

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory
Committee - EES

753

Request to be heard?: No

Full Name: Vienna Anne Roberts

Organisation:

Affected property:

Attachment 1: V_EES_Submission

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: See attached submission

Dear Enquiry and Advisory Committee members,

I am writing this submission about the EES for the Fingerboards mineral sands mine project as I think the mine is going to be in a highly inappropriate location due to the risks to our natural environment. The potential environmental and ecological impact on our area is too great to outweigh the possible benefits. Some of my major concerns include the risk to the vegetable growing area, competing water usage, and potential for toxins to affect the Mitchell River and the Gippsland Lakes.

I am fourteen years old, I have lived here all my life and I love living in East Gippsland because of the beautiful environments we have at our doorstep. I live 60kms from the proposed mine site and go to school under 30km from the mine. I love going for walks along the river, kayaking on the Gippsland Lakes, 4WD driving into the National Parks to have picnics with my family. The Den of Nargun is one of my favourite spots that could be affected. I have attended council meetings with my mum and attended a peaceful protest on the steps of Parliament House last year with my little brother and my dad as we are concerned that our environment could be ruined if this mine is allowed to go ahead.

The vegetable growing and agriculture areas that surround the proposed mine site, only 500 metres away, are important in the food security of our state and provide lots of people with jobs. The vegetable growing industry alone is worth \$150 million dollars per year and employs up to 2,000 people. There are more jobs available to local people through this industry than the mine will ever provide local people. If we allocated the huge amount of water that the mine will take from our local water sources to the vegetable growers instead we would see an increase in jobs, up to 3 times more jobs, within that existing industry and the direct economic benefits to our region would also increase.

The toxic dust spreading over the vegetable growing areas is unavoidable and this will affect the photosynthesis of plants and the health of the rich fertile soil will be impacted long after the mine stops operating. The clean green image of the industry will be affected for much longer. The construction of the mine will also result in the destruction and loss of viable agricultural land.

The toxic dust and the seepage or overflow of the tailings dam full of chemicals and toxic minerals will get in to the underground water and the nearby creeks, Mitchell and Perry Rivers and eventually run into the Gippsland Lakes. There is no guarantee against this happening and the water quality will affect the aquatic ecosystems, inhabitants and the animals that rely on that water to survive. I don't think the EES is telling the full story and the assessments have been limited to provide a better indication to benefit the stance of Kalbar.

I worry about all the animals that will die if this mine is approved. The Kalbar proposal includes the removal of 400 mature trees that provide both shade and habitat for many animals. A lot of other vegetation that animals feed off will be removed too. For over 150 years local farming families have preserved large areas of native habitat. Kalbar will destroy many ancient trees that are older than my grandparents and no replacement planting can make up for that kind of loss to our environment. Some of the areas that are earmarked for destruction adjoin bushland that forms native wildlife corridors that connect to the Providence Ponds Nature Reserve which is one of only three areas in Victoria that is home to the New Holland Mouse. The EES has not included adequate surveys to determine what species will be affected.

There have been 42 rare or threatened terrestrial fauna species, 11 native and 2 exotic fish species, not to mention turtles and the platypus that have been recorded in the areas that will be affected. They could die due to loss of habitat, food sources and contamination of waters. We should be acting to protect rare and endangered species not contributing to their extinction.

I worry about the health of the people in the community. With all the toxic dust floating around, how will the people with asthma be affected? Being on a plateau the mine area will experience a lot of wind that will carry the dust, containing radioactive materials and at least four known carcinogens, many kilometres and affect everyone in its path. Can you guarantee there won't be a massive increase in cases of cancer? The dust will not just affect people's health due to being airborne but will also get in to peoples water tanks after settling on collection surfaces and be consumed through drinking water. The hundreds of people living within 5kms of the site would rely solely on tank water.

I don't want this mine to go ahead, the effects on the water quantity/quality and the loss of habitat and animals will be evident well into my adulthood. I would like to see the environment protected so that my kids can enjoy a similar childhood to me within this unique, naturally magic area.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission.

Vienna Anne Roberts.