



NSW & ACT Prospectors and Fossickers Association Inc.

Incorporation No: INC 1200398

www.napfa.net

PO Box 4529
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“Fights for fairer access to land in NSW and represents interests of prospectors and fossickers”

Dear Member,

1st May, 2017 – Members’ update

Dear Members,

The **LUCKY WINNER of the Minelab GPX4500** membership promotion is:

Bruce Edwards, member number 495, who hails from South Australia. Bruce often detects in Victoria and uses a GPX5000. He is very happy with the new detector because he will be able to take his grandkids detecting!

Congratulations Bruce!

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

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.

Excellent progress on new Fossicking Districts

Four new NSW Fossicking Districts were declared on 28 April 2017.

The new districts cover the Local Government Areas of: Bega, Eurobodalla, Bland and Tumut. The Tumut area is the Tumut section of the new Snowy Valleys Shire, which means the whole of that new Shire (includes the former Cootamundra LGA) is now a Fossicking District.

Ten new Fossicking Districts have been declared since NAPFA launched this campaign in 2015, more than doubling the LGAs in NSW covered by Fossicking Districts. These 10 LGAs are the first new Fossicking Districts declared since 2001.

There are now 18 complete LGAs across NSW that are fossicking districts. This is in addition to 45 small areas that are covered by Fossicking District rules. This covers almost 9 million hectares – or 11 per cent of the state.

This demonstrates what NAPFA is doing for you.

The full list of new ones is:

Bathurst

Bega

Bland

Cootamundra

Eurobodalla

Guyra

Narrabri

Upper Lachlan

Tumut

Walcha

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.

It is good to also now see the new Minister for Resources, Don Harwin, getting behind these districts, although he could take it much further by removing this EL permission requirement altogether through legislation change.

In the Beagleweekly (Bega) Minister Harwin made the following statements:

Minister for Resources Don Harwin said the increase in fossicking districts will help to expand the regional geotourism market in NSW.

“Fossicking is not only a popular and rewarding recreational activity, it has a positive impact on regional tourism and NSW regional economies,” Mr Harwin said.

“Our Government is committed to encouraging regional tourism, to strengthen and support the economies of our rural towns and centres. We have allocated \$400 million through the Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund and Regional Environment and Tourism Fund to deliver on that commitment.”

This message of the benefit to regional areas is one that NAPFA has been pushing since we formed in 2012. I would like to see some of the \$400 million in the Regional fund go to fossicking.

Stay tuned for more areas, as we follow up with Councils who have not responded to invitation letters from the Department.

Radio interviews

I have done half a dozen radio interviews about the new Fossicking Districts and the media has been very interested in what fossickers do, and what the new districts mean.

So, it has been a good way to promote NAPFA and improve awareness of the contribution that fossickers make to regional economies.

The interviews can be heard on the links below:

<https://www.talkinglifestyle.com.au/2017/05/02/theres-gold-in-them-thar-hills/>

<http://www.abc.net.au/radio/sydney/programs/evenings/evenings/8468986>

Interview starts at 1:16:00 on the ABC one.

Progress on high banker issues.

NAPFA and the DRE have had numerous dialogue over high bankers. There are two issues remaining that need to be resolved to facilitate the regulation change needed to legalise the use of high bankers.

Firstly, the DRE have stressed that they would only facilitate Regulation change if assurances could be made to prevent high banker equipment being used for dredging. This relates to the use of dredge suction nozzles and power jets pumping into high bankers.

The final outcomes were that NAPFA agreed to investigate and provide limitations or restrictions to high banker equipment that would:

- Allow the pumping of water to sluice boxes and high bankers while preventing them being operated as a dredge; and
- Allow sluicing and high banking operations to be easily distinguished from dredging, making improvements to regulate activities in the field.

NAPFA's detailed research in consultation with long term users and manufacturers has resulted in suggesting restricting hose sizes over 40mm to only allow lay flat hose. Hose sizes below 40mm can be rigid to allow tight bends and small pumps. This has been accepted in principle by the DRE to solve the problem.

By restricting all equipment to only use lay flat hose between the pump and the sluice or high banker unit (apart from the pump inlet) would prevent dredging, and only allow the delivery of water.

Dredging must use a rigid hose, and if attempts were made to use lay flat it would suck shut, kink, block and wear out in minutes. It would be impossible to operate the same with gravel being sucked up in the feed.

This initiative is very easy for regulatory staff to see from a distance, and very easy for all to understand.

Secondly, is the "semi-industrious" issue, where a larger high banker can more easily be able to exceed the set limits of the 1 cubic metre restriction in 48 hours.

As any good fossicker knows that just putting through a lot of dirt doesn't guarantee more gold, it comes down to getting the gold off the bottom, and in most cases, is not possible.

Currently the restriction also applies to equipment being able to be "hand carried".

NAPFA has researched a lot of high banking operations, and collated detailed measurement. NAPFA consider the current restrictions of no more than 1 cubic metre of any soil, rock or other material during any single period of 48 hours is adequate in the Regulations.

