

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [DEM:Mintabie Opal Mining](#)  
**Subject:** The Future of Opal Mining at Mintabie  
**Date:** Sunday, 21 October 2018 7:55:53 PM

---

Submission from Tadija and Ailsa Soldo.  
The Future of Opal Mining at Mintabie.

To The Department for Energy and Mining,

We arrived in Mintabie to Opal mine in April 1979, my wife Ailsa, 5 year old daughter Tania and 18 months old son Paul.

It was a long journey 3000 kms of wind, dust, corrugations and rain in the desert, flooded and cold. Flat tyres, bogged in sand an eventful trip.

There was every type of camp site, swags, tents, caravans and some tin sheds. No facilities not even water.

Everything had to be provided by the miners. So from the beginning the town and field grew.

We applied for pspp's from the local Mines Department office. Our pspp numbers are 8124 and 8125. Then a residential lease and annual license no 15888 on the 8th October 1979.

Then we became involved in the communities efforts to make life easier for everyone.

Ailsa was voted in as Chairperson of the newly formed Mintabie Progress Association to raise money to provide the necessities of life,

Water, roads, communications, airstrip, SES, community centre and school. She also ran the Flying Doctor Clinic a very essential link to the

outside world not only for medical reasons but also phone calls. I was the treasurer helping to raise the required funds to develop the area.

We had many Town events mostly at the bush picnic grounds and later in the Community Centre when it was built.

Ailsa also ran a Chemist Depot for the Coober Pedy Pharmacy to make it easier for Patients to receive their prescriptions and other chemist items.

Everything was developed a water bore and storage tanks, roads, air strip, SES, and the Community Centre where the first school was held.

Initially we were led to believe that Mintabie would be a declared opal field with a Town area surveyed and a planned residential area set aside.

Mintabie Precious Stones Field was proclaimed on the 27th November 1980.

Then on 30th October 1981 everything changed when with very little prior warning to the miners that the land was part of a grant in the Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act (SA).

The state was to have possession and control of Lease Area for the term of the lease and any extension or renewal thereof enjoy possession and control of the Lease Area

Without interruption or disturbance by A.P. set out in 2002 draft.

There was an opal rush as happens on opal fields and the population grew over 1000 mostly mining with varied success.

After mining for four years I became partners in the Goanna Grill Bar with Luka Sumanovic in September 1985.

We became aware of the fact we would need to operate a hotel to fulfil our needs and that of the community.

Lambina opened to opal mining and we tried our luck there for a number of years because of the regulations it was very expensive and restricting for very little reward.

Mining was no longer permitted so people moved on.

When we applied for a hotel license it became obvious that the present building would not be suitable for the requirements of the liquor license regulations.

We needed a better premises from which to operate. Local materials would be needed as transport and the cost of all required equipment and products was beyond our means.

Rock from the cuts were an obvious choice. Having only built a small stone wall our our camp site I don't think I realised the extent of the work involved.

Every stone had to be sorted, collected, transported by a small trailer to the site. Then again sorted before they were placed in position and set in concrete.

A temporary building would not have been accepted for a venue for a hotel. There are many health and other regulations with which to comply.

Basically we were forced to build a more acceptable premises if we wished to operate within the laws set out by the various Government Departments.

My wife Ailsa moved to Adelaide in December 1997 to have another child Zoe.

She never moved back permanently to the field because of ongoing health problems for herself and our daughter.

Also our other children who had been taught by correspondence for seven years were now in high school and Mintabie had just begun at a primary level.

I stayed in Mintabie to support my family by mining and the hotel business. Consequently of the 50 years I have been in Australia I have spent 40 years in Mintabie.

Recently our daughter Tania was diagnosed with Leukaemia with a very doubtful outcome. My wife health deteriorated and I had a number of operations which has led to me spending time away from the area but I am still involved with the hotel business.

The Government should be obligated to compensate myself, my family and my business partner Luka Sumanovic for the years spent in our endeavours to support the growth of a community.

Also there is the issue of the loss of income in the future. It is as if our life memories and work have no meaning or value.

We should be awarded a sum of at least \$1,000,000. Whatever the amount will not be enough to make up for the time, work and emotional upset caused by the sudden actions of the Government.

The Mines Department has always been fickle with its treatment of Mintabie. Moving their offices to Marla back to Mintabie then again Marla now on to Coober Pedy.

Closing Mintabie and basing miners in Marla to be successful there would have to be a Mines Department Office in Marla. Roads would need to be upgraded to Mintabie and on the field.

Mining equipment, transport, materials for housing and fuel should be subsidised by the Government as costs are very restrictive. Only then would this be able to work.

Looking forward to a successful outcome for the people of Mintabie from these latest plans of the Government, Compensation can be the only fair and just action on their part.

Kind Regards,

Tadija (Ted) and Ailsa Soldo