Gippsland Critical Minerals

EES Community Consultation Plan (EES CCP)

Final - Version 2

October 2026

Learn more on our website –
gippslandcriticalminerals.com

Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners

We acknowledge the Gunaikurnai People as the Traditional Custodians of Country that encompasses the proposed Fingerboards Project area. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and recognise their enduring connection to the land, waters, culture, and community. We are committed to working in partnership with First Nations people.

Quality Information

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4	13-August-26	Revised draft	Michelle Wood, CEO
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Abbreviations

Abbreviation / Term	Definition
CCP	Community Consultation Plan
CMA	Catchment Management Authority
CRG	Community Reference Group
DCCEEW	Department Of Climate Change, Energy, The Environment and Water (Commonwealth Department)
DEECA	Department Of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
DJSIR	Department Of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
DTP	Department Of Transport and Planning
EE Act	*Environment Effects Act 1978*
EES	Environment Effects Statement
EPBC Act	*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
EPA	Environment Protection Authority
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
GCM	Gippsland Critical Minerals Pty Ltd
GLaWAC	Gunaikurnai Land & Waters Aboriginal Corporation
HMC	Heavy Mineral Concentrate
IAP2	International Association for Public Participation 2
IAU	Impact Assessment Unit
NGO's	Non-governmental organization
PBC	Prescribed Body Corporate
PSA	Planning Scheme Amendment
RV	Resources Victoria
RL	Retention Licence

Definitions

Stakeholder

Any individual, group or organisation that may impact or be impacted by the Fingerboards Project. Stakeholders include Traditional Owners, First Nations not-for-profit/NGOs, directly impacted landholders and near neighbours of the project, agriculture and horticulture industry groups, local community and community interest groups, local business and industry, government and regulatory bodies, education, training and research organisations and media. This definition aligns with the principles of IAP2, recognising that stakeholders may have different levels of interest, influence, impact or involvement.

Community

Community is a subset of stakeholders, including: Traditional Owners, First Nations not-for-profit/NGOs, directly impacted landholders and near neighbours of the project, local agriculture and horticulture industry groups, local community and community interest groups, local business and industry.

Gippsland
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About this Plan

This Community Consultation Plan (CCP) guides GCM's approach through the Environment Effects Statement (EES).

The EES CCP has been developed in three parts.

Part 1: Introduction and Background

Introduces the project and Gippsland Critical Minerals; summarises community consultation and engagement to date and how it has re-shaped the project; explains the impact assessment pathways; and outlines the project timeline.

Part 2: Stakeholders and Community

Identifies key project stakeholders; defines GCM Engagement Principles, defines the relevant level of engagement for each stakeholder group based on the IAP2 Spectrum; outlines key issues raised to date; and explains how feedback has shaped engagement approaches and informed the development of the EES CCP.

Part 3: EES Community Consultation Plan (EES CCP)

Defines the community consultation activities to inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower communities through the EES and on specific technical studies. This describes the methods, processes and tools to record, monitor and report all elements of the EES CCP implementation and community feedback.

Contact us

Community feedback is invited:

Project email address:	**contactus@gippslandcriticalminerals.com**
Project phone number:	**1800 791 396**
Project website:	**gippslandcriticalminerals.com**
Social Media:	**Connect via LinkedIn and Facebook**
ChatBot:	**Available from the GCM website to provide real-time responses to FAQs**
GCM Office:	**50 Forge Creek Rd, Bairnsdale, VIC, 3875**
GCM Virtual Project Office:	**Available on the GCM website with the latest project information**

The Impact Assessment Unit, Department of Transport and Planning can be contacted for queries related to the EE Act as the relevant legislation for this EES Community Consultation Plan.

Impact Assessment Unit is available to answer EE Act queries:

Phone:	**(03) 8572 7980**
Email:	**environment.assessment@transport.vic.gov.au**

Wrangler
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Build

1.0

Introduction & Background

A note from our CEO

The conditional renewal of Retention Licences RL2023 and RL2026 gave Gippsland Critical Minerals the opportunity to reset, re-design, and re-engage to create a better Fingerboards Critical Minerals Project. We have gone back to the drawing board to rescope the project and present a better project for East Gippsland. We have done this by genuinely engaging with supporters, opponents, those who have never heard of the project before, some with deep technical and agricultural knowledge for us to learn from and some people who want to work with us, partner with us and better understand how their business, family, farm or town can benefit from the project. It has been a valuable experience.

We have taken the time to understand concerns, gather local knowledge, and test our early assumptions. This work has included reviewing submissions, refining our mine design, progressing baseline environmental studies, and working with technical specialists to address issues raised through the previous process.

We have received encouraging feedback which has been reflected in the community sentiment toward the project based on qualitative and quantitative research undertaken for GCM.

As we now prepare for the next phase in our environmental approvals process, we are focused on ensuring that the studies we undertake are robust and the results shared transparently.

We know that trust must be earned through openness, consistency and respect. Our commitment is to keep sharing information, listening carefully, and ensuring that the community's perspectives are embedded into both our studies and our decision-making.

This is the next chapter in a long process, and the community's voice remains central to shaping an approvable and sustainable project that delivers enduring benefits for East Gippsland, Victoria, and Australia's critical minerals future.

Michelle Wood
Chief Executive Officer

1.1 About the Fingerboards Project

Australia holds some of the world's most significant critical mineral resources, which are essential to renewable energy, transport electrification, advanced manufacturing, defence, communications and emerging technologies.

The Australian and Victorian Governments have identified the development of secure and responsibly produced critical mineral supply chains as an economic and strategic priority, reducing reliance on overseas supply while delivering benefits to regional communities.

The Fingerboards Project is located on Gunaikurnai Land in East Gippsland, approximately 270 kilometres east of Melbourne. The Fingerboards deposit contains rare earth elements including neodymium, praseodymium, dysprosium and terbium, as well as zircon and titanium minerals.

GCM proposes to extract approximately 170 million tonnes of ore and produce approximately 8 million tonnes of heavy mineral concentrate over the life of the project. Once operational, the project is expected to produce around 280,000 tonnes of heavy mineral concentrate each year, containing approximately:

– 14,000 tonnes of rare earth minerals, including around 200 tonnes of dysprosium and terbium oxides and 1,800 tonnes of neodymium and praseodymium oxides

– 75,000 tonnes of zircon

– 150,000 tonnes of titanium minerals, including ilmenite, leucoxene and rutile.

These minerals are used in high-performance magnets, electric vehicles, wind turbines, electronics, ceramics, pigments, titanium metal, medical technology, defence systems and advanced manufacturing.

The Fingerboards Project is identified in the Victorian Critical Minerals Roadmap because of its potential to strengthen sovereign access to strategically important minerals.

If operating today, the project is estimated to contribute approximately 7.2 per cent of global zircon supply and 7.1 per cent of global dysprosium and terbium supply (Adamas Intelligence, 2025).

Consistent with government policy, the project is being developed with a focus on responsible production, environmental assessment, engagement with Traditional Owners and local communities, and ensuring that economic and employment benefits are retained in East Gippsland.

How feedback has shaped the Project

> ***Gippsland Critical Minerals (GCM) has substantially rescoped and redesigned the Fingerboards Project since the original proposal put forward in 2021.***
>
> ***The Project which has operated under renewed Retention Licences RL2023 and RL2026 since 2024 - entered an Environment Effects Statement (EES) assessment pathway that recognises a fundamentally new design, warranting new assessment in February 2026.***

Engagement undertaken during the 2021 EES did not meet community expectations. GCM recognised the need for a substantially different approach that moved beyond simply 'informing' to 'consulting' and 'collaborating' with community on the fundamental design, as well as the potential benefits.

Acknowledging the particular interests of the agriculture and horticulture stakeholder group, GCM appointed a specialist consultancy to undertake targeted, one-on-one consultation in 2026. The sessions were promoted through local newspaper advertising and direct invitations and included a deliberately broad cross-section of local farmers and agribusinesses, including those who have historically opposed, supported, or shifted toward cautious support of the project.

GCM's broader engagement program has been supported by regular, high-visibility community communications, including quarterly newsletters, fact sheets, flyers, letterbox drops, advertising, social media updates, and local media releases and interviews.

These inputs shaped the significant improvements outlined in Table 1 – Design Changes Driven by Feedback below.

Table 1 – Design Changes Driven by Feedback

What changed	Old project	NEW PROJECT	WHY IT MATTERS
Rate of mining	1,500 tonnes per hour	900 tonnes per hour (40% reduction)	Less dust and noise generation at any one location and time
Product storage	Open-air stockpiles	Enclosed storage sheds	Lower risk of wind-blown dust
Tailings management	Tailings centrifuged and stored in above-ground dams	Tailings stored below ground (in-pit cells) with no centrifuges	No dams mean no dam break risk. No centrifuge means less noise and vibration.
Water use and sources	5GL per year, majority sourced from the Mitchell River	3GL per year, diversified sourcing strategy including recycled water	Less pressure on any one water source
Proximity to Lindenow Valley Horticultural Area	600 metres	1.5 kilometres	Greater buffer protects crops from dust
Gullies	Mining or tailing storage in three major gullies	No mining in major gullies, no tailings storage in any gullies	Stronger protection for sensitive vegetation, wildlife and waterways
Mining footprint	1,297 hectares	955 hectares	Smaller pit means less impact on sensitive areas
Rehabilitation trials	No trials	Planned demonstration pit, early 2026	Proof of soils and water management and species establishment
Trucks on public roads	B-double trucks on public roads past local communities	GCM-owned private haul road and rail-first strategy	Fewer trucks on local roads
Road relocations	7.6km of road relocations	One 1.5 kilometre road relocation	Less disruption to local roads and mature trees along them
Fingerboards intersection	Removed and relocated	Preserved	A local landmark with cultural and historical value is protected
Processing location	No commitment to Australia; preference for China	Commitment to onshore processing	Boosts Australia's sovereign critical minerals supply chains
Post-mine land use	Combination of Grassy Woodland native vegetation, and agricultural land	Land returned to productive agricultural use	Restores the land for future farming

Engagement activities following Retention Licence renewal

Objectives

Following renewal of the Retention Licence (RL2026) in October 2024, GCM commenced a comprehensive program of community engagement activity with the initial objective to:

- Inform stakeholders of the changes to the Project to address the issues from the 2021 EES, and
- Invite stakeholders to provide feedback on issues and concerns to GCM on any aspect of the Project.

Expanded engagement activities

Community engagement activities expanded across East Gippsland and Wellington Shires, to include a mix of drop-in sessions, high-traffic visits, targeted briefings, and one-on-one engagement with key community stakeholders, including landowners, farming groups and Traditional Owner groups.

A comprehensive range of engagement materials has been made publicly available on the Project website including webinar recordings and transcripts, presentation materials, reports, plans, studies, fact sheets, and Community Reference Group (CRG) materials.

Community Reference Group

The CRG has provided a dedicated forum for detailed project briefings, while also giving members the opportunity to ask questions, raise issues, share information with their broader communities, and help shape key aspects of the Project as it progresses. The performance of the CRG against its Terms of Reference has been tracked in a CRG Report Card Dashboard. The Dashboard shows the relationship is functioning well with 122 matters raised since inception, 51 closed, 44 in progress, and 27 noted or open. The leading themes by volume are engagement/communications, environment/technical, and general/governance.

As of May 2026, seven Community Reference Group (CRG) meetings had been held, bringing together a diverse cross-section of community members to support open, informed and constructive dialogue about the Project.

Sentiment analysis

In 2023, sentiment analysis and surveys were undertaken by a third party to establish a baseline for community sentiment about the Project, and to guide GCM's approach to engaging with and communicating with the community and key stakeholders.

