



SUBMISSION:

**SUBMISSION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF RESOURCES – FEEDBACK ON THE
DRAFT DEVELOPMENT PLAN & PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO CURRENT
MINING CATEGORIES**

JANUARY 2022

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BOULDER OPAL MINING

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Queensland Boulder Opal Association (QBOA) was founded in Winton in 1992, to represent Opal miners within the Winton region, and to promote this incredibly rare and beautiful gemstone.

Australia is home to the world's highest quality, precious opal. In July 1993 the Governor-General, the Hon Bill Hayden AC, proclaimed the opal Australia's national gemstone. Australian opals are valued worldwide for their stability as well as their brilliant colours.

Boulder Opal is found in the regions of Winton, Longreach, Barcoo, Paroo, and Quilpie, stretching across an area of over 1000km - what was once an inland sea around 100 million years ago, and what we now know as the Great Artesian Basin. Today opal mining is carried out across this vast area - refer to attachments 1-3.

OPAL

'Australia's National Gemstone'

Opal formation in the great artesian basin - A variety of opalization theories have been proposed, including weathering theory, microbe theory and syntectonic theory and redox theory. Not all opals formed the same way, so therefore multiple models may apply.

The opals are mined connected to their host rock, then generally put through a very basic cutting, shaping and polishing process, before being set into jewelry. Boulder opal has a full spectrum of colour, the mesmerizing exhibition of colour often giving the illusion that the display seems to be happening deep within the stone.

The lack of Government interest in developing the Opal Industry in Australia has been evident for many years. People's interest in Opal around the world is currently at a record high.

Taken from the earth, examined in the hand, then cut and polished – the result can leave you breathless.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Queensland Boulder Opal Association (QBOA) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Department of Resources.

40. Implement reforms for small-scale mining

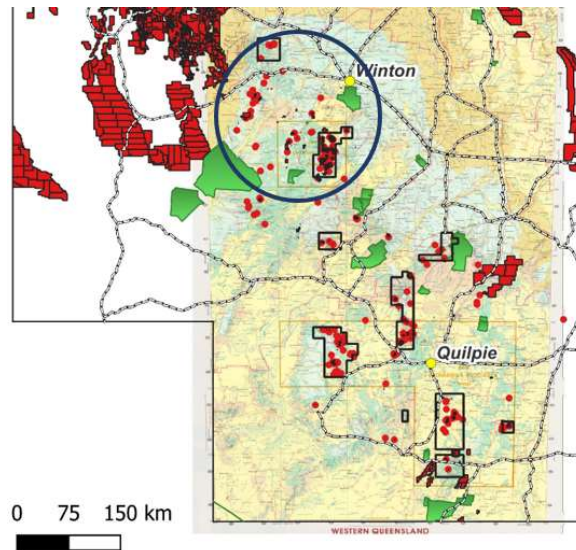
The Queensland Government proposes to remove mining claims from the Mineral Resources Act 1989, while continuing to provide legitimate pathways for small-scale miners to gain tenure through a mining lease. Appropriate transitional arrangements to grandfather existing tenement holders will be developed in consultation with stakeholders.

This submission has been made in consultation with the Winton Shire Council and other organisations/individuals as seen fit by the QBOA and who are associated with the Opal Mining/Manufacturing/Selling industry.

The following sections within the submission, provide vital detail to the Department of Resources in relation to the proposed changes by the Department in relation to the Mineral Resources Act 1989:

1. QBOA Feedback
2. QBOA Proposed Amendment to the current 'Small Scale' Mining Category

On 9 December 2021, I met with representatives from the Mineral Assessment Hub to discuss in further detail the proposal to remove mining claims from the Act, and to express QBOA's concerns in relation to the proposed amendments.



This submission put forward by the QBOA representatives, focuses primarily on the Winton Opal mining region as indicated in the map above.

James Evert

QBOA President

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF OPAL MINING TO THE WINTON REGION & OUTBACK QUEENSLAND

The Opal Industry has a compelling economic story to tell and is quite unique to other mining sectors. Much of the investment in the Opal industry occurs in regional outback communities, strengthening regional economies, creating employment, and making regional communities more resilient.

The Winton Shire has benefited greatly from the economic contribution from the Boulder Opal industry since the Opal boom in the late nineteenth century until today. Miners within the region contribute significantly to local businesses and other services for food supplies, day-to-day necessities, equipment maintenance/spares, fuel and other operating essentials.

WINTON REGION OPAL MINING STATISTICS

OPERATION	NUMBER
Opal Retail Outlets (Winton)	4
Opal Miner - Large Operation (3+ Heavy Machinery / grossing avg. > \$63K/annum)	26
Opal Miner - Medium Operation (1-2 Heavy Machinery / grossing avg. > \$10k/annum)	11
Opal Miner - Small (Hand Miners)	8
Wholesale / Opal Cutters	46
Direct employees (within region)	103
Residential Land (Direct)	Approx. 22
Residential Land Ownership (Indirect)	Approx. 15
Commercial & Industrial	Approx. 9

Table 1: Winton’s Opal Mining Statistics

The Winton/Opalton Boulder Opal community make up a large portion of the Winton shire population of approximately 1150 personnel. The Opal industry also attracts hundreds of individuals to the Shire throughout the year, for the purpose of purchasing opal either in the rough or wholesale and through tourism.

The QBOA attracts thousands of visitors (Australian and international) to the region each year through the following avenues:

- Opalton Bush Park fossicking area and camping grounds,
- Two Opal festivals held in the township of Winton during the year,
- Queen of Gems Jewelry design Awards (International competition),
- Members of the QBOA own Opal retail outlets,
- National Opal Symposium (Industry knowledge, sharing of techniques, & new discoveries) held in Winton, and
- Opal buyers/traders all year.

SMALL SCALE MINING ESTABLISHMENT FEES/CHARGES

The current operating costs for a small-scale miner are detailed in the table below:

FEE/CHARGE TYPE	Mining Claims	MINING LEASE
	Prescribed Mining Claims	
Application Fee	\$408.40	\$849.00
Native Title (Advertising Fee)	\$500.00	\$3000.00
Environmental Authority	N/A	\$688.00
Land Compensation	Varies	Varies
Native Title	Varies	Varies
Security	(Refer to Attachment 3)	
Yearly Rent Fee	N/A	\$64.00/ha
Council Rates / Fire Levy (Winton)	N/A	\$375.40/yr. (Fire levy \$112.40)
Financial Assurance (EPA) Rehabilitation Costs	N/A	(Refer to Attachment 4)
Annual Fee ERA	N/A	\$712.00
Royalties		2.5% payable > \$100,000

Table 2: Small-scale Mining Establishment and On-going Fees/Charges

Note: Mining claims and leases (number and area size) allowable:

1. Mining Claim - maximum allowable size is 30m x 30m (Only 2 permissible, or one of each type of Claim)
2. Prescribed Mining Claim – Maximum size allowable is 20 hectares (Only 2 permissible, or one of each type of Claim)
3. Mining Leases (unlimited number) - Maximum size is unlimited

The QBOA and the opal mining industry collectively, recognise the importance of Government Revenue, especially in the instance where monies are returned to local people in the form of services such as hospitals, schools, and road infrastructure etc.

