



GLaWAC Interim Position Statement April 2019

Kalbar Resources Ltd - Fingerboard Mining proposal.

Introduction

The Board and Executive of Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation have been aware of the possibility of mining on private land in the area west of Lindenow for several years. We are aware that some of the proposal may involve public land that the Gunaikurnai have Native Title rights over. A previous GLaWAC Board approved an exploration licence under the provisions of the Native Title Act several years ago. This approval didn't and was never intended to provide a position statement from GLaWAC or the Gunaikurnai on its policy view regarding the proposed mining. An exploration licence is one step along a long road of approvals process and should not be construed as GLaWAC approving mining.

The proposal from Kalbar Resources in relation to the Fingerboards Mine was moved to a more formal approval process, following Government direction. This occurred leading up to and during the period of Special Administration of GLaWAC in 2016

GLaWAC is not represented on the Technical Reference group who will make recommendations to Government under the Environmental Impact Statement process. Therefore, GLaWAC is now ensuring our position is well understood.

The new GLaWAC Board and Executive have since mid-2018 ensured they are fully aware of the process and the information being communicated by Kalbar Resources and its contractors.

GLaWAC has recently supported a community fact gathering exercise supported by GEGAC and Kalbar Resources. All information gathered during this session is available on our web page <https://gunaikurnai.org/fingerboards-mine-proposal-details-available-here/>

From this information, community feedback and from direction provided in our Whole of Country Plan, please note GLaWAC's interim position statement on the Fingerboards Mine proposal below.

Interim Position Statement

GLaWAC respects the right of any development proponent to progress ideas related to developing land for economic development.

GLaWAC is opposed to any development that conflicts with the principles of our Whole of Country Plan and Elders' advice.

Gunaikurnai Country has long been altered and modified to suit the colonisation process and while we acknowledge the world has moved on, we believe it is time for us to assert more vigorously the rights of the Traditional Owners and their families and friends.

The rights and views of the Traditional Owners of Gunaikurnai country must be respected and understood. Aboriginal people are part of their country and they have a deep spiritual connection and responsibility to care for country.

The proposed mining operation will disturb and hurt the cultural connection of the Traditional Owners to the land, air and water that is part of the development area.

Any government decision regarding the site must not disrespect or undermine this connection.

GLaWAC will remain at the table and insist on direct, ongoing and meaningful government and proponent consultation. Whilst the Native Title Act provides limited procedural rights in respect of future acts on Gunaikurnai country, we reserve our rights on behalf of the Gunaikurnai community to object to the Fingerboards Mine proposal and be included in any negotiations that take place as a result of subsequent government decisions.

Whole Country Principles that GLaWAC upholds and uses for its decision-making:

Look at what was there before

When we are healing and restoring degraded landscapes, we should try to put back the plants and animals that used to be there.

Sustainable use

Our approach to managing Country is to balance resource use with conservation – they are all part of the same.

Take only what you need – leave some for others.

Seek collective benefits

*We use our resources for the benefit of our mob
rather than seek individual gain.*

We have the right to be on our Country

*Traditional Owners should not be restricted in
accessing our traditional Country. At the same time,
we should have the right to restrict access to others
who disrespect and damage our sensitive areas.*

Our traditional knowledge is valuable

*Our traditional practices and approaches sustained
the land for thousands of years. Our Country should
be managed in harmony with our traditional ways.*

*We need to take the time to understand what
natural and cultural heritage exists out on Country.
It can't be managed properly if we don't know what
is there.*

We have cultural obligations

*It is our inherent responsibility to look after Country
– to heal the damage of the past and protect it for
future generations.*

Everything is connected

*All of our Country is linked. There is no separation
between our landscapes, waterways, coasts and
oceans, and natural and cultural resources. All are
linked and bound to our people, law and custom.*

Every bit matters

We understand the need to prioritise limited resources to where important values are under threat, but every part of our Country remains important to us.

Our values exist even when you can't see them – whether they are under water, deep inside caves, covered with vegetation, they are still important to us.

Don't wait until it has gone

When you lose a site, it's gone forever. We need to act now to prevent any further loss of environmental or cultural values.