By late 2025, community opposition to the project has declined from 35 per cent in 2021 to 28 per cent (RedBridge). Support has stabilised at 44 per cent. Critically, 27 per cent of surveyed residents strongly support the project, compared with only 12 per cent who strongly oppose it. GCM's community trust rating (45 per cent) is effectively on par with that of the principal organised opposition group (47 per cent).

This shift reflects the focus on identifying the interests and concerns of key stakeholder groups and seeking to reach out early to understand concerns and make project design changes in response.

Key engagements:

From the granting of its Retention License (RL) extension in October 2024 through to 30 June 2026, GCM has engaged with hundreds of community members, stakeholders, Traditional Owners and organisations:

CRG MEETINGS

x 7

16-member CRG with quarterly meetings (seven to date)

DIRECT INTERACTIONS

2,500+

meetings, calls, emails, site visits and drop-in sessions

ATTENDEES

280+

public forums, webinars, industry briefings and events

COMMUNICATION

20K+

households reached via mailbox drops, newsletters and flyers

Since RL renewal, GCM logged the following number of interactions. All these activities have informed the development of the EES CCP and will continue through the EES and approval processes.

WEBSITE

23,086

total website visits

CHATBOT

4,094

number of messages from 465 individuals

INTERACTIONS

1,512

Briefings, meetings, events, workshops

SITE VISITS

86

number of visits to site

MINING & REHABILITATION DEMONSTRATION PIT (MRDP)

Between 15 May and 31 July 2026, GCM hosted

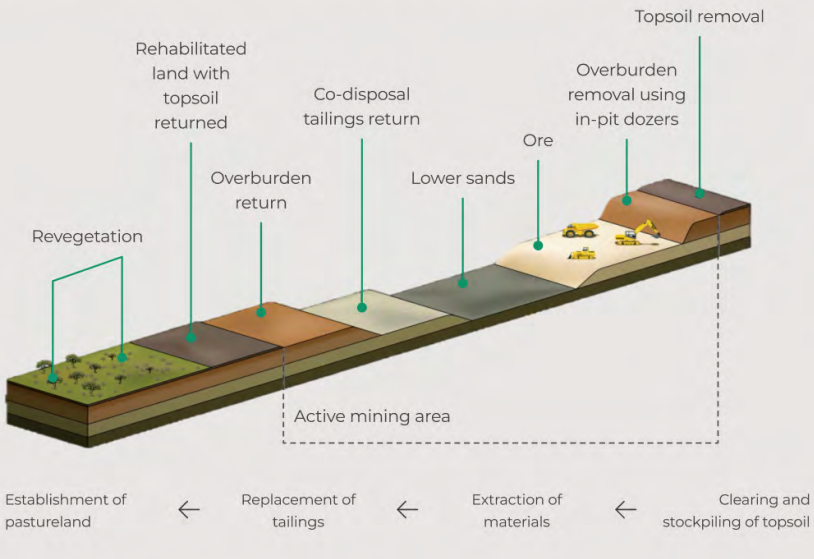
200+ visitors across 27 visits

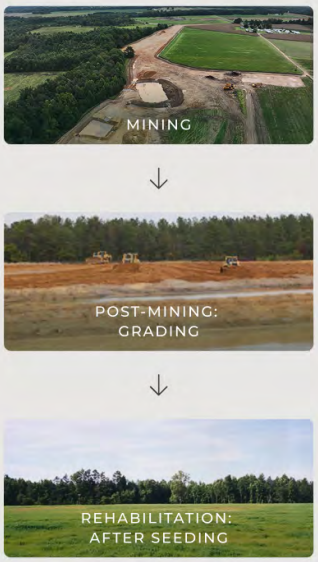
Our approach to mining

Rehabilitation occurs progressively with open mining areas generally filled within 12 months. As mining advances, rehabilitated areas are returned to agricultural land or plantations. Our revised approach has been developed through ongoing conversations with local farmers, agronomists and agriculture experts. A Mining and Rehabilitation Demonstration Pit (MRDP) has been constructed to test and validate our proposed approach to rehabilitation in local conditions.

Mining in panels with continuous rehabilitation

We return unused sands to the site, backfilling and rehabilitating the land as we go





Sources: Gippsland Critical Minerals, Iluka, Atlantic Strategic Minerals

Our native seed production facility supports native vegetation restoration by propagating locally sourced species to restore biodiversity and ensure long-term ecological resilience.

Fingerboards uses a water-based process to minimise environmental impact and enable rapid land rehabilitation.

Process innovations

Once ore is extracted, our mobile plant loads it into the mobile mining units, where water is added to the ore to form a slurry that's pumped to the separation plant through pipelines. This wet process significantly reduces dust. The majority of overburden is removed through the use of in-pit dozers rather than only on-surface trucks, further reducing noise and dust impacts.

Storage and transport minimising dust

The heavy mineral concentrate product is stored in a covered storage shed protected from wind, further reducing dust, before being transported on a private sealed road to the rail siding.

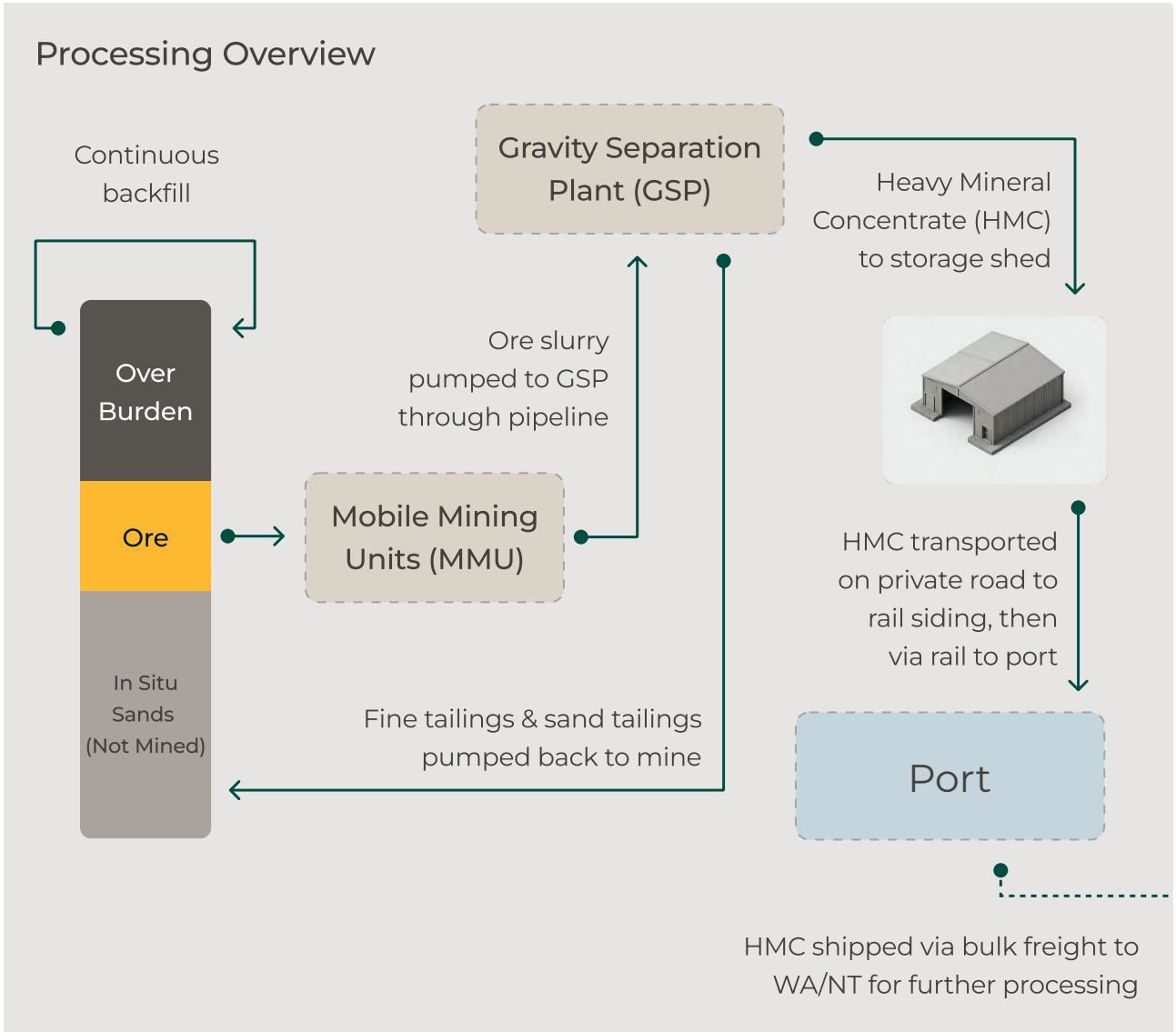


Figure 1 – Employment and Economic Benefits

Employment and Economic Benefits

LABOUR FORCE	LOCALISED FUNDING	STATE ROYALTIES	ECONOMIC BOOST
~300	$300m	$180m	$90m
Ongoing jobs	Development investment	Lifetime contribution	Annual contribution
From local communities, over the operations phase of the project. An additional 400 full-time equivalent roles are expected over 2-3 year construction period.	Project development investment with significant local economic flow-on effects.	Estimated royalty payments strengthening Victoria's capital foundations.	Annual contribution to Victoria's economy through operations, wages and supply chain.

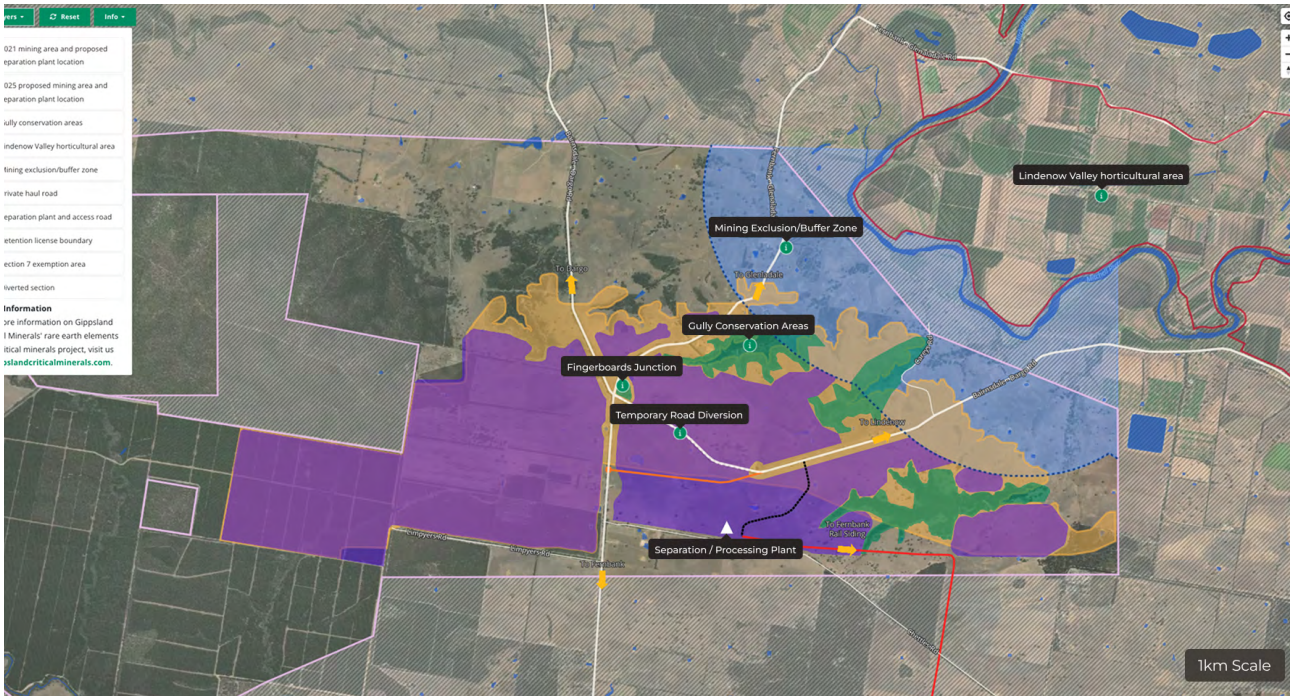
About Gippsland Critical Minerals

GCM is jointly owned by Australian-owned REZir Ltd and Appian Capital Advisory (Appian Capital), a leading global investor in critical minerals projects, with a track record of high-quality project delivery.