PROPOSED ACTION – DEPARTMENT OF RESOURCES

The proposed action (40) in the draft plan is to remove mining claims as a resource authority from the Mineral Resources Act 1989 (the Act) Chapter 3 Mining Claims - Released by the Department of Resources on the 24 November 2021.

40. Implement reforms for small-scale mining (2021-2023)

The state's return from the regulatory and administrative effort it expends on regulating small scale mining is limited due to small production amounts which provide limited economic returns to the state. Additionally, a recent cost-benefit analysis found that the sector had only a marginal benefit on the Queensland economy and surrounding communities. As a result, the Queensland Government proposes to remove mining claims from the Mineral Resources Act 1989. It will implement an immediate moratorium on accepting new mining claim applications while consultation on this proposal occurs through this draft. The government will announce its decision about progressing this reform in the final plan. It will also consult with stakeholders to develop transitional arrangements to grandfather existing tenement holders. In working through these transition arrangements, requirements under the Environmental Protection Act 1994 will be considered and streamlined. Importantly, small-scale miners will still be able to gain tenure through a mining lease, and recreational miners will still get access to designated fossicking areas in the state.

While consultation on the draft plan occurs, the Queensland Government has introduced a one-year moratorium on applications for new mining claims. This moratorium has been implemented by means of a restricted area under section 391 of the Act, which was gazetted on, and was effective from 25 November 2021.

This has resulted in the following:

1. No new applications for mining claims can be accepted during the moratorium period.
2. Any application lodged prior to the moratorium on 25 November 2021, will continue to be progressed.
3. Existing mining claim holders can continue to operate in accordance with their conditions of tenure.
4. Existing mining claim holders will also be able to apply to transfer or renew their tenure.

1. QUEENSLAND BOULDER OPAL ASSOCIATION (QBOA) FEEDBACK

The QBOA would like to present feedback to the Department of Resources in response to the proposed action 40. Implement reforms for small-scale mining, documented in the draft Queensland Resources Industry Development Plan and released on 24 November 2021.

The QBOA strongly disagrees with the outcome of the Queensland Government sponsored Synergies report released in November 2021 along with the reaction by the Government to impose a moratorium on the small scale mining tenure shows the lack of understanding and knowledge by a disconnected company contracted by the government to report on a mining industry that has for over a hundred years contributed to the Queensland and Australian economy.

The Synergies report lacks understanding and knowledge of our industries flow on effect of "value adding" from a small scale miners production in Queensland to the hundreds of people relying on opal product to cut, manufacture, wholesale, design and retail, both in this country and around the world.

This Report demonstrates how rash decisions can be made by a Government Department that can cripple industries, slow down progress, and create economic hardship for individuals and businesses.

The QBOA (based in Winton) represents Opal miners, Opal cutters, Wholesalers, Jewellery designers, Jewellers, Retailers, along with a wide range of people who all rely on the production of Opal from the Queensland Opal fields.

Reference in the Synergies report to the Winton mining district and the Opal Industries 'Lack of Contribution' to the Winton Shire and to the State, is a total lack of understanding of what the Opal Industry is and how the industry works.

The Awareness of Opal and the development of the Opal mining community in the Winton Mining District first came about by the discovery of Opal at Opalton in the late 1880s. As of the 24 November 2021, for the first time in over 140 years no one can peg a mining claim in Opalton.

The Opal Industry in the Winton Mining District has had a resurgence of investment in mining and is continuing to grow with new equipment entering the fields each year. Opal Miners continue to educate and develop themselves and their Opal interest in the ever-changing economic environment across the world. Opal miners now value add their own raw materials which they have mined with great success. The success of this process has allowed miners to survive on product that once was worth nothing and as a result allows the miner to invest back into mining.

Reference in the Synergies report to the opal industries nil contribution to the tourism industry is unfathomable, the Queensland and Australian Opal Mining Industry has built and supported retail shops in every city in this country along with promoting Australia around the world under the AusTrade banner and private enterprises for more than 40 continuous years.

These Opal retail shop fronts, sell and promote Opal, the Industry, Australia, and the regions the Opal is sourced from, they also employ hundreds of people and support many families across Australia.

The Ongoing Opal Hunters series (Winton was the first Queensland region to air on the series) is continually watched by millions of people around the world promoting Australia and Opal Mining. As a result of this series, we are seeing new miners interested in entering the opal mining sector across the country.

The states lack of interest in developing the Opal Industry in Queensland has been evident for many years, led by the ever increasing complicated and disjointed processes for small scale mining tenure. This can result in discouragement of investment in the industry, which may lead to a depletion of stock and other negative results towards livelihoods and the Tourism, Wholesale and Retail industries within Australia.

The QBOA would like less disconnect from the State and assistance provided to navigate their ever-changing website of 'my mines on line', rather than the disconnect and distance demonstrated between the department and the miner.

Geological exploration data for future potential mining prospect is nonexistent from the State, this is left up to private enterprise. State input in this area would be beneficial for the Opal Industry and future generations.

The States position in 2000 to help the small scale opal mining community in Winton to negotiate the legal complexities of the first " Right To Negotiate" agreement and further the first " Indigenous Land Use Agreement" with the Traditional land owners from this region and small scale opal miners, was an example of how this help from the Government at that time working with the collective opal mining industry in the Winton region had a successful outcome for everyone involved. This was and still is a great example of how

invested groups in the region can successfully work together having a longer broader result across the industry giving stability for all parties involved and economic growth in the shire.

At the end of the 10 year life of the these agreements, the government's decision not to help the opal industry any further with the Native Title process, therefor leaving this complicated expensive every changing process to individuals or associations to deal with, shifting all responsibilities of this part of the tenure process completely over to the opal miner resulting in often unrealistic, unworkable, lengthy, expensive outcomes that the majority of the time completely stops the progress of the tenure application.

