards Mineral Sands project to the Mitchell River National Park, will directly impact the perception of the area as a key wilderness region in Victoria, for mixed recreational use. The proposed 3 billion litre water requirement for mine operations, may also have impacts of decreased river flow, which would directly impact the use of the upstream Mitchell River for a paddle sports location. These factors will directly impact our business operations.

In addition to the recreational uses of the Mitchell River, the region has significant importance for the Gunaikurni Nation, specifically the Brabawooloong Brayakuloong people, for cultural significance and heritage value. The proximity of the proposed large scale open cut mine will have lasting impacts on these places of significance.

Pack Raft Australia also believes the location of the mine site, upstream of the vast agricultural operations of the Mitchell River Plains growing areas encompassing Woodglen, Walpa and Lindenow may pose a direct threat to food security for the greater Melbourne area, which is supplied with approximately 30-40% of fresh vegetable produce from the region. Given the Fingerboard Mineral Sands geochemistry report have identified multiple radioactive and cancer-causing substances contained within the proposed mine site, there has high potential of toxic contamination to the area from atmospheric dust and/or water quality contamination. In years of low rainfall, issues may also arise in respect of water resourcing and allocation for irrigation. We understand the regions agricultural sector contributes significantly to employment at levels 10 x that of the proposed mine over the 15-20yr life of the project.

For the reasons outlined above, Pack Raft Australia opposes the approval of the Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project as proposed.

Sincerely

Ryan Jaffe
Director
Pack Raft Australia