GCM is equally governed by both groups, with representatives from each sitting on the GCM Board and its Technical and Finance Committees.

GCM is led by a team of in-house professionals with extensive experience across the full lifecycle of resources and construction projects. This includes planning, social license and community engagement, benefit sharing, legal governance, environmental sustainability, design, construction, operation, rehabilitation and decommissioning, both in Australia and internationally. The team has proven expertise in the design, construction and operation of critical minerals mining projects, project governance, communications and community engagement.

New mining area map with proposed changes



* May be subject to change as the project develops.

1.2 Project Area Demographics and Community Priorities

Gunaikurnai People and Country

GCM acknowledges the Gunaikurnai People as the Traditional Owners of the Country that encompasses the proposed Fingerboards Project area. They have occupied and cared for Country and Waters for thousands of years. GLaWAC represents the Gunaikurnai people as the Prescribed Body Corporate holding Native Title rights on behalf of the Gunaikurnai.

The Gunaikurnai are recognised as Traditional Owners over approximately 1.33 million hectares in Gippsland, encompassing diverse ecosystems and significant cultural sites. Their territory extends from west Gippsland to the Snowy River and includes 200 metres of offshore sea territory. The area is rich in biodiversity, including significant wetlands and marine life. The region faces challenges due to environmental degradation and climate change.

The Gunaikurnai people consist of five clans. Historically, each clan had its own geographical territory and cultural responsibilities. This structure emphasises the unity and diversity within the Gunaikurnai community.

- **Brayakaulung:** Located around Sale, extending to Mounts Baw Baw and Howitt.
- **Brabralung:** Central Gippsland, south to Bairnsdale and Bruthen.
- **Krauatungalung:** Near the Snowy River, from Cape Everard to Lakes Entrance.
- **Bratauallung:** South Gippsland, from Cape Liptrap to Wilsons Promontory.
- **Tatungalung:** Coastal area near Lakes Entrance, including Ninety Mile Beach.

First Nations Communities with rights and interests in the proposed Fingerboards Project

The Gunaikurnai people, the Native Title holders, hold rights and interests related to the proposed Fingerboards Project. Other interested parties may include:

- All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Gippsland region.

The different communities are not mutually exclusive. A First Nations individual may be a member of more than one community and membership of some communities is not limited to those residing in Gippsland region.

Project area demographics and community priorities

GCM's engagement approach is informed by demographic data about the local community, which will continually be updated over the life of the Project.

Communications and consultation processes have been designed to cater to a range of audiences of diverse ages, cultural backgrounds, education levels and employment experiences.

Online and in-person engagement activities have been designed to ensure accessibility for all stakeholders. This includes the use of both online and print media, recognising the age range represented in the area, and that regional audiences do not always have consistent and reliable internet access.

The Fingerboards Project is in East Gippsland Shire, one of Victoria's largest and most diverse regional areas. The project site overlays the Fernbank, Glenaladale and Walpa localities of East Gippsland, in rural communities with deep agricultural roots and strong connections to the land.

The population of East Gippsland Shire is 49,179 (2023), with a median age of 52 years, and 39% aged over 60.

Lone-person households make up 29%, and couples without children account for 32.5%. The First Nations population is 3.5%, higher than the state average of 1%.

The region faces challenges like lower labour force participation (48.4%) and youth disengagement (11.7%). The SEIFA index ranks East Gippsland 63rd out of 80 Victorian LGAs for socioeconomic disadvantage.

The East Gippsland Shire's Community Vision 2040 outlines the community's vision and priorities for the future based on feedback from 2500 diverse community members and was developed with a panel of 21 local community members.

The community vision is: In 2040, our people, place, environment and economy will be inclusive, connected, sustainable and resilient for the growth and wellbeing of our unique and diverse communities.

The community's priorities for the future are:

- Our Communities will include, encourage, respect and value everyone
- Our Place will be accessible, safe, connected and healthy
- Our Environment will be managed and preserved for all generations
- Our Economy will be sustainable, innovative, and supportive of existing and emerging industries

There are opportunities for the Fingerboards Project to contribute significantly within each of these priorities.

1.3 Assessment Pathway

Mining and Rehabilitation Demonstration Pit (MRDP)

In December 2025, Resources Victoria announced it had approved an exploration work plan for GCM to undertake a Mining and Rehabilitation Demonstration Pit (MRDP) on a small section of land covered by RL2026.

This decision marked the culmination of an extensive assessment process that commenced in July 2025 and included consultation with other government agencies, including Environment Protection Authority (Victoria) and water authorities.

It also followed approval of a cultural heritage management plan for the trial site by a registered Cultural Heritage Advisor in conjunction with GLaWAC, as the relevant Registered Aboriginal Party.

The demonstration trial is underway and involves excavating, processing and refilling a purpose-built pit to replicate key elements of the proposed Project's operational cycle. Excavation, mineral separation and refilling take place over several months. Rehabilitation begins once refilling is complete, followed by monitoring over a number of years to assess land stability, soil performance and the return of the site to productive use.

The trial footprint occupies approximately 4 ha, with the demonstration pit comprising about 0.6 ha and measuring roughly 170 m long, 55 m wide and 21.6 m deep. The data generated informs the development of viable and effective rehabilitation options for the wider Fingerboards project.

New EES process

As required under a condition of Retention Licence RL2026, GCM referred the rescoped Fingerboards Critical Minerals Project for assessment under the Environment Effects Act 1978 (EE Act) and the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act). Both referrals were accepted on 8 January 2026.

In February 2026, the Victorian Minister for Planning determined that an Environment Effects Statement was required under section 8B(3)(a) of the EE Act.

The Minister's decision and statement of reasons, including the potential environmental effects to be assessed, are available on the Department of Transport and Planning website.

EPBC

On 15 May 2026, the Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water determined that the Fingerboards Critical Minerals Project was a controlled action under section 75 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act).

The project therefore requires further assessment before a decision can be made on approval under the EPBC Act. The decision, controlling provisions and reasons are available on the EPBC Act Public Portal. GCM's environmental and technical studies are addressing the Commonwealth requirements through the coordinated state and Commonwealth assessment process.

Major project status

In February 2026, GCM was awarded Major Project Status (MPS) by the Australian Government, recognising its global supply impacts, economic benefits and its alignment with national interest.

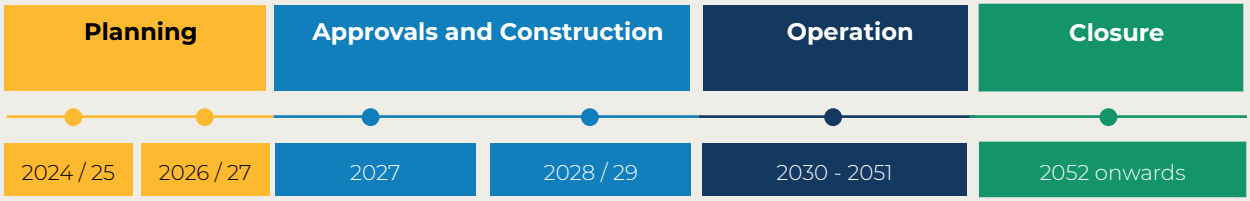
Major Project Status provides coordinated engagement with the Commonwealth's Major Projects Facilitation Agency as the project progresses through approvals. The project remains subject to all relevant state and federal regulatory processes.

1.4 Project Timeline

The current indicative timeline for planning and design, construction, operation and closure of the Project is shown in **Figure 2.**

Subject to receiving all required approvals, construction would commence in 2029. The Project is expected to commence operation in 2030.

Figure 2 – Project Timeline



2024-2025
- Feasibility studies
- Preliminary environmental studies
- Baseline monitoring
- Community Reference Group formed
- Commence process of 'iterative design' informed by community engagement
- EE referral and EPBC referral

2026-2027
- Prepare, finalise and submit EES
- Studies and design to inform EES assessment
- More targeted and subject specific community consultation informs detailed design work - iterative design continues.
- Stakeholder consultation to collaborate on community benefits
- Local workforce engaged through MRDP
- East Gippsland Agricultural and Horticultural experts engaged to inform rehabilitation

2027
- EES Inquiry and Advisory Committee
- Ministerial assessment of the EES
- Obtain secondary statutory approvals
- Stakeholder consultation (ongoing)

2028-2029
- Continue to obtain secondary statutory approvals
- Commence construction

2030-2051
- Complete construction
- Commence operation

2052 onwards
- End of mining
- Rehabilitation and closure

1.5 How Directly Impacted Stakeholder Groups Have Been Engaged to Date

First Nations

The Gunaikurnai people are the Traditional Owners of the land and waterways on which the Fingerboards Project is proposed.

The Gunaikurnai people have lived on and cared for this Country for tens of thousands of years. Their connection to the lands, water, and cultural sites within and surrounding the project area is deep, ongoing, and protected by law.

Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) is the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for the Project area and represents the interests of Gunaikurnai Traditional Owners. GLaWAC has statutory responsibilities under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (VIC), including the evaluation and approval of Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs).

GCM recognises that it is at the beginning of building a strong and lasting relationship based on trust and respect. Engagement with First Nations stakeholders, remains an important priority and will continue as an appropriate and respectful pace.

The redesigned project has been developed to reduce impacts on First Nations cultural heritage, including through a reduced mining footprint and the avoidance of areas of native vegetation and cultural sensitivity within new gully exclusion zones.

First Nations values and perspectives are also being considered in planning for water and land use, rehabilitation, and cultural heritage protection.

We recognise that:

- Gunaikurnai people hold rights, interests, and responsibilities that must be respected
- Cultural heritage – both tangible sites and intangible cultural values – must be protected
- Early, respectful and informed engagement is essential to building trust and strong relationships
- Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is the foundation of ethical engagement
- Traditional Owners possess irreplaceable knowledge of Country that can inform better project design and land management outcomes
- Economic opportunities and benefits should flow to Gunaikurnai communities

GCM will continue to work with Gunaikurnai people and other First Nations people to seek a pathway to a partnership arrangement that supports genuine, transparent and regionally led engagement with Traditional Owners at the centre.

The following table summarises engagement to date and our continuing approach to engaging with First Nations Communities and Aboriginal NFPs/NGOs.

