

Dear Members,

A lot has been happening since the last newsletter.

## **Progress on sluicing and high banker issues.**

As members are aware that the sluicing issues have been at the forefront of NAPFA's lobbying with the DRE, and are the single most important issue to Prospectors and Fossickers in NSW.

The recent letter to members has detailed the lack of progress after our report was tabled in May 2017, and how the dept are commencing compliance action against "power operated" without any reply.

With ongoing developments NAPFA will continue to keep members informed by a separate letter to members on this issue and remove it from the newsletter.

## **No more DRE.**

The Dept of Resources and Energy is now under planning and environment so is now called PERE. Please use the new name.



## **Further progress on new Fossicking Districts**

Blayney and Cabonne Councils have both notified the PERE of their wish to be a fossicking district. Blayney shown below centres on the Carcoar area and includes Mandurama.



Cabonne takes in the Molong and Ophir areas.



These pending new districts cover some great goldfields and a great benefit to becoming a Fossicking District.

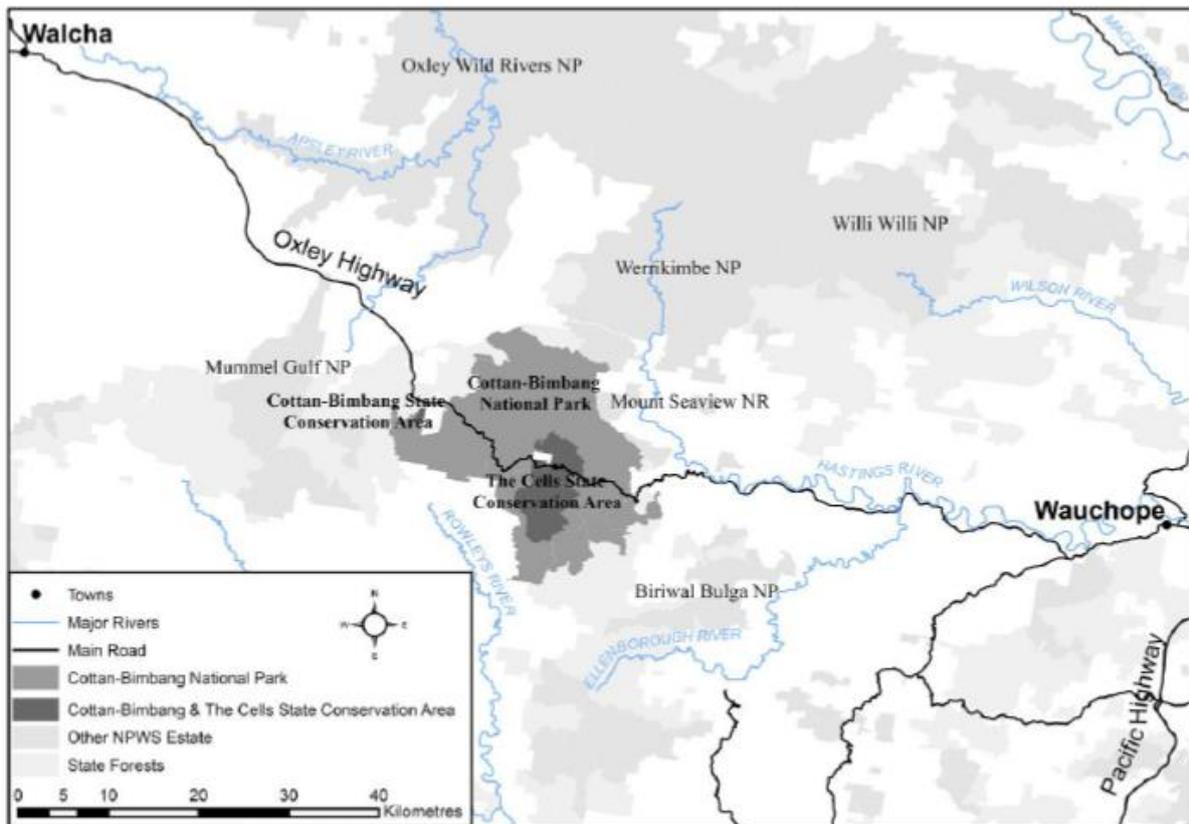
Ten new Fossicking Districts have been declared since NAPFA launched this campaign in 2015, and with the Gazettal soon of Blayney and Cabonne will make it twelve new districts.

This demonstrates what NAPFA continues to do for you. We continue to follow up with other Councils who have not responded to invitation letters from the Department.

We want to have as much of the state as possible covered by Fossicking District regulations – which effectively cuts some Red Tape for fossickers by removing the need to get permission from Exploration Lease holders to fossick on ground covered by those ELs. If you are fossicking in those areas please tell everyone you're there because it is a Fossicking District.

