

**Submission
No 1**

INQUIRY INTO TOURISM IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Name: Mr Ross Langlands

Date received: 21/05/2013

Submission by: Ross Langlands, to:

The General Purpose Standing Committee Into:

Local Tourism

Dear Members of the Committee. Please allow me the opportunity to inform you of a policy direction from within the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service and also the Lands Department, which is not only depriving myself and thousands like me from enjoying our lawful pastime but is effecting the viability of many small town businesses which for many years have depended on our custom to survive.

I refer to the Lawful Practice of Fossicking and Prospecting.

Since the review of the 1992 Mining Act dated 2007. The National Parks and Wildlife Service has adopted an hostile and baseless policy of denying small impact Fossickers & Prospectors access to many areas within the N.Ps which have previously and traditionally been areas where Prospectors and Fossickers were entitled to carry out their Lawful right.

They have an open policy of continual denial of those traditional lands as well as foreclosing those rights to ALL fossicking and prospecting whatsoever.

As far as I am aware, no environmental studies were initiated or published which would or could support such a policy being introduced. Nature itself does far more, (environmental) damage in one minor flooding event in any given waterway or stream then centuries of fossicking and panning could EVER do.

As a member of the NSW/ACT Prospectors and Fossickers Association..NAPFA, I am joined by the hundreds of fellow members in decrying this appalling decision by NPWS. We are in the main, of mature age, responsible citizens. We do however include our children and grandchildren in this healthy outdoors activity and in doing so pass down to them the skills and knowledge of our ancestors.

We In fact, remove heavy metals such as Lead and Mercury FROM the environment. We ENCOURAGE OTHERS to abide by the regulations contained within Section 12 of the Mining Act and we endeavour to leave a negative impact in the areas on which we camp.

I, as do many of my fellow prospectors have documented proof of our continued participation down through the years since 1855, it is in our DNA. It is a very real part of our cultural heritage. As it is to those many small businesses, that supply our goods and services.

Many small hotels and accommodation places have closed or will soon close as a result of the NPWS policies and the Privatisation of many public roads that provide access to these areas.

I implore the committee to investigate the possibility of reopening all those areas previously open to panning and fossicking as well as for the purpose of metal detecting.

That a moratorium be put in place preventing any further closures until a properly conducted impact statement is produced for each area. Including a statement of the financial opportunities to local business.

That the cultural heritage value of these areas be recognised on equal terms with the aboriginal significance of certain areas, to not do so is to deny history and the part our forefathers played and in which we continue to play, in these historic regions.

In conclusion may I inform the committee, that the Gold Rush never stopped. It is a living breathing part of our nation. We are all of us in some way involved in its manifestations, even if it's by just bearing witness to it. Thank You for this opportunity.

Ross L. Langlands