NAPFA have researched equipment limitations, and any further restrictions to equipment can have a lot of detrimental impacts to innovation and flexibility of the individual.

Any restriction to apertures or dimensions is not easy to distinguish in the field without detailed measurement, which is somewhat subjective as well. This is very difficult to regulate the specifics, trains users and Regulatory personnel.

NAPFA's investigations has concluded with suggestions to solve issues, alleviate concerns and make the job of regulatory officers and compliance much easier.

These have been supported by manufacturers, retailers, and long term experienced prospectors that have used dredges and high bankers in the past when it was legal to do so.

The final detailed report will be put to the DRE this month, in May 2017.

NAPFA request members to be patient and follow the directive of regulatory staff in the field especially as we are near the end of the saga and at a sensitive time with negotiations.

We expect feedback on the proposals in the very near future.



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

Sturt National Park Draft Plan of Management

National Parks has also released a Draft Plan of Management for Sturt National Park , which extends from Tibooburra, west to Cameron's Corner.

You can have your say by 17 JULY.

While NAPFA will put in a submission, please consider having your own say to potentially get fossicking back onto areas where fossicking was allowed before it became national park.

As a rule of thumb, it looks to me like the area in the park south of the Gas Line could be carved out as a section of the park where fossicking could be permitted, with consent and with some park controls.

That would take in areas close to Tibooburra but allow sufficient roaming space within the general area. This is a very small percentage – probably less than 5% of the overall park which is about One Million Ha. I can stand corrected if someone wants to measure it up. It takes in the Whitta Brinnah range and known gold locations near Tibooburra.

National Parks Advises:

The Sturt National Park Draft Plan of Management has been prepared and is being exhibited in accordance with the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. Sturt National Park is located in the far north-west corner of New South Wales, approximately 330 kilometres north of Broken Hill and 400 kilometres west of Bourke. The park extends to the north, east and west of the town of Tibooburra and is bordered by Queensland to the north and South Australia to the west.

Sturt National Park is managed by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), part of Office of Environment and Heritage.

The draft plan of management can be viewed at <https://engage.environment.nsw.gov.au/consult>

You are invited to make a written submission on the draft plan of management.

Submissions need to be received by 17 July 2017. You can provide your written submission in one of the following ways:

i. use the online submission form

at <https://engage.environment.nsw.gov.au/consult>

ii. email your submission to npws.parkplanning@environment.nsw.gov.au

iii. post your submission to NPWS Planner, Sturt NP Draft PoM, NPWS, PO BOX 1049 Griffith NSW 2680

Proposal for detecting fee on the Tibooburra Common

There is also a proposal for a \$15 per day per detector fee on the Tibooburra Common. NAPFA has written to Crown Lands and explained that any fee on detecting there would discourage fossicking tourism. Many of the residents of Tibooburra also don't want a fee, so it is a good lesson in how small committees can suddenly make decisions without relevant consultation. It is not a good situation and has yet to be resolved.

In the meantime, please don't give up on Tibooburra – they need fossickers to visit and although the gold is small, you can get some gold just about each day, especially if you are using a Minelab SDC2300 which is amazing on small gold. The town facilities are good and deserve our support.

COOYAL – Easter Gold Rush Expo

On the Easter Weekend I had the pleasure of attending the inaugural Cooyal Gold Rush Expo at the Cooyal Hall (near Mudgee). This was organised by our supporters at the Central West Prospecting Supplies shop in Mudgee.

Hundreds of people turned up over the course of the day and around \$3500 was raised for the Cooyal Hall Trust – which is a fantastic boost for such a small community.

The work of NAPFA was highlighted and we picked up some new members; and I had a chance to chat with some existing members. Thanks to Greechie and Vaughn from Central West for organising the event. If it is on again next year, then pencil it in early. There is public fossicking land around there.

Doug Stone's online maps

At Cooyal, I had a chance to sit down with our illustrious member Doug Stone and he told me that he is in the process of putting many of his maps online through AVENZA, which is an offline GPS mapping application. This means you will be able to see your location on your device or phone, even if you are not in phone range. The cost of the maps will be \$15 per map, same as the paper versions. So, check it out on AVENZA by searching Doug Stone Gold Maps or Outdoor press and take it from there.

NSW maps available now include: Stuart town, Sofala-Wattle Flat, Hill End and Hargreaves. There are also some Victorian maps and Doug is gradually working through his collection and getting them properly calibrated.

The App enables you to create tracks, attach photos and notes etc. So, it really is a big step forward in simplifying smart phone access to fossicking maps for those of us who are more technically challenged!

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](#).

Prospecting Australia and Gold Detecting and Prospecting Forum are also great places to alert other fossickers to things as well, and to stay up to date yourself.

Cheers & Good Luck out there!

Stephen Dangaard

President

NSW&ACT Prospectors and Fossickers Association Inc

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