

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [DEM:Mintabie Opal Mining](mailto:DEM:Mintabie.Opal.Mining)  
**Subject:** CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: THE FUTURE OF OPAL MINING AT MINTABIE  
**Date:** Tuesday, 30 October 2018 8:41:05 AM

---

Government of South Australia

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: THE FUTURE OF OPAL MINING AT MINTABIE

As part of my Submission I offer the following Report, as a whole, however I have only inserted the Report Abstract (and Source link), which is quoted here:

Mintabie Opal Resource Evaluation:

Current value of opal resources and projected value of undiscovered resources  
Laszlo F Katona. Geological Survey of South Australia, Department for Energy and Mining August 2018 Report Book 2018

<https://sarigbasis.pir.sa.gov.au/WebtopEw/ws/samref/sarig1/image/DDD/RB201800025.pdf>

Abstract:

A detailed spatial analysis shows that after approximately 40 years of mining in Mintabie, an area totalling less than two square kilometres has been intensively mined.

A conservative estimate of the area of greatest prospectivity within the Mintabie Precious Stones Field is 20 square kilometres.

Within the 20 km<sup>2</sup> region of high prospectivity, the Mintabie opal field will support Mining for 400 years at the levels already experienced in its lifetime to date.

Complimentary analysis performed in 2002 reveals further prospective regions within the Mintabie PSF totalling 44 km<sup>2</sup> .

The total value of the opal mined at Mintabie to 2016 has been estimated by the South Australian Government to be \$412M.

An area-based analysis concludes that this is less than 10% of the total contained opal at Mintabie. The opal resource in Mintabie, including the opal already found is therefore estimated to have a raw opal value of over \$4B

(The full Report can be found at:

<https://sarigbasis.pir.sa.gov.au/WebtopEw/ws/samref/sarig1/image/DDD/RB201800025.pdf>)

<I am a citizen of the United States and concerned for my family's well being since a portion of my income is derived from the sale of Mintabie Opal that I cut, polish and make custom jewery with. If the Mintabie Opal production were to stop, my profit margin would be significantly reduced and effectively putting me out of business since the majority of my clientele demand high quality Mintabe Opal.

This particular locale is very different than the rest of Australia's Opal and the demand now more than ever is high in the US market. I also sell rough Opal to other cutters and jewelers alike who's families will be affected by the cessation of mining in this region. Prices for Mintabie Opal rough has skyrocketed due to talks of shutting down the mines. Please for the sake of our children's future, I and many other friends and family plead that you do not shut down mining at Mintabie.

Actions the S.A. government could take instead of shutting down the town of Mintabie:

Take a small percentage of profits generated by mining to increase police presence and security in the area to crack down and reduce crime, drugs, hooning, etc.

Increasing efforts to clean the area up and more importantly, rebrand the Mintabie mines as a travel destination to bring much needed revenue for the local economy to become more established, continuously profitable and sustainable for future generations to come.>

- Does 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 manybim, 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 km<sup>2</sup>- 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 km<sup>2</sup> . 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,

Arek Varjabedian