



Lightning Ridge Miners' Association Ltd.

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Mineral Resources Division
Department for Energy and Mining
GPO Box 320
Adelaide SA 5001

By email: DEM.MintabieOpalMining@sa.gov.au

Re: The Future of Opal Mining at Mintabie

The Lightning Ridge Miners' Association Ltd (LRMA) is vehemently opposed to the closure of the Mintabie Precious Stones Field and to the closure of the opal mining town of Mintabie.

The SA government estimates there is substantial reserves of excellent quality opal still available to be mined in and around Mintabie. This potential resource is vital to the future of the opal industry.

Mintabie currently has over 21 active mining teams operating which is no mean feat for an isolated community and is a testament to the potential of the area. In fact the SA government should be making every effort to encourage increased opal production not sterilise these opal reserves forever. Commodity prices change, technology is ever improving and with the support of the SA government Mintabie could potentially be a great boon to SA, the opal industry and the nation.

In addition, the NOMA believes the APY people on 'Granite Downs' wish to open up their property to opal mining. It would be ironic if one opal area was opened up as another, in close proximity, is closed down.

It does not make sense to the LRMA that a whole community would be closed due to an alleged law and order problem rather than addressing the problem by other means such as compliance and enforcement.

It is astonishing that the Federal and State Government is prepared to step in and close down a town. The LRMA is very concerned with the precedent this sets. There are numerous small opal mining communities spread throughout the outback areas of NSW, Qld and SA and the LRMA would hate to think these communities may be at risk in the future.

Australia produces the finest opal in the world. It is vital the industry is able to supply sufficient opal to enable the industry to sustain, grow and effectively compete in international markets that have taken many decades to develop.

Opal is Australia's national gemstone and the State emblem of South Australia as black opal is the State emblem of NSW.

The LRMA looks forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MOB', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Maxine O'Brien
Secretary/Manager