Table 2 – First Nations Engagement

Stakeholder group	Insights & analysis	Our engagement
First Nations - GLaWAC Registered Aboriginal Party and representative of Traditional Owners	**Interests / Concerns** **Interests:** Cultural heritage protection, connection to Country, benefit sharing, partnerships, transparency in design and Indigenous rights. **Concerns:** Cultural impacts, environmental impacts and sustainability, water security. **Influence / Impact** Very high influence with statutory authority under the Aboriginal Heritage Act and key partner for cultural heritage management, benefit sharing, and long-term agreements.	**Level** Involve - Empower **Methods** Cultural Heritage Management Plans, direct meetings, expert panels, focus groups, key stakeholder interviews, site tours, shared projects, workshops. **Approach** Partner respectfully in line with self-determination. Co-develop cultural heritage plans, benefit-sharing frameworks and land return initiatives. Provide timely design and environmental information. Ensure engagement aligns with legislative frameworks and empowers Traditional Owner governance.
First Nations - Aboriginal NFPs / NGOs Aboriginal-led organisations providing health, education and social services across East Gippsland.	**Interests / Concerns** **Interests:** Partnerships, benefit sharing, economic development, cultural heritage, Indigenous rights, health, education and transparency. **Concerns:** Cultural impacts and environmental sustainability. **Influence / Impact** Medium influence with strong community connections and ability to shape social and cultural outcomes, guided by GLaWAC leadership.	**Level** Inform - Consult **Methods** Community events, direct communications, direct meetings, information sessions / forums. **Approach** Engage respectfully with Aboriginal organisations, taking guidance from GLaWAC. Offer partnership opportunities in education, health and community programs. Provide transparent updates and support aligned initiatives that strengthen community wellbeing and Indigenous empowerment.

Landholders and near neighbours

The people who live and work closest to the project area experience the greatest impact and opportunity – and their voices count.

Landholders and near neighbours include property owners within and adjacent to the Project area, as well as residents and farmers within approximately 5 kilometres of the proposed mining footprint.

These stakeholders will experience the most direct impacts from the project – both positive and negative. They're the people with the deepest knowledge of local conditions, land use, water systems, and seasonal patterns that will inform our planning. GCM recognises that landholders and near neighbours hold valuable, place-based knowledge. This local insight plays an important role in informing technical studies, impact assessments and project design.

Engagement with this group is prioritised through direct and tailored approaches, including property visits, small group discussions and targeted updates. This ensures individuals have the opportunity to ask questions, raise concerns and provide feedback, while enabling GCM to respond in a timely, transparent and practical way.

The following table summarises engagement to date and our continuing approach to engaging with Landholders and near neighbours.

Table 3 – Landholders and Near Neighbours Engagement

Stakeholder group	Insights & analysis	Our engagement
Landholders & Near Neighbours (Directly Impacted - Project Area) Landowners whose properties are within the mine footprint or required for project infrastructure.	**Interests / Concerns** **Interests:** Financial security, compensation, land access, and transparency of project design. **Concerns:** Amenity, liveability, livelihoods, property values, farming impacts and long-term management. **Influence / Impact** Very high influence as directly affected parties with legal rights and strong ability to support or oppose project approvals.	**Level** Consult - Collaborate **Methods** Agreements (compensation, good neighbour, land access options), Community Reference Group, direct mail, direct meetings, negotiation and mediation, newsletters. **Approach** Engage with care, confidentiality and respect. Prioritise one-on-one meetings and transparent negotiations. Provide clear outline of entitlements, fund independent advice and respond promptly to concerns. Share monitoring results and design updates to support trust and informed decision-making.
Landholders & Near Neighbours (0 - 2 km) Property owners and residents located within 0-2 km of the project area.	**Interests / Concerns** **Interests:** Transparent engagement, fair compensation, neighbour agreements / benefit-sharing, land access clarity, protection of amenity. **Concerns:** Dust, noise, vibration, water impacts, property values, farming disruptions, long-term liveability, loss of trust from past engagement. **Influence / Impact** Very high influence as directly impacted neighbours whose amenity and property interests may be affected by operations.	**Level** Consult - Collaborate **Methods** Agreements (compensation, good neighbour, land access options), briefings, Community Reference Groups, direct meetings, local media, negotiation. **Approach** Engage respectfully and confidentially through one-on-one meetings, clear entitlements and prompt responses. Share monitoring results early, offer scaled neighbour agreements and emphasise shared benefits to foster trust, reduce opposition and support informed, long-term relationships.
Landholders & Near Neighbours (2 - 5 km) Property owners and residents located within 2-5 km of the project area.	**Interests / Concerns** **Interests:** Transparent information, neighbour agreement opportunities, protection of amenity, local development benefits. **Concerns:** Dust, noise, traffic, water use, property value impacts and cumulative farming disruptions. **Influence / Impact** Medium-high influence as close neighbours, while not always directly impacted, they can strongly shape local sentiment and opposition.	**Level** Inform - Consult **Methods** Agreements (compensation, good neighbour, land access options), briefings, Community Reference Group, direct meetings, local media, negotiation and mediation, newsletters. **Approach** Provide clear, proactive communication about potential impacts / disruptions. Share results of noise/dust modelling and traffic studies openly. Frame engagement around shared benefits (community programs, regional investment) while addressing amenity concerns with transparency and empathy.

Agricultural and horticultural Industry groups

The Agricultural and Horticultural sectors are key stakeholders in the Project, reflecting the central role farming, food production and land stewardship play in the region's identity and economy.

Local producers are focused on maintaining regional reputation as a farming community, soil health, water security, product quality, and the long-term viability of their operations.

GCM recognises these priorities and is committed to ensuring they are carefully considered in project design, impact assessment and ongoing engagement.

This commitment is reflected in the substantial redesign the Project has undergone specifically to address sector concerns around dust. Changes include a reduction in the size of the mined area at any one time, a reduced rate of mining, and the introduction of a 1.5km buffer zone between mining activity and the Lindenow Valley Horticultural Area. These design changes were made directly in response to feedback from agricultural and horticultural stakeholders, and reflect GCM's commitment to genuinely responding to what the sector has told us matters most.

The views of agricultural and horticultural stakeholders are gathered through direct representation on the Community Reference Group (CRG) including graziers, dairy producers and others associated with the sector, as well as through direct meetings, panels and focus groups, interviews, webinars and work groups.

Consultation with agricultural and horticultural stakeholders has shaped GCM's approach to land use, rehabilitation, water and infrastructure planning and includes progressively rehabilitating mined land to return it to productive use as early as practicable, alongside initiatives such as farmland leasing and supporting pathways for young farmers.

GCM is also working with technical specialists and engaging with the sector to inform soil trials, pasture establishment methods and post-mining land use planning.

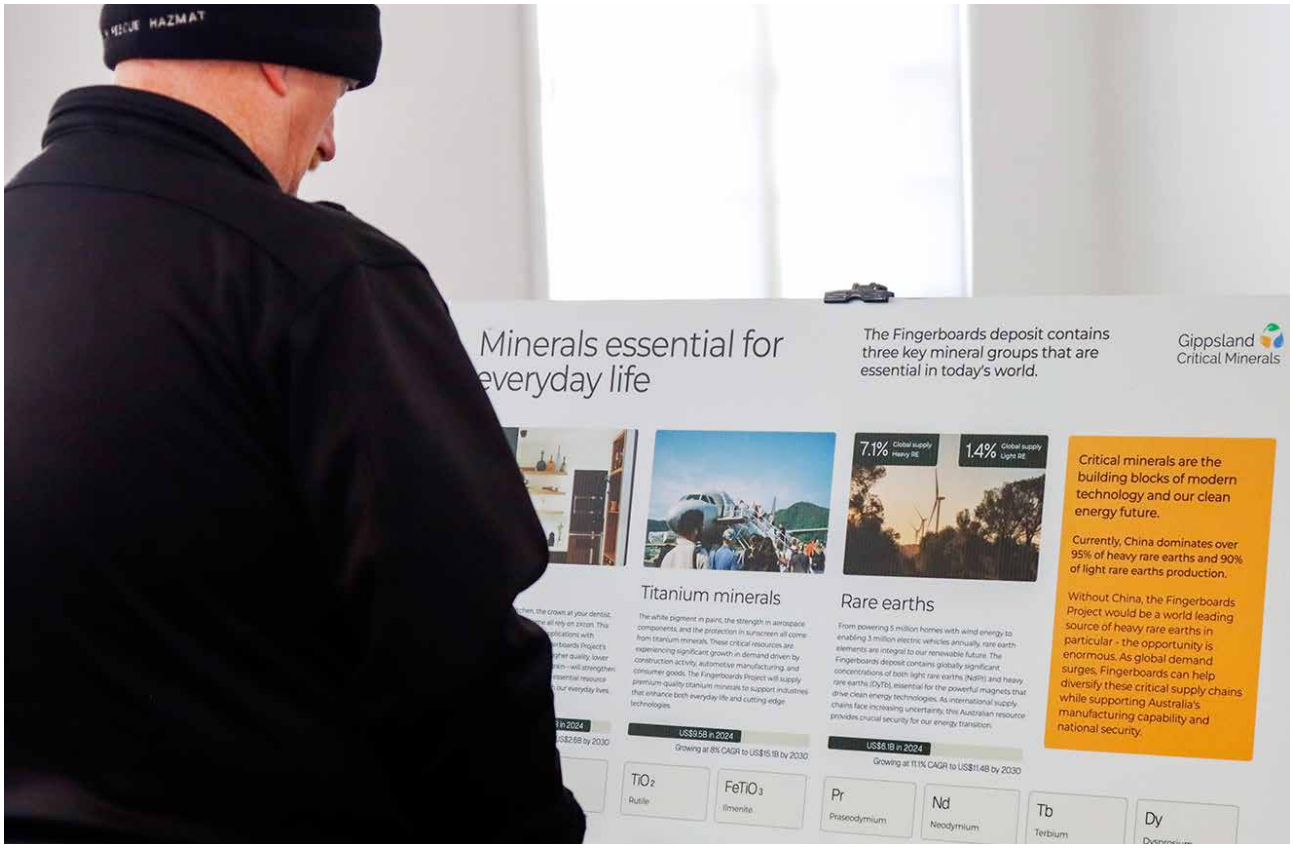
This work is intended to include local knowledge into project development, support evidence-based rehabilitation outcomes and contribute to the long-term resilience of local agricultural systems. Practically, this is being undertaken with the advice of leading agronomy experts, well regarded within the local Agricultural and Horticultural sector.

This approach to redesign around the sector's core concerns aims to responsibly manage potential impacts while identifying opportunities for agriculture, horticulture and mining to not only coexist, but innovate and think together, delivering lasting benefits for the region.

The following table summarises engagement to date and our continuing approach to engaging with Agriculture and Industry Groups.

Table 4 – Agriculture and Horticulture Industry Groups Engagement

Stakeholder group	Insights & analysis	Our engagement
Agricultural & Horticultural Industry Groups Local farming and horticultural enterprises and representative bodies with significant land use, water and regional supply chain interests.	**Interests / Concerns** **Interests:** Economic development, diversification of income, local procurement, infrastructure and regional development. **Concerns:** Land use and compensation, environmental impacts, land rehabilitation, food production and tourism. **Influence / Impact** High influence as major regional employers and land managers whose operations may be directly affected by land access, water use and regional perceptions of agricultural quality.	**Level** Consult - Collaborate **Methods** Community Reference Group, direct meetings, expert panels, focus groups, information sessions / forums, key stakeholder interviews, webinars, workshops. **Approach** Engage directly through one-on-one meetings, industry forums and CRG participation to address land and water concerns. Share monitoring results and technical updates early and transparently. Support coexistence through leasing, agistment and collaborative innovation initiatives.



The following table summarises community engagement approaches that GCM has implemented in response to community feedback. These learnings have informed the EES CCP.