# Cottan-Bimbang National Park Draft Plan of Management

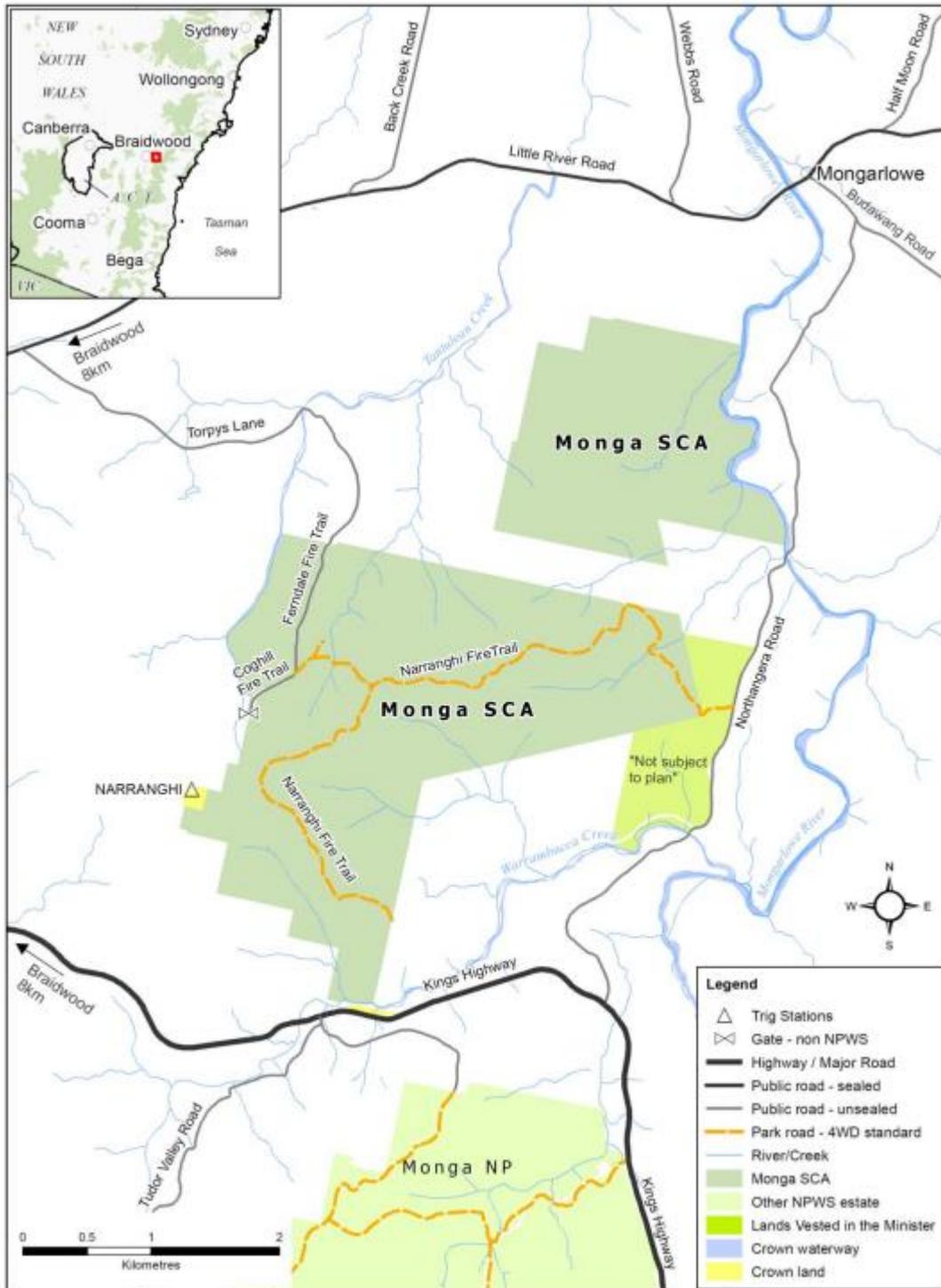
National Parks has also released a Draft Plan of Management for Cottan-Bimbang NP, Cottan-Bimbang SCA and The Cells SCA.



NAPFA has been working on a detailed submission as this area includes known goldfields.

# Monga State Conservation Area Draft Plan of Management

National Parks has released a Draft Plan of Management for Monga State Conservation Area. This area is close to members in Canberra, South Coast and Sydney.



