

Once again we have had a number of reports from members who have been challenged in the field as to their right of access. In each case a person has told the prospector that they are not allowed to be on, or not allowed to prospect on the land.

NAPFA are investigating 3 separate issues with two of these reported in writing to Crown Lands and the Central Tablelands Local Land Services. The 3<sup>rd</sup> issue is much more serious, and quite a number of parties have been contacted to get to the bottom of this. NAPFA will update members on the outcomes.

The main thing when confronted by any person in the field is to keep your cool. After all they may be right.



There are a number of instances where access may have changed, be temporarily restricted, or a map could be inaccurate.

Changes made by authorities such as Crown Lands, Forestry EPA, Local Councils and Fisheries are not always clearly marked on all areas. Some of these are temporary and can be made for a number of reasons. Importantly in some cases these can give other land users exclusive access, or stop access altogether.

Even if you are right, a shouting match will not help you to establish their identity, or let you detail their reasoning, which can later be disputed and taken up with authorities.

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The main thing we want to do is to identify the person challenging you, get the reasons for their argument, and establish any other facts.

Remember that an officer of any authority will identify themselves upon request.

Yes there are a number of land owners falsely claiming public access routes and land as their own. There is also the case of other fossickers trying to keep people off good areas.

For us to enable the relevant authorities to deal with the situation we need accurate detailed information.

Reports like “some bloke turned up and told us to get off” don’t help unless we have detail such as “he came from the property next door, he drove a white ute rego number XXX, he said it is his private property.....”. Photos or record of the location help greatly.

NAPFA has previously dealt with situations where enough detail has been provided, and authorities have taken appropriate actions against false claims by land holders. Some of these have been where persons claim that public land or access is their private property, or put up signs saying the same.

So remember, we need to get as much detail as possible, and to identify the person. So in the field:

1. Listen to what they have to say.
2. Ask the person who they are.
3. Ask them if they have any identification.
4. State how you accessed the area or how you think you are right.
5. Lastly note the GPS coordinates of the encounter, the direction the person approached and left the area, any vehicle types, registrations or other details.

Please report details to NAPFA at: [member.enquiries@napfa.net](mailto:member.enquiries@napfa.net)



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