

From: [REDACTED]
To: [DEM:Mintabie Opal Mining](#)
Subject: Mintabie Opal Fields
Date: Wednesday, 26 September 2018 6:34:12 PM

As an Australian citizen and opal hunter I am appalled at the lack of foresight shown by the proposal to close these fields.

I am a stake-holder in this Review as an Australian Citizen who has the right to purchase a Precious Stones Permit and then fossick/noodle in a Designated Precious Stones Field. Along with 25 million of my fellow Australians.

- Do the government even realise they are putting future Stuart Highway road users at risk by moving to evict & bull-doze the Opal mining town, and Field, of Mintabie? The Mintabie SES, & CFS have attended many, many car accidents & fires over the years!! Mintabie is a HUGE asset in the large, remote area of Far North SA, particularly on such an isolated stretch of the Stuart Highway. The Mintabie Samaritans volunteer their time, energy & goodwill to train & are usually the first responders to any crisis that occur in the region. The government's actions will be the cause of future deaths if the #towneviction and PSF closure is allowed to proceed.
- Does the government realise the Mintabie Telecentre is the only open, accessible Post Office between Alice Springs & Coober Pedy?? Businesses at Marla also use this service.
- Does the Government realise that with these expulsion moves they will be sentencing young children to travel 80 km each way to and from school?

The APY Lands consist of an area of land of 102,700 km²- for approx 3,000 people..... And entry to those lands are firmly blocked to approx 25 million Aussies. Totally locked off lands. Apart from the long-time Designated Precious Stones Opal Field at Mintabie, an intensively mined area of, currently, a miniscule 2 km² . Even if the PSF were to be expanded (for which there is a good case for doing so), it would still be a tiny percentage. By removing the Designation of a Precious Stones Field at Mintabie, and the township, you will be taking away the opportunity of all Australians to visit and experience the challenges and triumphs of finding a piece of Australia's National

Gemstone.

The 2009 APY-Mintabie amended Legislation gave power that affected all Australians, in the fact that ordinary Australians are now forbidden to venture into Mintabie, which was previously an established, thriving opal field township that was open to ALL Australians, prior to the aboriginal land grants in the 1980's. So Goodbye to the rugged adventurers, grey nomads, rock hounds, 4WDDrivers and tourists, with your pockets full of money. You could have helped to bring the APY lands into the 21st century, raised their living standards, offered fresh opportunities, the possibilities could have been endless.

Mintabie, SA, Australia has deeply touched the hearts of a multitude of people over the long years of its existence. I like to think that it is only those people whose own inner qualities resonate with the characteristics of individuality, resourcefulness, genuineness, empathy & compassion.

I have long protested the years-long, multi-governmental bullying of Mintabie residents, which has caused prolonged mental anguish and untold distress to the populace over that time. After taking away the local Medical Centre, the State Government then cruelly planned to take away their homes. Now the next plan is to take away their very livelihoods, past-times and hobbies.

• It should be noted - In the 1/12/2009 edition of Hansard, a quote from the very respected Mr. Graeme Gunn, the former Member for Stuart, from within the APY Act debate, "In relation to this legislation (the 2009 Amendments to the APY Act), let me make it very clear that I believe the people at Mintabie are just as entitled as anyone else to have a place in the sun. They were legally there before the AP lands legislation came into effect. It was a part of the Walatina pastoral lease. I have been there many times, and they provided services and facilities and acted legally. " Unquote.

At the time of the original AP Legislation, 1981, the government stressed to Mintabie residents that change would be minimal & the opal miners would be protected.

Successive government's policies have actually been the cause

of the decline of local services & population, and have thereby created deliberate uncertainty in the opal town's future
At the time of the Mabo judgement and land rights, all Australians worried their very backyards would be at risk of being handed over to a Land Rights claim. The government said 'Occupied land would NEVER be handed over'.
Well, Mintabie WAS an established, occupied township at the time of the APY Land deal, so Mintabie was not supposed to be included within the deal. The Politicians of yester-year said 'Don't worry, Mintabie will be protected' Hah!

As an existing, occupied township such as Mintabie, SA, should NEVER EVER have been included in the 2009 APY Land Claim!
Please do not compound the error by locking away the Designated Precious Stones Field at Mintabie.
Yours cordially,

Robert Clarke