The opal miner now has the total responsibility to achieve a successful outcome for a native title agreement. The historic Winton mining district in general has had a long and good working relationship with landowners over the last 40 years with generational landowners in these regions familiar with opal mining activities over the many years and totally aware of where the main concentration of mining activity is taking place. These Landowners and opal miners in the Winton Mining District traditionally have had a good communication relationship between all parties involved.

Opal mining today with the advanced machinery and mining techniques developed by miners to move the dirt has had a positive effect on historic workings and new workings leaving a neat clean footprint as the mine progresses and is finalised.

As in the Winton mining district in recent years, when a Landowner decides they just do not want the opal mining industry to operate on their holdings, the delays in working through this situation causes huge time loss to the miner, personal stress to individuals' families and an industry as a whole, loss of opportunity and increased personal business cost.

Opal miners are aware and familiar with Biosecurity obligations and act accordingly to meet those requirements.

The department of resources plays no role in referring a mining claim to the land court for determination of compensation if the matter remains unresolved between the landowner and the miner. Opal miners' now have total responsibility in trying to achieve a successful outcome for a landowner's compensation agreement.

The introduction of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) department in more recent times has added to the complexities of the granting of a mining tenure. Before the introduction of the EPA, the management of the opal fields in the Winton district was the responsibility of the Mines Department. The remains of evidence of old workings from that period are still present today, all previously signed off by approval from the department on the cancellation of the tenure.

Today's opal miners are continually reminded and referred to that old period and method of mining by past generations, and as such falsely treated accordingly as though that is how we continue to mine today.

Modern Opal miners are continually tidying up the majority of these old workings at their own expense as they work through old disturbed mine sites within their tenures. In time, all old workings will be rehabilitated as the current opal miners systematically revisit and work old mine sites.

This modern approach to mining a site on the opal fields should be encouraged rather than discouraged by the ever-increasing demands put forward by the EPA department. The opal miner is responsible to deal with the EPA department.

The QBOA believes the current model put forward by the State for Mining Claims, Prescribed mining claims and Mining leases with some modification, would be the best model for a small scale mining sector in this state for the years ahead. The QBOA would like to put forward points for consideration that could be implemented into the reform adopted by the state in the hope that the reform that is suited to this type of mining will secure the future and certainty of Opal, Sapphire, and Gold mining. For consideration:

- The Mining Claim in a restricted area like Opalton in the Winton mining district, is the first viable economic step for legal Tenure to enter the opal mining industry to mine.
- The Secure framework of a mining Tenure has served the opal mining industry well for over 140 years in the Winton mining district.
- The mining Claim Tenure system prior to the 24 November 2021 worked and worked well. We now have an opportunity to further improve on the Mining Claim Model as it stands, if this can be achieved small scale mining and the communities who support those regions have a future.
- Mining claims in Government designated restricted areas has allowed these regions to be mined collectively by a larger number of miners which in turn creates stability to the industry and communities that support them.
- The Prescribed Mining Claim is the second economic step up to move into a bigger opal mining operation.
- The Prescribed Mining Claim has served the opal mining industry well since its introduction in 2013.
- The remote regions of the Queensland Boulder Opal fields south of Winton have embraced the Prescribed Mining Claim as a higher level of entry to secure tenure and mine as opposed to the area size restrictions imposed in the designated restricted areas.
- The obligations built around the Prescribed mining claim along with the economic benefits of application and grant as compared to a mining Lease have allowed our opal industry to grow considerably in the last seven years.
- As a result of the success of the Prescribed Mining Claims we have seen new miners and growth on the mining fields in the Winton mining district. The growth has flowed into the community of Winton and surrounding communities, confirming its importance to the economic development of these shires.
- The Mining Lease is the third step up to move into the situation of securing enough potential ground that the miner requires to secure and complete a project.

The Modern Boulder Opal Miner

Is socially, environmentally, and community minded, with business savvy. They continually strive to meet all environmental, native title responsibilities and other government obligations.

- The economic cost of a Mining Lease is significantly more expensive than a Mining Claim along with the ongoing cost for the life of the Lease.
- The Mining Lease caters for operations that work on a larger scale requiring more land and a portfolio of Leases that allow planning moving forward.
- The Mining Lease process needs to be simplified and modified to allow quicker granting of tenure at an affordable cost on the opal fields in Queensland.

-
- The coordination of all the departments and stakeholders involved in the granting of a Mining Claim and a Mining lease (i.e., Mines Dept: EPA: Native Title: Landowners), requires a less complicated and cost-effective pathway to the granting of tenure.
 - The method of mining and extraction of opal in the remote regions of Queensland leaves a "Minimum" footprint on the environment as compared to other industries that have been operating in that same region for longer periods of time.
 - By not including the EPA as part of the Mining Claim process, the Department have acknowledged the small footprint opal mining leaves on the environment, this acknowledgement needs to be continued in any further reforms on Mining Claims, Mining Leases and Exploration Permits.

ASSOCIATED FEEDBACK

Opal Auctions Australia

Feedback received by QBOA from the President of the Opal Association Mr. Paul Sedawie on the 30 December 2021. (Refer to Attachment 6)

The Opal Association Incorporated is made up of opal cutters, dealers, retail/sellers, and exporters of opal. We are concerned of the low value the Queensland government has put on the opal industry in the state and the benefits to the state. The processing of the rough opal to the finished product as a cut stone or as jewellery is incredibly labour-intensive employing hundreds of people throughout the state and across the country. The opal retail industry in Queensland used to have a turnover in the millions but that has been decimated due the collapse of inbound tourists to Australia.

The internet has increased recently and just one example of a Queensland based company on opalauctions.com sells approximately \$10 million per year with 30 % being opals sourced in Queensland. There are several other internet companies in Queensland selling approximately \$500,000 to 1 million in sales per year. There are also several Queensland based companies exporting opal to the world, providing numerous jobs for Queenslanders.

We believe the Queensland Opal Industry needs support to keep mining as commercially viable as possible. The outback opal hunters tv show has a potential audience of 100 million viewers worldwide, of which approximately one third of the filming is conducted in Queensland alone. This has a huge positive impact on the State's tourism industry, Opal sales worldwide and encourages miners to enter the business.

Paul Sedawie - President of the Opal Association – Founding member of the Australian opal center in Lightning Ridge. <http://www.opal.asn.au/opal/>

Boulder Opal Traders (Constable and Co.) Australia

Feedback received by QBOA from Mr. Michael Constable – Principle of Constable & Co. / Vice President of the QBOA, on the 3 January 2022.