Engagement Approach Changes Driven by Feedback

Key issues / concerns	How we responded
Trust and inclusivity in engagement	Invited **representatives of an opposing community interest group** to join the Community Reference Group, ensuring critical voices have a seat at the table.
Reaching diverse community voices	Conducted **house calls** to near neighbours (within 2km), **mailbox drops** to 774 households, and **20,000 flyers region-wide** to reach people who might not attend public engagements.
Need for tangible site understanding	Hosted **site tours** for CRG members, farmers, and industry representatives to see the project area firsthand and ask questions on Country.
Accessibility of technical information	Launched a virtual office and new GCM website with fact sheets, study summary scopes, and key project information.
Clarity on contact and feedback channels	Opened a **physical office in Bairnsdale** (50 Forge Creek Road), staffed with local team members, and provided multiple contact channels (phone, email, in-person).

The following table summarises community benefit initiatives driven by feedback. These initiatives will be built upon through continued community engagement and involvement through the EES CCP. See Part 3 of this document for details.

Community Benefit Initiatives Driven by Feedback

Key issues / concerns	How we responded
Land affordability for young farmers	Launched the **Young Farmers Program** – 526 hectares leased to emerging farmers at up to 20% below market rates. In total, 1,470 hectares leased to local farmers.
Local employment opportunities	Committed to **prioritising local employment** and partnering with local / regional education and training institutions to map training pathways and align education and training with project workforce needs.
Long-term regional infrastructure benefits	Established the **East Gippsland Rail Freight Taskforce** with Regional Development Victoria to unlock broader freight opportunities for local businesses beyond the life of the mine. Potential legacy benefits of water infrastructure associated with the provision of recycled water to the project, including both irrigation pipelines and a multi-gigalitre water storage.
Demonstration of benefit-sharing commitment	Developed an **early-stage Benefit Sharing Plan** and committed to co-designing the final model with the CRG and through four benefit sharing workshops with community.
Future skills and employment	Developed the **Fingerboards Project Jobs Guide** in response to community interest in future local employment opportunities, and commenced work with TAFE Gippsland to map training and education pathways to help local people build the skills needed for future Project roles.

2.0

Stakeholders & Community

2.1 GCM Engagement Principles

> ***Community and stakeholder input is essential to the success of the Fingerboards Project and its contribution to regional economic growth. Engagement will continue throughout each stage of the Project and the EES process, through a program of formal and informal consultation opportunities set out in this EES Community Consultation Plan (EES CCP).***

GCM Engagement Principles

TRANSPARENCY	INTEGRITY AND TRUST	INCLUSIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY	REAL CHANGE AND RESPONSIVENESS
We commit to the transparency of all information about the project to the extent that it maintains the confidentiality of parties. This includes processes to record and disseminate information on how community feedback contributes to GCM's decision-making.	We will undertake all engagement activities in a manner that fosters mutual respect and builds trust and confidence by exploring communities' values and interests and finding common understanding.	We commit to facilitating the involvement of individuals, groups and organisations that represent a diversity of views and interests. We will provide access and opportunities for those in hard-to-reach locations with the use of technology where possible and tailor communications and approaches to special needs groups.	We will respond to communities' concerns in a timely, open and effective manner, and undertake open and meaningful two-way dialogue with processes established to allow this to occur.

2.2 IAP2 Levels of Engagement

The EES CCP has been developed using the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) framework, a globally recognised standard for meaningful stakeholder engagement. **Table 5 – IAP2 Levels of Engagement outlines** the specific engagement levels that will be used throughout the approvals process. These levels align with IAP2 spectrum and provide an indication of the degree of influence that certain stakeholders can have at different stages of the project.

Table 5 – IAP2 Levels of Engagement

Level of Engagement	Aim
Inform	To provide clear, accessible and objective information about the approvals process to assist the community and stakeholders in understanding the implications, alternatives, opportunities and solutions.
Consult	To seek feedback from the community and stakeholders on aspects of the approvals process and any alternatives or options and respond to comments on proposals and alternatives.
Involve	To work directly with the community and stakeholders throughout the approvals process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
Collaborate	To partner with you in key aspects of the decision-making, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
Empower	To place the final decision-making in the hands of the stakeholders.

GCM is committed to maintaining open communication with community members and other stakeholders and to providing up to date and transparent information on the Project. Outcomes of the EES may inform required changes to the project design and development. The EES phases may require adaptation of approaches to community engagement. The community and stakeholder engagement approach is designed to adapt for the various phases of the EES and the approvals process and to provide opportunities for:

- Informing the community and other stakeholders about the Project design, EES process and approvals processes.
- Consulting with community members and other stakeholders about the Project design, scope, findings and mitigation measures proposed in draft technical studies being prepared.
- Involving community members and other stakeholders (through the Community Reference Group) in discussions on community values and aspirations and potential community benefit projects.
- Collaborating with community members and other stakeholders on the approach to community benefit sharing.
- Collaborating with the Agriculture and Horticulture Sectors on rehabilitation, land management and community benefits.
- Empowering First Nations communities to make decisions on aspects of the project relating to community benefits.

What this looks like in practice

Through these IAP2-aligned practices we're implementing the commitments outlined in our engagement principles.

We identify and reach stakeholders proactively

Rather than waiting for people to find us, we're actively mapping and reaching out to those whose lives, land, or livelihoods might be affected. This includes targeted outreach to landholders, neighbours, industry groups, First Nations communities, local government, and environmental authorities – using multiple contact methods to ensure we connect.

We make engagement accessible and convenient

Multiple entry points for engagement: physical office, virtual showroom, house calls, drop-in sessions, webinars, phone, email, community events. Whatever works for you. No one should miss out because of location, technology access, or mobility constraints.

We engage early, while design is still evolving

You're seeing draft concepts and work-in-progress, not polished final plans presented as a done deal. We're sharing our thinking while it's still forming, so your feedback can genuinely influence decisions. This includes sharing technical studies in plain language, not just technical reports.

We provide multiple ways to have your say

Community Reference Group meetings, public forums, one-on-one conversations, site visits, webinars, written submissions — multiple ways to ask questions, raise concerns, and provide feedback. Every question gets a response. Every concern gets considered.

We close the loop

When community input changes the project, we'll tell you. When it doesn't, we'll explain why. You'll see the direct line from "the community raised this" to "here's what we did about it" through published CRG minutes, updated fact sheets, and regular reporting.

We document and learn

We've analysed feedback from the 2021 EES process to understand historical concerns. We're tracking current feedback systematically. We're documenting how consultation has shaped project design. This creates accountability and shows our commitment to genuine two-way dialogue.

2.3 Identifying Stakeholders

This section outlines the key stakeholder groups identified for the Fingerboards Project. Stakeholders have been identified by GCM across six different categories:

- Directly impacted stakeholders;
- Community and local interest groups;
- Industry and business groups;
- Government and regulatory bodies;
- Education, training and research organisations;
- Media

These categories enable GCM to tailor engagement activities based on the needs, expectations, and level of influence of each group across different stages of the Project. Further information on the stakeholders that sit within these categories is available in Table 6 below.

Table 6 – Identified Stakeholder Groups

Category	Stakeholder group	Description	Information
Directly Impacted	First Nations – Gunaikurnai People, as represented by GLAWAC	GLaWAC is the Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC) and Registered Native Title Body Corporate (RNTBC) for all Gunai/Kurnai People under the Native Title Act 1993 (Cth). It is also the Traditional Owner Group Entity representing the Gunaikurnai Traditional Owner Group for the purposes of the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 (Vic) and appointed as the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic).	Engagement Level: Involve – Empower
	First Nations – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander not for profits / non-Government organisations	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led organisations providing health, education and social services across East Gippsland.	Engagement Level: Inform – Consult
	Landholders and Near Neighbours (Project Area)	Landowners whose properties are within the mine footprint or required for project infrastructure.	Engagement Level: Consult – Collaborate
	Landholders and Near Neighbours (0-2km)	Property owners and residents located within 0-2 km of the Project Area.	Engagement Level: Consult – Collaborate
	Landholders and Near Neighbours (2-5km)	Property owners and residents located within 2-5 km of the Project Area.	Engagement Level: Consult – Collaborate
	Agricultural and Horticultural Industry Group	Local farming and horticultural enterprises, and representative bodies with significant land use, water and regional supply chain interests.	Engagement Level: Consult – Collaborate

Table 6 – Identified Stakeholder Groups (cont'd)

Category	Stakeholder group	Description	Information
Community and Local Interests	Community Interest Groups	Local organisations, associations and networks representing environmental, social, and community wellbeing interests.	Engagement Level: Inform – Consult
	Community Advocacy Groups	Local community advocacy groups actively opposing the Project through public campaign, community meetings, and online activity.	Engagement Level: Inform – Involve
	Community Reference Groups	Advisory body established to provide a structured link between GCM and the local community, fostering transparent, inclusive and meaningful engagement.	Engagement Level: Inform - Collaborate
	Local residents (East Gippsland and Wellington Shires)	Residents living more broadly across the East Gippsland and Wellington municipalities.	Engagement Level: Inform – Consult
	Local residents and townships (<10 km)	Residents living within 10 km of the Project Area and nearby townships.	Engagement Level: Inform – Involve
	Not-for-profits (NFPs) and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)	Local and regional NFPs and NGOs working on environment, health, education and community wellbeing.	Engagement Level: Inform – Consult
	Sports and Recreational Clubs	Local sports clubs and recreational organisations.	Engagement Level: Inform – Consult
	Environment and land care groups	Local and regional organisations focused on biodiversity protection, land rehabilitation, conservation, sustainable land use.	Engagement Level: Inform – Consult

Table 6 – Identified Stakeholder Groups (cont'd)

Category	Stakeholder group	Description	Information
Industry and Business	Business and Industry Groups	Regional business associations, chambers of commerce, industry peak bodies, and local enterprise groups.	Engagement Level: Inform – Involve
	Local Businesses and Tourism Operators	Local business contractors and tourism operators in East Gippsland and Wellington Shires.	Engagement Level: Inform – Consult
	Mining and Resources Sector	Other mining and exploration companies, industry, associations and critical mineral networks.	Engagement Level: Consult – Collaborate
	Forestry and Timber Industry	Local forestry operators, timber companies and plantation managers.	Engagement Level: Inform – Involve
	Transport, Infrastructure and Waste	Providers of transport, road, logistics, waste management and related infrastructure services across the region.	Engagement Level: Consult – Collaborate
	Waste, Energy and Communications Providers	Utilities responsible for water supply, energy distribution and communications networks.	Engagement Level: Consult – Collaborate
	Unions	Trade unions representing workers in construction, mining, energy and related industries.	Engagement Level: Inform – Consult

Table 6 – Identified Stakeholder Groups (cont'd)

Category	Stakeholder Group	Description	Information
Government and Regulatory	Local Councils (East Gippsland Shire, Wellington Shire)	Local councils and planning authorities responsible for community wellbeing, infrastructure, and economic development.	Engagement Level: Consult – Collaborate
	Elected Representatives - Federal and State	Members of Parliament, Ministers and political representatives both at Federal and State levels.	Engagement Level: Inform – Involve
	Government Departments and regulatory Authorities – Federal	Commonwealth departments, regulators and statutory agencies with roles in environment, infrastructure, resources and investment.	Engagement Level: Inform – Involve
	Government Departments and regulatory Authorities - State	Victorian Government departments, regulators and statutory agencies responsible for resources, environment, planning and community wellbeing.	Engagement Level: Consult – Collaborate
	Emergency Services	Regional fire and emergency services with statutory roles in community safety and risk management.	Engagement Level: Consult – Collaborate
Education, Training and Research Organisations		Regional schools, TAFE, universities and training providers working on workforce development and innovation.	Engagement Level: Consult – Involve
Media		Local newspapers, radio stations, online outlets and regional journalists.	Engagement Level: Inform – Consult

2.4 Key Issues and Concerns from Consultation Undertaken to Date

Over the course of engagement conducted to date, GCM has received a wide range of valuable insights from community members, Traditional Owner groups, landholders and stakeholders for consideration.