NAPFA will be reviewing the plan and making a submission on behalf of fossickers. We urge members to have a look at the plan, and in particular if they wish to make their own submission or have knowledge of the area to pass on to NAPFA. The plan can be found at:

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/planmanagement/draft/monga-state-conservation-area-draft-plan-management-170241.pdf>

## Detecting fees on the Tibooburra Common

NAPFA informed members earlier in the year about proposals for a \$15 per day to a one off annual \$50 fee per detector on the Tibooburra Common. NAPFA requested that Crown Lands look in detail at this decision by the local common's committee. Many of the residents of Tibooburra also don't want a fee. NAPFA has also spoken to reporters and sees a policy of charging fossickers for access to Commons goes against the regional tourism push.

Such user fees for visitors to commons are discriminatory if they are not applied to all visitors to the common. For example, why should fossickers be singled out and not trail bike riders, 4WD travellers or mountain bikers? The last meeting held only discussed fees for fossicking.

Rather than an initiative to charge fossickers, why can't Crown Lands consult and come up with policy initiatives that makes it easier for fossickers? For Example, the Western Lands division can apply to become a Fossicking District in its own right. It would cost nothing, can be done quickly and be a big help to Tibooburra and surrounding areas.

Support for fossicking and other activities was identified as an area of interest in the 2016 Legislation and White Paper. Yet the only response/initiative is to create a mechanism so Commons can create charges! That is not progress. In our view a detecting charge goes against these aims and undermines the approach.

[http://www.crownland.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/680986/Fact-sheet-Crown-Land-Management-Bill-2016-Facilitating-a-sustainable-and-prosperous-Western-Division.PDF](http://www.crownland.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/680986/Fact-sheet-Crown-Land-Management-Bill-2016-Facilitating-a-sustainable-and-prosperous-Western-Division.PDF)

The visitor economy is vital to the well-being of the Tibooburra economy and fossickers/prospectors are a large part of that visitor economy. Many fossickers from all over Australia visit Tibooburra on a regular basis and can spend weeks and even months in the area, as opposed to the 'drive-through' 4WD tourists.

This has been identified by NAPFA to the NSW Government in its 2013 GP3 Inquiry into Tourism in Local areas and in the 2015 Review of Crown Lands. Government has stated that it will do things to encourage 'geo-tourism.'

Two key recommendations supported in the NSW Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee No.3 into tourism in local communities were:

- Recommendation 17. That the NSW Government investigate further opportunities for tourism development in national parks including accommodation, camping, mountain bike trails and fossicking.
- Recommendation 19. That the NSW Government investigate opportunities for fossicking in national parks, a single access fee for state forests and linking information for fossicking activities on the Destination NSW website.

These recommendations were supported in the government response by the Deputy Premier the Hon. Andrew Stoner MP on the 14th October 2014.

NAPFA has made recommendations to allow recreational fossicking in parts of the Sturt National Park – around about 20,000 ha of the 340,000 ha park:

<http://www.napfa.net/upload/NAPFA%20submission%20-%20Sturt%20National%20Park%20Plan%20of%20Management.pdf>

Fossickers are not making lots of money by visiting the area – only a few would be lucky enough to cover their fuel costs of the fossicking trip. However, they enjoy the challenge of the healthy, outdoor activity and the natural beauty of the area.

Imposition of a charge would be a significant burden for many grey nomad fossickers, and fossicking families. Many fossickers have now stated publicly that they will not visit Tibooburra if this charge is implemented. Such an unofficial boycott of the area would be very detrimental to the well-being of the town.

No other visitors to the common are treated in this way.

NAPFA can report that a number of meetings have taken place and the end result is a \$10 fee per month or \$50 annual fee has been introduced. At this stage provided fees are used towards facilitating and maintaining fossickers interests they may be supported. However, they will not if they go towards other interests who are not paying and getting a free ride. NAPFA encourages members to ask questions when paying fees and provide feedback to NAPFA.

# National Prospecting & Fossicking Survey

Dustin McMurray of Gold Rat Highbankers has put together a national survey to gather information to demonstrate the importance of Prospecting & Fossicking to the economy, and to show that we go where the regulations are the most friendly. The results will be passed on to state associations to use in their lobbying.

The survey can be found at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/nationaldata>

Get your mates to fill this in !!!!!



## Finally – we need your help

If you see things in NSW that affect fossickers negatively, or you have ideas that would be good to put to the government, please get in touch.

Cheers & Good Luck out there!

**Stephen Dangaard**

**President**

**NSW&ACT Prospectors and Fossickers Association Inc**

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Thank you to all the others who have renewed or joined since late last year. There have been some who have not got around to renewing. If you are one of

those please dust off your paperwork and renew. Inquiries can be sent to [Membership@napfa.net](mailto:Membership@napfa.net)

Remember NAPFA is a volunteer organisation that works to better the fossicking environment in NSW on your behalf. If you care about the fossicking future, please get behind us with your membership and encourage others to do so.



**Support the Association that supports you – get a mate to join NAPFA today!**