Feedback in relation to the proposed Queensland Resources Industry Development Plan - With specific reference to the moratorium on mining claims and its effect on the opal mining industry.

My background in the opal industry involves some 38 years' experience, predominately in the Retail, Wholesale, Manufacturing and Export side of the opal industry. I currently operate an online ecommerce business specialising in Queensland Boulder Opal, based out of Winton Queensland. Currently I hold the position of vice president of the Queensland Boulder Opal Association QBOA.

Our customers are predominately international, with an ever increasing number of Australian customers (wholesale jewellers and other clients).

My feedback in relation to this mater relates to the extended view of opal mining and its flow on effects within the immediate local Winton community, Queensland and ultimately Australia and the world.

I have attached figures obtained from the World's largest online Opal retail house, of which we are a member (Refer to attachment 6). I have extracted the verifiable percentages relating to Queensland Boulder Opal.

What this shows is a dramatic and consistent increase in the demand for all forms of Queensland Opal. This has also been borne out by our own companies increase in turnover in the last 5 years of 25% per annum with the last two years over 100% on previous years. There are also a number of other platforms selling Boulder Opal, these include eBay, Etsy, Instagram, private/company websites, festivals, markets, Gemborees, and other CBD retail outlets.

We are not miners - however we invest tens of thousands of dollars within the Winton community each year. We support local businesses and suppliers - be this fuel, food, rates, post office and many other local services. This income is derived from the opal industry.

Queensland Boulder Opal is shipped from the miner, regardless of the size of operation, either a claim or lease, to processors, wholesalers around Queensland, Australia and the world. The demand is ever increasing and with this we require increased production and the mining claims system being the ideal entry point for prospective miners is crucial to our business.

*Strong evidence shows that rough opal was predominately sent overseas for processing, a great proportion of it is now processed here in Queensland and Australia. This has provided increased employment and business opportunities and value adding on-shore. **Refer to the Boulder Opal Sales associated with Opal Auctions – Attachment 6.***

Opalton Miner / Lease and Claim Holders – Alison Summerville and Gill Summerville

The benefits of opal mining are not just economical, or tourism related, and I wish to highlight the importance of enduring generations in the industry. My parents are opal miners, my brother and I also, my three sons are in the mining industry, and one is a geologist. I have a granddaughter named Opal also – a unique and vivid 10-year-old who has opal fever and wants to mine colour with Nana.

Collectively our families have been a part of the industry from mining, cutting, wholesale, jewelry, and retail for over 45 years. We are spread far and wide around Australia and oversees now and continue to promote, mine and sell this wonderful gem.

Like all industries, the future generations hold the key to success. Our family has seen the absolute multitude of changes – from a simple peg and dig style to the now laborious and confusing online system. The next generation need to be able to enter the industry knowing it will be viable and manageable on all levels. Without them, another family industry will be overtaken by large corporations who are interested in profit rather than the future. Small scale mining and Mining claims are our future guided by the knowledge, stories and history of the generations.

2. QBOA - PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CURRENT 'SMALL-SCALE MINING' CATEGORY

The Queensland Government Department of Resources has grouped together Sapphire and Opal mining – as small-scale mining. The two industries work independently of each other including location, scale, and operational processes – Refer to **Attachment 2** – Sapphire Fields hand mining claims and **Attachment 5** – Extract Environmental Protection Act 1994 (Schedule 4).

The QBOA would like to encourage the Government to listen to the "Small Scale Mining" groups to develop a mining tenure model that is stable and that will encourage new people to our industry, miners to mine, which in turn grow and allow outback communities to prosper. The QBOA would like to put forward the following points for consideration:

- Leave the existing Mining Claim model with some adjustments, i.e. in Government Gazetted Designated Restricted Mining Areas like at Opalton in the Winton mining district leave as is.
- Leave the existing Prescribed mining claim model with some minor adjustments.
- Allow Miners to apply for up to five Prescribe Mining Claims.
- Identify Mining Claims in Restricted Mining Areas in their own right from Prescribed Mining Claims.
- Clear the whole Opalton reserve region (four sub blocks) with the obligations of Native Title and Cultural Heritage responsibilities.
- Increase the allowable size of a mining Claim inside a Designated Restricted Areas from 30m x 30m to 50m x 50m therefore allowing miners more ground to mine with less application paperwork as the mine develops.
- Allow more drilling activity from the surface on these mining claims inside the Designated Restricted Areas, this will speed up and develop the potential deposit in turn will support the industry for growth.
- Leave all existing camp sites inside the Opalton reserve as is.
- Develop an economic model moving forward for secure tenure for mining camps, be it mobile or semi-permanent, as a separate identity to a mining Tenure.
- Simplify and speed up the granting of all small scale mining tenure applications.
- Use the regional mines department offices (Winton, Quilpie, and Yowah), to be a one stop shop to complete a mining tenure application along with any help required in navigating the complex and complicated mining tenure process, that involves many different parties.
- Create a better working relationship between the State, departments, and the miner, with the aim to build a pathway forward that will be simplified and work better for all parties into the future.
- Create land compensation agreements built on past history of this remote region that is acceptable by all parties, therefore allowing a quicker solution to the existing application process.

WINTON SHIRE COMMUNITY

The Winton community is a great example of how opal miners have economically and socially integrated into the fabric of what allows a regional town to survive and prosper.

The Federal and Queensland government invest tens of millions of dollars into regional Queensland in various projects trying to stabilise, develop and support these communities as they struggle with the exodus of young people and the transformation of how remote businesses operate.

With the transformation of the way the modern grazing station operate, Regional communities like Winton have had to adapt to a changing model to supplement the loss of workers who supported that industry along with the drop off of expenditure into the town.

The Winton Shire Council has always understood the importance of the opal industry in its shire. It has always supported and encouraged opal miners in its shire to keep developing its industry.

The Continuing transformation of towns like Winton investing more into Tourism to support its changing historic economic base puts this community in a stronger position to survive and prosper into the future. The Winton Shire Council recognises that Opal and Opal Miners are an important part of that transformation.

The Opal industry supports Tourism and the Tourism investments built around the greater Western Queensland Region. The ongoing progress of a Winton opal mining community is essential for the growth and survival of this remote historic town.

The Uniqueness of "Australian Opal, Sapphires, Diamonds and Gold" together, all form part of the Billion Dollar world of Luxury putting Queensland and Australia at the forefront in promoting Luxury across the world.