This feedback provided GCM with a better understanding of the key areas of concern or interest for stakeholders. Engagement received to date has influenced the route refinement process and will be considered throughout the development of the EES.

Input on several key areas of interest has contributed to the re-scoping of the Fingerboards Project and a better understanding of key issues of concern, including those detailed in **Table 7** below.

Table 7 – Key Issues and Concerns

Issue	Description
Air Quality	Dust emissions, including the potential for impacts on surrounding agriculture and human health.
Contamination	Potential emissions and impacts of contaminants from the mining operations.
Flora & Fauna	Loss of vegetation and potential impacts on rare and threatened flora and fauna species.
Rehabilitation	Ability to effectively return the land to agricultural use and the potential risks of rehabilitation not being completed or carried out to acceptable standards.
Water Quality	Potential for impacts on receiving water bodies, including the Mitchell and Perry Rivers, Gippsland Lakes and underground water.
Noise and Vibration	Noise or vibration levels from the project site (including vehicle noise associated with transport of mined products).
Radiation	Potential health risks for local residents and mine workers associated with radiation.
Traffic	Heavy vehicle impacts on road safety and the condition of road infrastructure.
Visual Amenity	Potential visual landscape impacts of the project.

Issue	Description
Land Ownership	Land access, compensation, and risk of operations impacting farming land.
Land Use	Changes in land use (agriculture to mining).
Infrastructure	Water supply, power supply, roads, transport, fire, ancillary mine infrastructure, location and use.
Engagement & Communications	Access to information, transparency, two-way communication and responsiveness.
First Nations	Management of land, cultural awareness, artefacts and opportunities for First Nations.
Social	Social and personal impacts, community cohesion, community services and lifestyle.
Agricultural and Horticultural	Reputational impacts and impacts on existing and future agricultural and horticultural operations. Concerns about dust, water use, and soils.
Employment	Local employment and the availability of workers.
Regional Development	Development and growth of the East Gippsland economy, and impacts on housing supply
Regional Image	Perception of the region, tourism and the region's natural image.
Water Supply	Competition for water supply.
Enforcement	Oversight and enforcement conditions.
Regulations	Transparency of process for Project approvals, monitoring and reporting.

ect for East Gippsland
changed
We've made real changes in response to real conversations with the people who know the region best.
oject
New Project
hes per hour
900 tonnes per hour (40% reduction)
stockpiles
Enclosed storage sheds
stored in above ground dams
Tailings stored below ground (in-pit cells)
year, majority sourced from the Mitchell River
3 GL per year, diversified sourcing strategy including recycled water
1.5 kilometres
or tailings storage in three major gullies
No mining or tailings storage in any gullies
955ha
Planned demonstration pit, early 2026
ble trucks on public roads past local schools
GCM-owned private haul road and rail-first strategy
of road relocations
One 1.5-kilometre temporary road relocation
ained
Preserved
ninistrators to Australia; preference for China
Commitment to onshore processing
oration of Grassy Woodlands, native
Land returned to productive agricultural use
What are the
Work for Local Businesses
Economic Impact
Legacy Assets and Services

3.0

EES Community Consultation Plan (EES CCP)

3.1 About this EES Community Consultation Plan

This EES Community Consultation Plan (EES CCP) supports the current re-scoped Fingerboards Project proposal, which is materially different from a previous proposal that was not approved through a previous EES assessment in 2021.

> ***This plan outlines the communication and engagement activities and program that will be delivered by GCM during the preparation of the Environment Effects Statement (EES) and Planning Scheme Amendment (PSA) for the redesigned Fingerboards Critical Minerals Project (The Project).***

The EES CCP has been prepared in accordance with the Ministerial Guidelines for Assessment of Environmental Effects under the Environment Effects Act 1978 and the EES Consultation Plan Advisory Note (DELWP, 2018).

Specifically, this plan outlines how GCM will inform, consult and respond to Traditional Custodians, the community, project neighbours, key stakeholder groups and participating landowners during the EES development and assessment phases.

As part of the EES process, there will be ongoing opportunities for community input into the project.

Objectives

The objectives of the EES CCP are to:

- Identify key stakeholders – individuals, groups and organisations that may impact or be impacted by the Fingerboards project – to engage throughout the EES process;
- Seek targeted input from stakeholders during the preparation of the EES to identify issues of potential concern, obtain local knowledge on existing conditions, understand perceptions of potential effects, and gain feedback on measures that might provide reasonable responses to stakeholder concerns.
- Respond to stakeholder input, enquiries and complaints in accordance with the commitments set out in Sections 3.3 and 3.4 of this EES CCP.
- The CCP outlines how GCM will inform, consult and engage the community about the redesigned Fingerboards Project and new program of EES studies by:
  - Providing transparent, balanced and objective information to assist in understanding alternatives and opportunities related to the project.
  - Identifying issues of potential concern and consulting to obtain feedback on alternatives.
  - Seeking local knowledge on existing conditions and involving the community to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered in the development of the project.
  - Gaining feedback on measures that respond to stakeholder concerns (including potential refinement to the proposal).

Related plans

The EES CCP synthesises previous GCM plans including the Community Engagement Plan (CEP) which was prepared to engage the community during the redesign of the Fingerboards Project under the conditional renewal of Retention Licenses RL2023 and RL2026.

The CEP was informed by the guidance set out in Resources Victoria's Community Engagement Guidelines for Mining and Mineral Exploration in Victoria.

Last updated and published on the GCM website in September 2025, the CEP will next be updated in September 2026. Quarterly Updates on the progress of the CEP are provided to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).

The EES CCP integrates the Mining and Rehabilitation Demonstration Pit Supplementary Community Engagement Plan which was published on the GCM website in November 2025.

Adapting to emerging Issues and community needs

As the EES for the Project progresses, activity schedules within this plan will adapt to address any emerging issues, reflect continued understanding of the project and its potential impacts and respond to stakeholder needs.

> ***GCM is committed to engaging respectfully with communities, being sensitive to cultural values and making a positive contribution to the region in which it operates.***

Tailoring engagement to meet the needs of different stakeholder groups

Engagement will be tailored to the needs and preferences of individual stakeholder groups, the nature of the information being shared, and the level of feedback sought. Stakeholder engagement will comprise a combination of all five of the levels of engagement (see Section 2.2).

A range of engagement methods will be employed to reach different stakeholder groups, depending on the information being communicated, the desired level of feedback, and stakeholders' engagement preferences. Engagement and communication channels are detailed in Section 3.4 and the Engagement Schedule is detailed in Section 3.5.

3.2 Overcoming Barriers to Participation

GCM will ensure engagement activities are inclusive and accessible to stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and with varied needs. This may involve providing materials in alternative languages or formats, and tailoring engagement methods to improve accessibility for participants of different backgrounds and demographics.

GCM will address participation barriers, particularly in the event of restrictions to face-to-face engagement, and maximise access through the following methods:

- Hard copy information and engagement opportunities will be delivered to all adjacent properties to the project site
- The consultation process will be promoted on social media, advertising in local newspapers and newsletters
- Face-to-face sessions will be highly accessible by varying the locations and times and ensuring we choose venues with universal access
- The digital platform will provide specific information about the project and provide opportunities for feedback about potential impacts and areas of concern
- Hard copy alternatives to the online material will be available and copies sent to people without computer access
- Support will be available to help people use the digital platform and participate with interactive online community sessions
- All project updates will be written in plain English and meet Victorian Government accessibility standards
- Social media posts will be accessible, with appropriate alternative text included so that people with disabilities can access and understand the information being presented
- Easy to read and visually accessible versions of project information will be available with images to support text, large font sizes and plenty of white space.
- Increased use of local radio to reach community members who may not have time or access to engage with written texts and social media.

3.3 Community Enquiry, Complaints and Issues Management

Community enquiries

GCM community enquiries will be managed through:

- Visible and user-friendly information on how and where to provide feedback to be published on the GCM website and discussed during community engagement activities.
- A detailed feedback register called the Community Contact Database (CCD)
- Clear accountabilities and procedures for staff to investigate and respond to community feedback
- GCM is committed to responding promptly, fairly and confidentially to all feedback received. Response and resolution timeframes will be targeted according to the urgency of the matter raised. High urgency matters will receive an initial response within 2 hours, with resolution targeted within 24 hours. Medium urgency matters will receive an initial response within 24 hours, with resolution targeted within 5 business days. Low urgency matters will receive an initial response within 48 hours, with resolution targeted within 10 business days.

Community complaints

GCM will implement a complaint management process, which includes the following:

- Any community complaints will be entered into the CCD, investigated by the GCM project management team, and feedback reports will be provided to the community member in a timely manner.
- An internal monitoring and auditing system to ensure effectiveness of the complaint management process, and to identify recurrent themes and appropriate management responses
- The target timeframe for complaints raised by community members is to acknowledge within five days, forwarding to the relevant department for investigation, setting and communicating further response times and response delivery.

Issues management

A Community Contact Database (CCD) has been created for reference throughout the life of the project. It amalgamates all data collected at community contact points and engagement conducted by GCM to date.

To ensure GCM responds to the procedures and requirements as set out in the Ministerial Guidelines, it is imperative that GCM adheres to all activity outlined in this plan. All contact with the community, whether with GCM or its specialist consultants, will be recorded, and entered into the CCD. Feedback recorded in the CCD will inform the EES and the work of the Technical Reference Group (TRG) and IAU in overseeing the EES process.

3.4 Community Engagement Team

GCM has a dedicated Community Engagement team located in its Gippsland Office at 50 Forge Creek Road, Bairnsdale.

GCM will maintain a physical presence in the community with dedicated local roles focused on community engagement, including:

- East Gippsland Community and Stakeholder Lead
- Office and Community Support Lead
- Community Engagement Team Member
- Social Media Engagement Lead
- Head of Government Relations and Communications
- Community Benefits Subject Expert
- Project Manager / Regulator Engagement Lead

Roles are located in the East Gippsland office (approx half of all roles) and Sydney and Melbourne. The East Gippsland Office is open to the community daily.

3.5 Engagement and Communication Channels

The EES CCP incorporates various methods to deliver a range of communication options. The program has been designed to ensure stakeholders are informed throughout all stages of the EES and approvals process and continues as an ongoing process, should the project be approved for development.

Specialist consultants will be involved throughout the community consultation process, as appropriate. This will provide specialists with the greatest possible opportunity to gather information from the community and provide advice to adjust the EES CCP.

The EES CCP will be reviewed regularly, including updates of stakeholder identification and mapping. The reviews will be required to reflect changes within the project and the community's concerns and expectations, ensuring the documentation is evolving, open, inclusive, responsive and accountable.

Table 8 outlines the various engagement activities conducted and tools implemented to date, and to be used in the future as the Project moves through the approvals process.

