

Media Release

The Hon Richard Wynne MP
Minister for Planning
Minister for Housing
Minister for Child Protection



Wednesday, 24 November 2021

DECISION PROTECTS EAST GIPPSLAND'S PRECIOUS ENVIRONMENT

The Fingerboards Mineral Sands Mine near Bairnsdale will not proceed with the Minister for Planning concluding the project would have unacceptable risks to the environment.

Minister for Planning Richard Wynne accepted the independent advisory committee recommendation that found the project would significantly impact local wildlife, vegetation, air quality, agriculture and horticulture.

The assessment also concluded the project would have posed significant risks to surface water downstream of the proposed mine.

The Minister required Kalbar Operations Pty Ltd to prepare an environment effects statement for the proposed mineral sand mine project – located 20 kilometres northwest of Bairnsdale. Kalbar had proposed extracting approximately 170 million tonnes of ore over a projected mine life of 20 years.

An independent inquiry and advisory committee reviewed the environment effects statement and held public hearings from May to July 2021.

The committee concluded the environmental effects of the project could not be managed to an acceptable level and the project should not proceed in its current form. The Minister for Planning's assessment supports this conclusion.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Planning Richard Wynne

"We owe it to the community and the environment to get this right and ensure only projects that adequately protect our environment go ahead."

"I have accepted the committee's recommendation not to proceed with planning permissions for this project. The committee's review of the environment effects statement found this project would pose a significant risk to the environment and valuable horticulture industry."

Quotes attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Harriet Shing

"This decision is based on a thorough and considered EES assessment and Independent Advisory Committee process - it's an outcome that recognises the concerns raised by the community and primary producers, including on the environmental and economic impacts of the project, and the importance of East Gippsland's horticulture and tourism industries."

Quotes attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Jane Garrett

"This is great news for the East Gippsland community who have actively participated in the EES process and had their voices heard. These processes are an important step in the planning process that ensure the benefits and risks are properly considered in the decision making process."