On numerous occasions within the Winton Shire, graziers and opal miners are known to work together on various projects across this remote region, for purposes of and including but is not limited to the:

- Use of earthmoving equipment to develop pastoral interests
- Locating and clearing of designated boundaries and fence lines
- Assisting with access routes, roads etc. and other earthworks
- Water Divining – locating underground water supplies (stock and Council water reserves for roads/excavation works)
- Managing Declared Restricted Matter as described within the Biosecurity Act 2014 – Restricted Matter, (Schedule 2)

CONCLUSION

The Queensland opal industry including miners, trader's, cutters, and retailers, work hard to promote this spectacular gem. Queensland Opal dominates the international market however, although Opal is well known in Australia, the industry struggles on many levels through the lack of consumer understanding, knowledge, and value of opal.

Despite the challenges faced by the industry, the QBOA wish to support and encourage the existing members, new generations of opal miners and other interested stakeholders.

The QBOA has serious concerns around the recent decisions made by the Department of Resources and look forward to further negotiations in relation to industry decision making with the department of Resources.

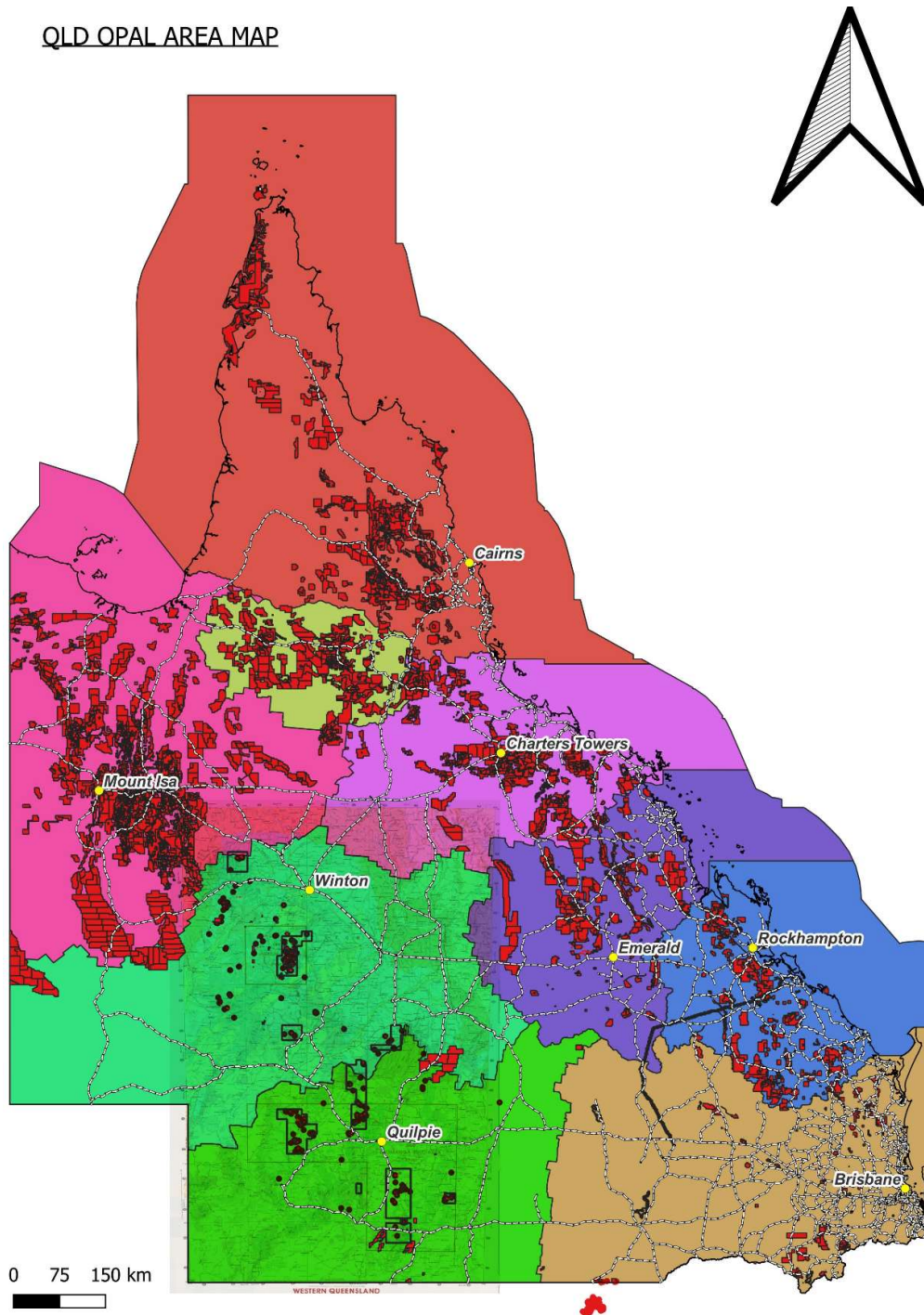
James Evert

QBOA President

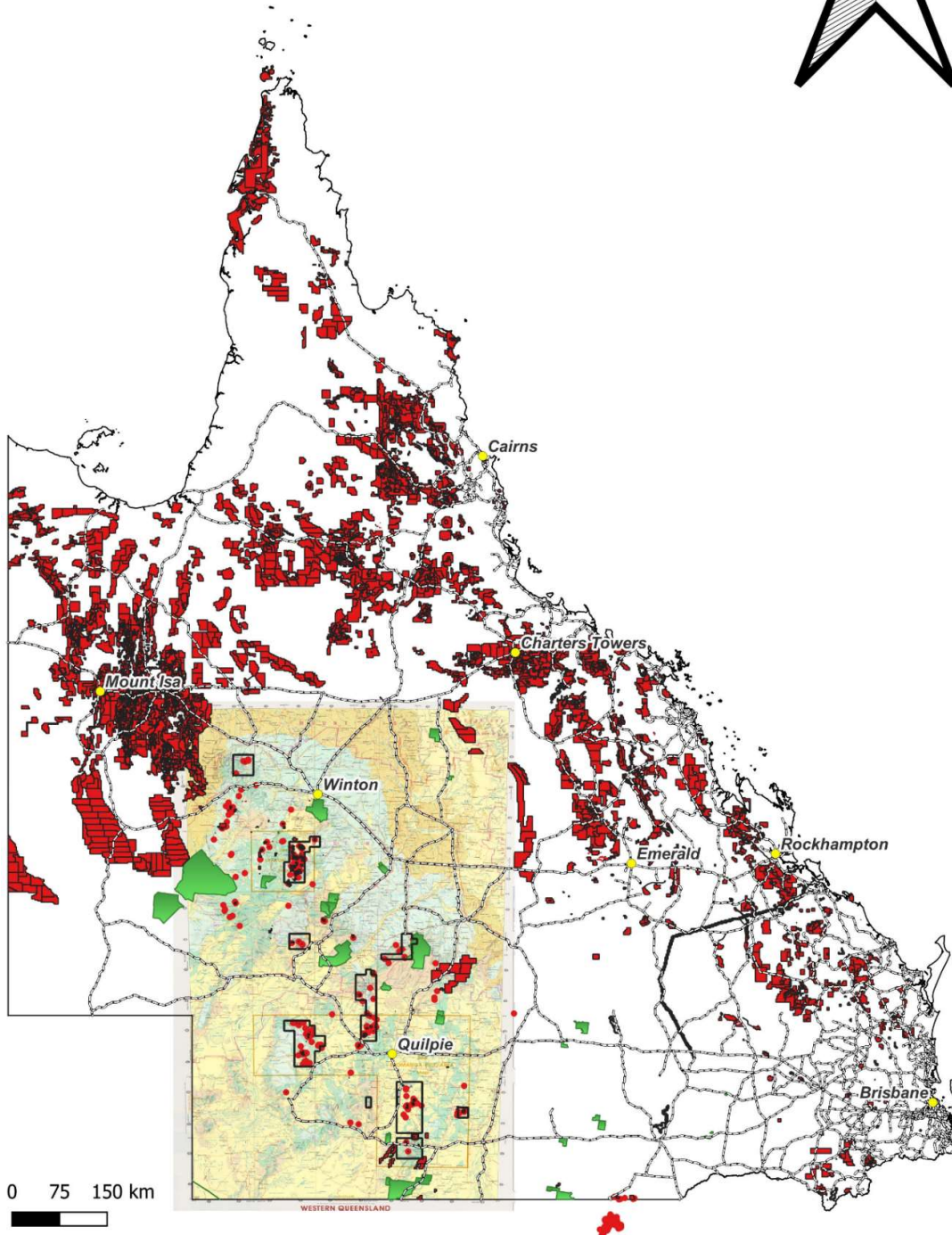
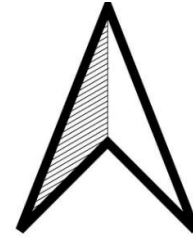
ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Queensland Opal Area Maps

QLD OPAL AREA MAP



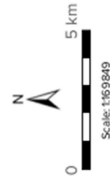
QLD OPAL AREA MAP



Attachment 2: Sapphire Fields - Hand Mining Claims



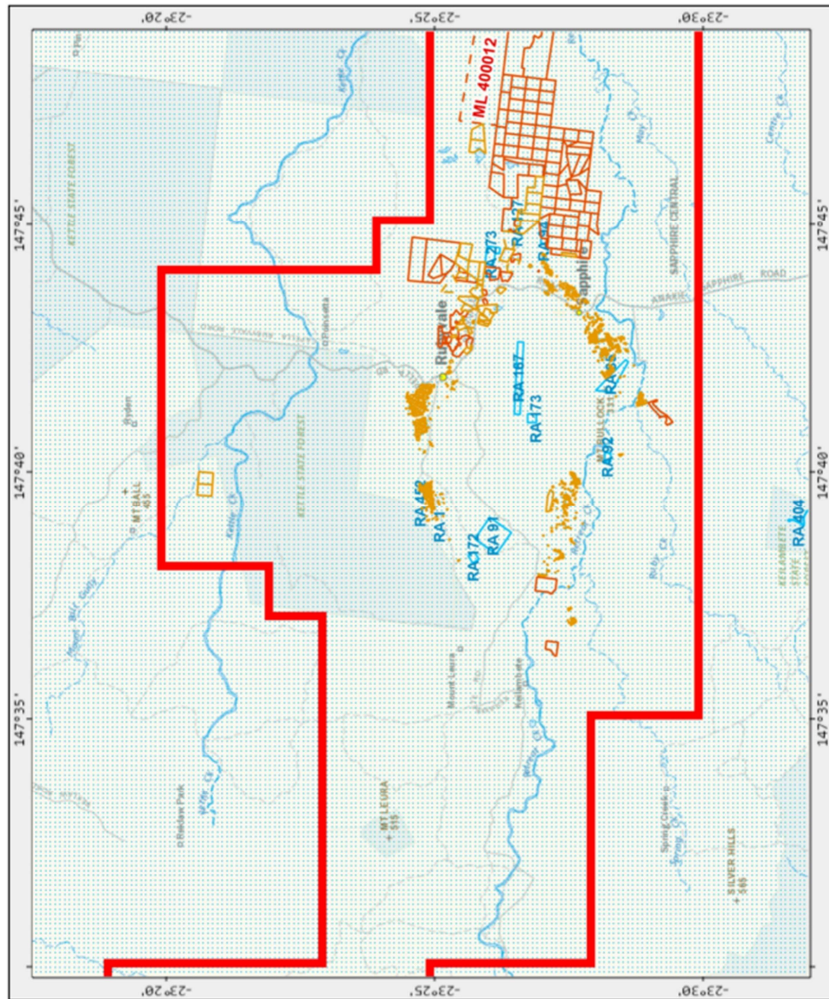