Table 8 – Engagement Methods

Method	Description
Community Reference Group (CRG)	Meetings with the 16 members of the Community Reference Group (CRG) throughout the EES process, and will continue tracking feedback and reporting on outcomes. Frequency: Quarterly
Drop-in Sessions	GCM will continue to hold drop-in sessions in the East Gippsland and Wellington shire councils to provide local stakeholders with an opportunity to interact with project staff and share feedback on the project. Frequency: Monthly
Mobile Offices	GCM will continue to run mobile offices in high-traffic locations such as local shopping centres and sporting events, with the aim of meeting community where they are and reducing barriers to engagement. Frequency: Monthly
Ask the Expert Forums	GCM will introduce targeted sessions where technical specialists present and answer questions on technical and environmental studies (e.g. water, air quality, ecology). These sessions are designed to make complex technical information accessible and to give the community confidence that their questions are being answered by the right people. Frequency: Quarterly / As needed
Project Update Webinars	Online information sessions provide updates from the CEO, technical and community leads to stakeholders who are unable to attend in person or prefer online sessions. Webinars include a Q&A component and are recorded and published on the project website for those unable to attend. Frequency: Quarterly
Social Media	GCM social media channels including Facebook provide an online forum for the community to engage with GCM and provide direct feedback.
Email and Phone	A dedicated contact email address and phone line provide a direct point of contact for stakeholders to ask questions, raise concerns or provide feedback. All enquiries are logged, tracked and directed to the appropriate member of the project team. Complaints that cannot be resolved through standard channels are escalated via GCM's formal complaint handling procedure.

Table 8 – Engagement Methods (cont'd)

Method	Description
Personal Meetings	Personal meetings provide the opportunity for GCM and project stakeholders to discuss key issues or concerns directly and may be initiated by either party. Throughout the approvals process, meetings will be held with Traditional Owners, landowners, local businesses, State Government agencies, and other interested groups, as required, to discuss matters such as land access and compensation.
Stakeholder Briefings	GCM will continue to brief key stakeholders at significant points in the approvals process, ensuring they receive timely, tailored updates on project progress ahead of public announcements. Briefings are held with individuals or small groups including local councils, Traditional Owners, and State and Federal Members of Parliament.
Benefit Sharing Workshops	GCM will host four in-person benefit-sharing workshops and one web-based workshop to give the community a direct role in shaping how the project's benefits are designed and delivered. The focus areas include, Local Jobs and Capacity Building, Infrastructure and Legacy Assets, and Community Vibrancy and Liveability.
Site Visits	At appropriate times throughout the approvals process, site tours will be offered to key stakeholders to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the project. This will include site tours of the Mining and Rehabilitation Demonstration Pit.
Community Partnerships	GCM will strengthen its relationship with the broader community and become an active and visible member of the community. This will involve providing sponsorship of and/or assistance with community needs and events, supporting the local community to build and strengthen the district. The Community Partnerships program is a direct reflection of GCM's aim to create respectful relationships with stakeholders.

Table 9 – Communication Tools

Method	Description
Fact Sheets	Fact sheets provide clear information about the Project, the EES process and key technical topics. Updated and new fact sheets will be published as the assessment progresses, including information responding to common community questions. Fact sheets are available on the GCM website and at community information sessions. The fact sheet topics are: - A Better Project for East Gippsland - Project Timeline - Project Overview - Project Map - Getting it Right - Water - Getting it Right - Our Engagement - Getting it Right - Dust - Critical Minerals and Rare Earths - Benefits to East Gippsland
Newsletters	A quarterly newsletter provides updates on environmental and technical studies, Project milestones and upcoming opportunities to participate. It is distributed in print through the Bairnsdale Advertiser, Gippsland Times, and emailed to subscribers.
Maps	The interactive map on the GCM website shows the current Project area and will be updated as further information is confirmed. Simplified printed maps are also available at community sessions and drop-in events.
Photos and Videos	Photos and videos explain key aspects of the Project in an accessible visual format. Current videos include an overview of the redesigned Project and an explanation of the Mining and Rehabilitation Demonstration Pit. Photos and videos are available through the website, virtual office and across GCM social media.
Social Media Posts	GCM's social media channels provide timely updates on Project milestones, site activities, environmental surveys, local employment and supplier opportunities, and upcoming engagement activities.
Email Updates	Email updates provide subscribers with information about significant Project developments, upcoming site activities, assessment work and opportunities to participate in formal consultation and public exhibition processes. Community members can subscribe through the GCM website.

Table 9 – Communication Tools (cont'd)

Method	Description
Website	The GCM website is the central source of current Project information. It includes media releases, fact sheets, study scopes and summaries, regulatory updates, maps, videos, government and industry documents, and details of upcoming engagement opportunities.
Letter Drops	Letter drops provide nearby residents and landholders with essential information about relevant site activities, assessment work, public exhibitions and other Project developments that may affect their local area.
Virtual Office	The virtual office is an online space where community members can explore Project information and resources. It includes fact sheets, demonstration pit information, the Fingerboards Project Jobs Guide, reports, videos and other interactive content.
Advertising	Advertisements in local newspapers and on local radio notify the community about upcoming engagement activities, formal submission periods, public exhibitions, employment opportunities and supplier opportunities.
Media Releases	Media releases provide information about significant Project milestones, regulatory decisions, community engagement opportunities and other major developments. They are distributed to local, state and national media and published on the GCM website.

3.6 Engagement Schedule

Figure 3 below provides an overview of the EES process, including how engagement will inform the different phases of the EES and steps in the process when stakeholders, landholders and other interested members of the public can provide input into the process (See Figure 2 Project Timeline). The Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) convenes and facilitates the Technical Reference Group (TRG) that oversees the progress of the EES.

Table 10 below provides indicative timing of proposed engagement and communication activities to support consultation during the EES process. The schedule, along with associated engagement and communication activities, will be reviewed and revised as necessary.

GCM will provide DTP and RV with a detailed action plan each quarter as the project progresses.

Feedback received during the EES process can influence both the EES and project outcomes, including:

- Scope and location of any additional investigations
- EES engagement approach and consultation activities
- Suggestions on how to avoid, minimise or manage impacts to receptors.

During each engagement phase GCM will collate and analyse feedback. Feedback will be communicated as technical studies are being prepared to ensure insights are incorporated in the EES. Public summaries will be prepared reporting on engagement activities, key themes received during consultation, and how feedback has been considered and/or informed project and design decisions.

Figure 3 – Overview of processes under *Environment Effects Act 1978* *(taken from Ministerial Guidelines)*

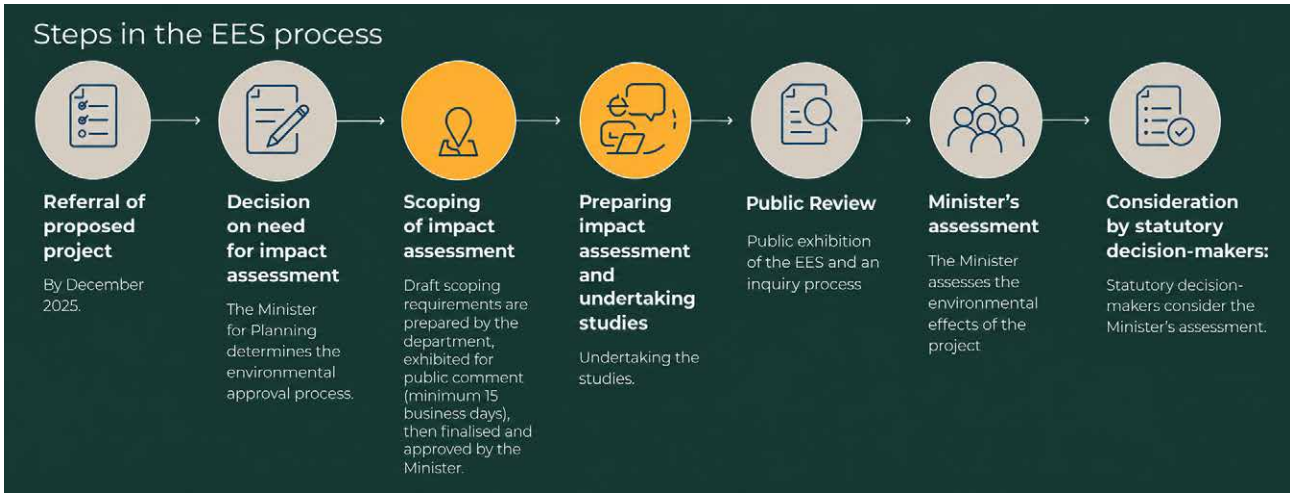


Table 10 – EES Engagement Schedule

Engagement Phase	Timing	Proposed Engagement Activities	Proposed Communications Tools	Objectives
Submission of Referral	Late 2025	– Briefings to local government, key stakeholders and Traditional Owner groups – Ongoing Landholder engagement – CRG meeting – Community information sessions – Respond to email and phone enquiries	– Website information on EES referral – Fact sheets & FAQs – Local print and broadcast media and advertising as required	– Key stakeholders are aware of the referral submission and understand next steps. – Feedback received guides engagement approach on the EES – GCM improves understanding of stakeholder interests and concerns for consideration in developing draft scoping requirements
EES Scoping Requirements	Mid 2026	– Briefings to local government, key stakeholders and Traditional Owners Targeted engagement with key stakeholders – Ongoing Landholder engagement – CRG meeting – Community drop-in sessions / webinar	– Ask the expert sessions – CRG – Community benefits – Website information outlining how feedback on scoping requirements can be provided. – Information packs to be shared by Councils and local (social) media channels – Fact sheets & FAQs – Social Media – Local print and broadcast media advertising as required	– The community is aware of the opportunity to provide feedback on the scoping requirements – Feedback received informs the determination of the final scoping requirements, endorsed by the Minister
Undertaking Studies & Preparation of EES	Through 2026	– Targeted engagement with key stakeholders and Councils – Landholder engagement – Traditional Owner engagement – CRG meetings – Place-based community drop-in sessions – Online webinar/engagement – Technical information sessions as required – Quarterly Ask the Expert Sessions conducted – Respond to email and phone enquiries	– Website information – Fact sheets – Videos – Social Media – Local print and broadcast media advertising as required	– The community and key stakeholders are informed of project updates, project design changes, upcoming site assessment findings and impacts – Community workshops focus on proposed impact triaging – The community and stakeholders are provided with the opportunity to inform the EES – Concierge style quarterly Ask an Expert sessions align with the TRG schedule of Topics and Meetings – Feedback received informs the preparation of existing conditions reports – Feedback influences the preparation of impact assessments and mitigations

Table 10 – EES Engagement Schedule (cont'd)

Engagement Phase	Timing	Proposed Engagement Activities	Proposed Communications Tools	Objectives
EES public exhibition	Early to mid 2027	· Targeted engagement with key stakeholders and Councils · Landholder engagement · Traditional Owner engagement · Community drop-in sessions · CRG meeting · Online engagement · Respond to email and phone enquiries	Broad communication on public exhibition and inquiry including: · Social media · Letterbox drops. · Media and advertising · Media release	Inform the community of the opportunity to participate in the public exhibition and public inquiry.
EES Inquiry	Early to mid 2027	· Targeted engagement with key stakeholders and Councils · Landholder engagement · Traditional Owner engagement · Community drop-in sessions · CRG meeting · Online engagement · Respond to email and phone enquiries	Broad communication on public exhibition and inquiry including: · Social media · Letterbox drops. · Media and advertising · Media release	Inform the community on how they can be heard as part of the Inquiry
Minister's Assessment and Decision Notification	Late 2027	· Targeted engagement with key stakeholders and Councils · Landholder engagement. · Traditional Owner engagement · CRG meeting · Respond to email and phone enquiries	Announcement of Minister's assessment and ongoing broad communication about the project including: · Website · Social media · Media and advertising · Media release	· Key stakeholders are aware of the Minister's Assessment and understand the reasoning · Stakeholders understand the meaning of the assessment and next steps

3.7 Recording, Monitoring and Reporting

Stakeholder engagement conducted as a part of the approvals process will be regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure that it is meeting the needs of Project stakeholders and providing a range of opportunities for them to receive up to date information and provide input.

The outcomes of this monitoring and evaluation will inform whether changes need to be made to the stakeholder engagement approach and/or engagement activities and tools. GCM will ensure that there are clear accountabilities within the company for investigating and responding to stakeholder engagement and to ensuring continuous improvement of GCM's engagement strategy.