Legend located on next page



For more information, visit <https://geospatialinformation.qld.gov.au/help-119> or contact us at help@geospatialinformation.qld.gov.au

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Legend

Attribution

- MC permit application
- MC permit granted
- ML permit application
- ML permit granted
- Restricted area

Esri, Geoscience Australia, NASA, NGA, USGS
 Department of Resources, Dept. of Environment and Science, Esri, HERE, Garmin, METI/NASA, USGS
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Attachment 3: QLD Government Self-assessment calculator – Small Scale Mining Security



Self-assessment calculator – Small Scale Mining Security

Mining Claim Number:

<i>Infrastructure associated with mining</i>			
Description	M ² /Unit	Rate	Cost
Structures – Skillion roof		\$30	
Structures – Non-permanent/closed in		\$60	
Description	Number	Rate (each)	Cost
Water Tanks		\$200	
Garden Shed (3m x 3m)		\$200	
Caravan		\$500	
Shipping Container		\$500	
Unregistered Motor Vehicles (for removal)		\$500	
Fencing - Wire		\$5 per metre	
Fencing – Timber/Metal		\$10 per metre	
<i>Third Party Infrastructure Costs</i>			
Septic		\$500	
Electricity (Disconnection)		\$800	
Water (Disconnection)		\$800	
Communication Towers		\$1000	
<i>Hard Waste Disposal Costs</i>			
Miscellaneous Materials		\$200	
Security (In accordance with <i>Policy 01/2019</i> and s83 <i>Mineral Resources Act 1989</i>)			\$500
Total Security amount calculated \$ _____			
Final Review Completed			
Officer: _____		Date: _____	
Comments			

Attachment 4: Extract – Environmental requirements for small scale mining activities

The table below displays Schedule 16 of the Regulation and provides the rates of financial assurance per tenure type and level of environmental risk.

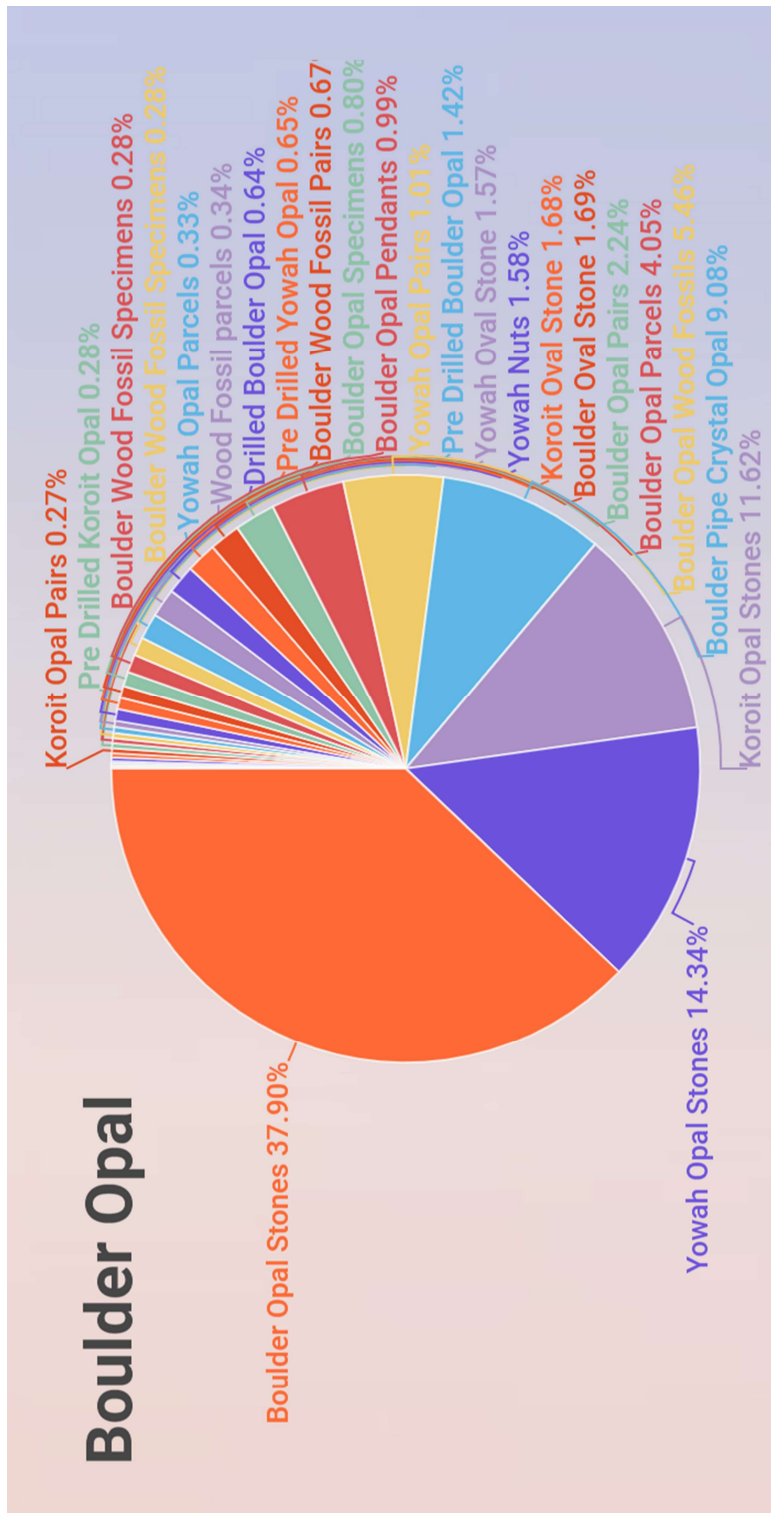
Tenure type	Mining Claim				Exploration permit (minerals)	
	Hand mining (previously mined)	Hand mining (not previously mined)	Machinery used for mining with no dam	Machinery used for mining with a dam	Low risk	High risk
0 to 0.1	\$200	\$400	\$400	\$3400	\$2500	\$5000
more than 0.1 to 0.5	\$400	\$800	\$2000	\$5000	Not applicable – small scale mining activities on exploration permits (minerals) may only cause up to 0.1 hectares of disturbance	
more than 0.5 to 1	\$1000	\$2000	\$4000	\$7000		
more than 1 to 2	\$2000	\$4000	\$8000	\$11,000		
more than 2 to 3	\$3000	\$6000	\$12,000	\$15,000		
more than 3 to 4	\$4000	\$8000	\$16,000	\$19,000		
more than 4 to 5	\$5000	\$1,0000	\$20,000	\$23,000		

Attachment 5: Extract – Environmental Protection Act 1994 (Schedule 4)