Monitoring will be undertaken to identify the extent to which Project stakeholders are accessing stakeholder engagement tools and attending events. This will include monitoring the number of queries and comments received through the Project email address, visits to the Project webpage and attendees at community information sessions and Stakeholder and Community Reference Group meetings. In addition, GCM will monitor the number of submissions received on the draft scoping requirements and the approvals documentation.

Feedback will be requested from Project stakeholders on the approach to stakeholder engagement and the engagement activities to identify if they are meeting their needs. This will be done through feedback forms, informal feedback received by email or in one-on-one discussions, and through the Stakeholder and Community Reference Group.

Recording feedback

Meetings, phone calls, emails, feedback forms, survey responses and community forums, will be recorded on GCM's Community Contact Database (CCD). This will enable GCM to:

- Capture and organise stakeholder information
- Document all interactions
- Track issues and responses
- Analyse feedback and trends
- Map stakeholder influence and impact

All stakeholder information managed within this platform will be managed in accordance with privacy legislation. Confidential discussions between stakeholders, particularly those regarding negotiations and compensation, will be clearly marked and have restricted access to protect confidential information and uphold stakeholder privacy.

Reporting on community consultation outcomes

It is anticipated that input received from Project stakeholders during the approvals process will be used to inform a range of Project elements. Below is a brief description of each of these elements and how stakeholder input will be recorded:

- **Project design:** Comments and concerns raised by Project stakeholders will be recorded in a comments register and issued to GCM's Project Manager for assessment and response.
- **Stakeholder engagement approach, activities and tools:** Comments raised by Project stakeholders will be recorded in a comments register and referred to GCM for assessment and response.
- **Draft technical studies prepared for the project approvals:** It is anticipated that Project stakeholders will provide a range of feedback that can be used to inform the scope, draft findings and mitigation measures of draft technical studies prepared. Feedback received will be recorded in comments registers and issued to the relevant specialist for assessment and response.
- **Community benefit projects:** Comments and suggestions on potential community benefit projects for GCM investment will be recorded and considered by the Stakeholder and Community Reference Group, GCM's Community and Stakeholder Engagement Advisor and Managing Director.

GCM will provide direct responses to a query or comment from a stakeholder or community member. A consultation report will be prepared summarising the feedback received and how this has been considered by the project.

This report will be made available during the EES exhibition period as a part of the public review process. A number of systems are in place to enable community members and other stakeholders to provide feedback or express a concern about the Project. This will include consultation reports provided regularly to the community to close the feedback loop.

> ***The EES CCP is supported by a number of other policies and plans available on the GCM website. It is a living document that will be updated to reflect community feedback.***

3.8 Governance

> ***GCM's ESG framework seeks to achieve alignment, integration and compliance with a range of international and national principles, standards, protocols, performance expectations and disclosure requirements in relation to community and stakeholder engagement, First Nations peoples and cultural heritage. The Community Engagement Plan (CEP) is a core component of GCM's ESG framework***

Legislation and Policy

Victorian

The CCP has been designed to meet the legislative requirements of the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990 (Vic)* and the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) (Mineral Industries) Regulations 2019 (Vic)*. The CEP has also been informed by the guidance set out in *Resources Victoria's Community Engagement Guidelines for Mining and Mineral Exploration in Victoria*.

National

At a national level, the CEP has been informed by the Australian Government's Leading Practice Sustainable Development Program for the Mining Industry handbooks, including:

I. *Community engagement and development*
II. *Working with Indigenous Communities*

As a member of the Minerals Council of Australia (MCA), GCM:

III. complies with the *Enduring Value Framework*

The Enduring Value Framework is the Australian minerals industry framework for sustainable development. The principles reflect, guide and underpin the approach of MCA member companies to sustainability, including community and stakeholder engagement.

IV. implements the *Toward Sustainable Mining* operating framework

The Toward Sustainable Mining accountability framework comprises targeted protocols directed at enhancing the quality of public reporting on the sustainability performance of minerals companies. The framework has a core focus on continuous improvement in ESG practices and sets clear performance expectations around improving transparency between minerals companies and community and Indigenous stakeholders. GCM has considered a range of recent Federal Court decisions that have established new standards, expectations and principles for community and First Nations engagement in the development of major projects, including:

- *Tipakalippa v National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority, 2022, Federal Court*
- *Tipakalippa v National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (No 2), 2022, Federal Court*
- *Santos NA Barossa Pty Ltd v Tipakalippa, 2022, Federal Court*
- *Cooper v National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (No 2), 2023, Federal Court*
- *Munkara v Santos NA Barossa Pty Ltd (No 3), 2024 Federal Court*

While the above decisions concerned oil and gas projects and Commonwealth legislation, which does not have a direct application to Victorian projects, GCM is cognisant of the trends being reflected in these matters towards more direct and transparent engagement with Indigenous stakeholders in particular. To the best of its ability, GCM has sought to achieve a contemporary best practice model in the CEP and the various objectives and consultation measures proposed under it.

GCM Partners' Commitments to Leading Practice Community Engagement

The shareholders of GCM are Appian Capital Advisory LLP ('Appian') and REZir Pty Ltd.

Appian is signatory to the **United Nations-supported Principles for Responsible Investment** and requires all of its portfolio companies, including GCM, to adhere to the **International Finance Corporation, World Bank Group, Performance Standards on Environmental and Social Sustainability 2012**. These include performance standards regarding:

- community health, safety and security
- land acquisition and involuntary resettlement
- Indigenous peoples
- cultural heritage.

Appian is a member of the **Development Partner Institute (DPI)**. The DPI Framework for Mining commits DPI members to apply principles to mining projects including developing a shared purpose with a clear understanding and articulation of the long-term vision, goals, risks, opportunities and approaches for a potential project and its impact on the surrounding region have been envisioned, co-created, discussed and agreed to by all relevant stakeholders.

Appian is also committed to the **DPI's Responsible Sourcing Coalition for Minerals and Metals (RESCO)**. RESCO exists to accelerate a mineral value chain free from inequality, shaped by community values and committed to a mindset of long-term value creation. This includes a commitment to working towards landowners, rights holders and communities being equitable partners in decision-making.

Appian is implementing standardised **Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) and Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP)** requirements aligned to the **International Finance Corporation Performance Standards and the Equator Principles** for all its portfolio companies, including GCM.

The Equator Principles:

- Integrate assessment of environmental and social risks, including assessing the impacts of a proposed project on affected communities and the appropriateness of measures to avoid, mitigate, offset, compensate and remedy adverse risks and impacts.

- Require projects to demonstrate effective stakeholder engagement as an ongoing process in a structured and culturally appropriate manner with affected communities and stakeholders, including an informed consultation and participation process for projects with potentially significant adverse impacts on affected communities.

CASE STUDY

Mining and Rehabilitation Demonstration Pit

In early 2026, GCM constructed a Mining and Rehabilitation Demonstration Pit (Demonstration Pit). This trial put our mining methods into practice - from dust and water management through to backfilling and rehabilitation.

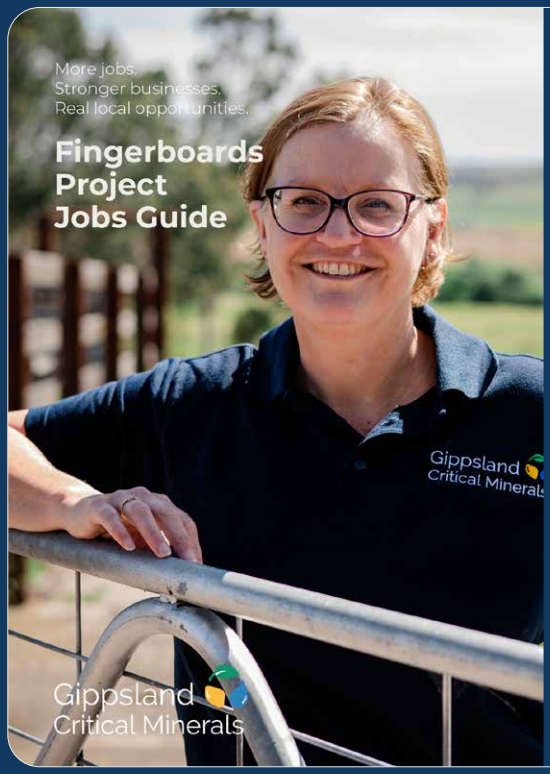
The Demonstration Pit is currently underway and tests technical and environmental approaches enabling us to measure and share on-site results before full-scale mining begins. We're undertaking this Demonstration Pit as part of our commitment to best practice design and transparency of our operations.

Excavation, backfilling and processing have now occurred. Revegetation of the backfilled pit has now begun, with monitoring ongoing. This will track vegetation growth, soil health and land stability to test and demonstrate that the land can be returned to productive agricultural use.

The Demonstration Pit program is not a pass or fail test. It is a scientific study with detailed data collected across many areas. We are collaborating with experts who have experience in Latrobe Valley mine rehabilitation, as well as local soils and conditions. Their expertise, together with our technical and environmental team, will ensure the results are robust and guide rehabilitation and mining practices for the life of the project.

CASE STUDY

Fingerboards Project Jobs Guide



“People want to know what this project means for them and their families, and how they can build a good career close to home.”

“This guide sets out the types of jobs expected, the qualifications typically required and the pathways people can begin preparing for today.”

Mick Harrington
Community & Stakeholder Lead

The Fingerboards Project Jobs Guide was published in early 2026 to outline the types of roles expected across development, construction and long-term operations. It covers 16 career areas, including mining, environmental management and restoration, logistics and administration.

The Fingerboards Project is expected to create around 400 construction jobs and approximately 300 ongoing operational roles, supporting local families, strengthening local businesses and creating long-term careers across the region.

Key workforce commitments are outlined, including GCM’s Gippsland-First Employment Policy. The policy prioritises people who live in or around East Gippsland and confirms the project will not operate a fly-in fly-out workforce.

Copies of the Jobs Guide are available at the GCM office in Bairnsdale or via the GCM website.

CASE STUDY

Backing local capability

In 2026 Riley Earthmoving joined Whelans in sharing more than $1 million in procurement contracts now flowing to East Gippsland businesses, working on the Mining and Rehabilitation Demonstration Pit (MRDP).

Operating in East Gippsland for more than 40 years, Riley Earthmoving brings deep regional experience and an expectation that major projects are undertaken with care for both the environment and the community.

Project Manager Paul Cox at Riley Earthmoving said the work underway should be understood in a broader regional context. “The Fingerboards Project has the potential to support long-term benefits for East Gippsland, not just through direct employment, but through the wider economic and social activity that comes with sustained investment over time,” he said.

“For the region, one of the most important outcomes is the opportunity it creates for young people to build professional careers in engineering, surveying, geotechnical, environmental and safety roles without having to leave East Gippsland to do so.”

Since announcing the MRDP, Gippsland Critical Minerals has received strong interest from locals seeking job and supplier opportunities. Anyone considering a career or working with the project is encouraged to register their interest at gippslandcriticalminerals.com/jobs-suppliers.

Gippsland Critical Minerals

www.gippslandcriticalminerals.com

Project email address: **contactus@gippslandcriticalminerals.com**

Project phone number: **1800 791 396**

Social media: The project is accessible via **LinkedIn** and **Facebook**

ChatBot: An interactive resource on the GCM website that provides real time responses to FAQs, available via the project webpage

GCM Virtual Office: Interactive project information available on GCM website

GCM office: **50 Forge Creek Road, Bairnsdale VIC 3875**