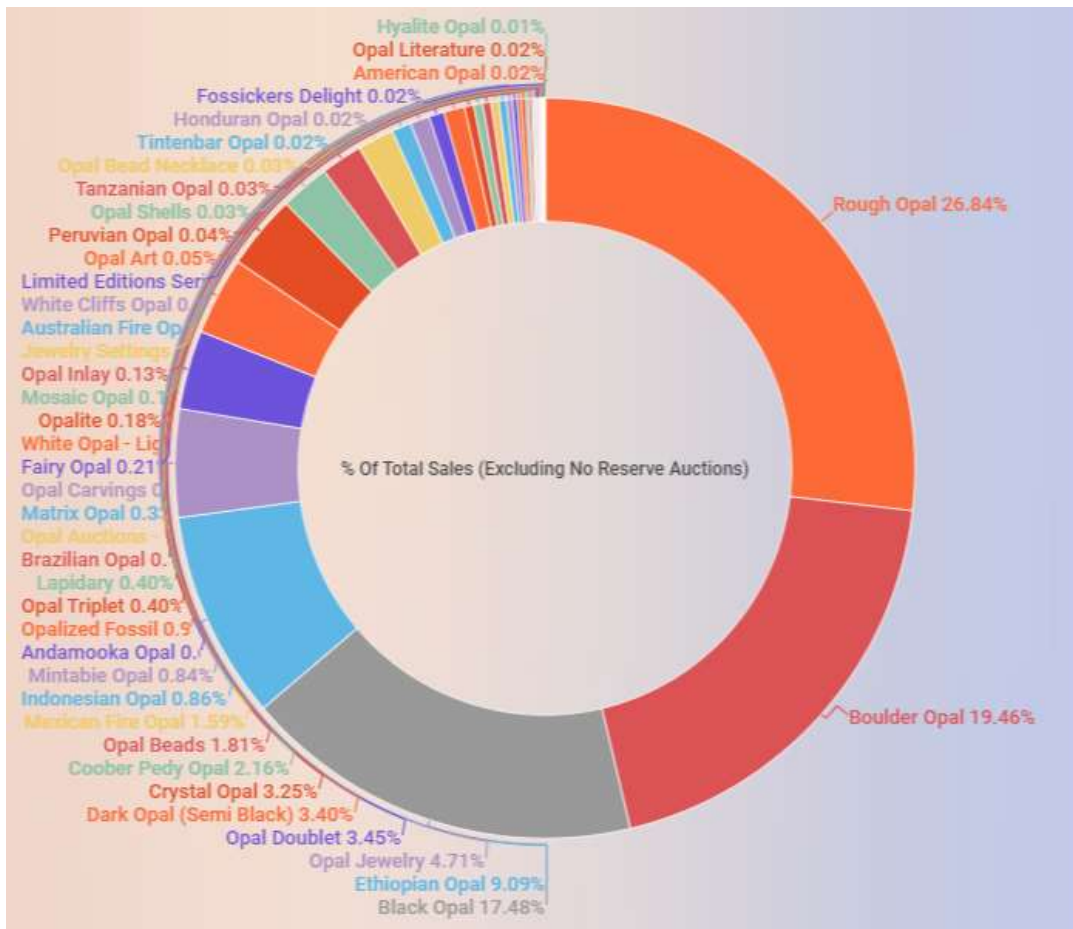
small scale mining activity means a mining activity that-

- (a) *is carried out under a mining claim, for corundum, gemstones or other precious stones, the area of which is not more than 20ha, and that—*
 - (i) *does not, or will not, at any time cause more than 5ha of land to be significantly disturbed; and*
 - (ii) *is not, or will not be, carried out in a designated precinct in a strategic environmental area; and*
 - (iii) *is not, or will not be, carried out in a watercourse or riverine area; and*
 - (iv) *is not, or will not be, carried out in or within 1km of an area that, under a regulation, is a category A environmentally sensitive area; and*
 - (v) *is not, or will not be, carried out in or within 500m of an area that, under a regulation, is a category B environmentally sensitive area; and*
 - (vi) *is not, or will not be, carried out in an area prescribed under a regulation as a designated environmental area for this definition; and*
 - (vii) *is not, or will not be, carried out as part of a petroleum activity or a prescribed ERA for which there is an aggregate environmental score prescribed under a regulation; and*
 - (viii) *is not, or will not be, carried out by more than 20 persons at any one time; and*
 - (ix) *does not, or will not, at any time cause more than 5,000m² of land to be disturbed at a camp site; or*
- (b) *is carried out under an exploration permit, for minerals other than coal, the area of which is not more than 4 sub-blocks and that—*
 - (i) *is not, or will not be, carried out in a designated precinct in a strategic environmental area; and*
 - (ii) *is not, or will not be, carried out in a watercourse or riverine area; and*
 - (iii) *is not, or will not be, carried out in or within 1km of an area that, under a regulation, is a category A environmentally sensitive area; and*
 - (iv) *is not, or will not be, carried out in or within 500m of an area that, under a regulation, is a category B environmentally sensitive area; and*
 - (v) *is not, or will not be, carried out in an area prescribed under a regulation as a designated environmental area for this definition; and*
 - (vi) *is not, or will not be, carried out as part of a petroleum activity or a prescribed ERA for which there is an aggregate environmental score prescribed under a regulation; and*
 - (vii) *does not, or will not, at any time cause more than 1,000m² of land to be disturbed; or*
- (c) *is carried out under a prospecting permit.*

Attachment 6: Extract Opal Auctions – 2021 Report



Boulder Opal Percentages – Sales (Rough Opal percentages also include rough boulder opal)



Opal Category	% Of Total Sales
Rough Opal	26.83691005
Boulder Opal	19.45746607
Black Opal	17.4818449
Ethiopian Opal	9.086884951
Opal Jewelry	4.711718306
Opal Doublet	3.445816698
Dark Opal (Semi Black)	3.397907029
Crystal Opal	3.253388842
Cooper Pedy Opal	2.160377095
Opal Beads	1.81090755
Mexican Fire Opal	1.585584558
Indonesian Opal	0.860808054
Mintabie Opal	0.8435589591
Andamooka Opal	0.6647282471
Opalized Fossil	0.9178659193
Opal Triplet	0.3994873915
Lapidary	0.3976760307
Brazilian Opal	0.3522685087

Opal Auctions

Activity - 2021



700,638

Individual Bids Placed



\$44,946,814

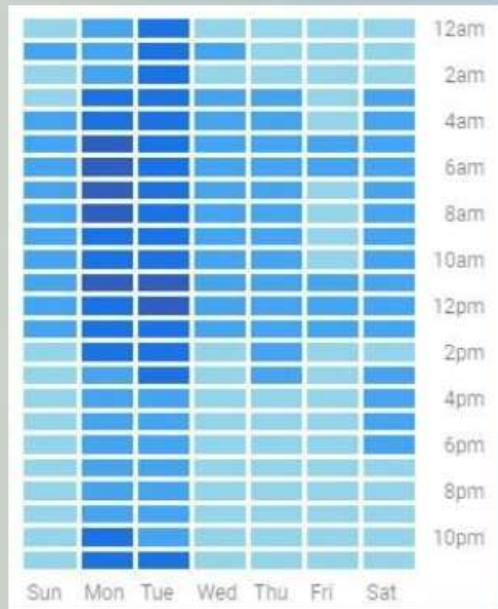
Total Value Of All Bids Placed



69,345

Total Number Of Opals Sold

Visitors by time (PST)



Rough Opal Deep Dive

