



NSW & ACT Prospectors and Fossickers Association Inc.

Incorporation No: INC 1200398

www.napfa.net

PO Box 2664

Carlingford Court

NSW 2118

The Hon. Niall Blair, MLC
Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water
GPO Box 5341
Sydney NSW 2001

7 January 2016

Dear Minister

OBJECTION TO SALE OF CROWN LAND NEAR SOFALA

I draw your urgent attention and seek your intervention to the sale in progress of Lot 7210 DP 1123796 being about 45 acres of land fronting the Turon River just upstream from the historic tourist township of Sofala.

The land is listed for sale on a commercial real estate site and is currently "under offer," an offer that seems to have been put in just before Christmas. I don't know when the property was originally listed.

I have confirmed with your department that this is in fact Crown Land. The reference to my most recent call on 7 Jan 2016 is 201791.

The sale of this block needs to be stopped because the land is currently used by many visitors to the Sofala area as a camping, fishing, swimming and fossicking spot. There are not many public access points to the Turon and to have such a large area removed from legitimate public access is a matter of great concern to the many fossickers through New South Wales, who are represented by the NSW&ACT Prospectors and Fossickers Association Inc. (NAPFA).

I have contacted the Crown Lands Sales support team to get urgent information about the process by which this block has come to market. I have not yet received a reply but they said they are looking into it. However the land is so important that I am alerting you to this situation so that it receives close and proper scrutiny of your office.

The listing of this block was brought to my attention by a member of our association who stumbled onto it on Christmas Eve. For obvious reasons I was unable to contact your Crown Lands Department until last Monday 4 January. **The sale is a matter of great concern to many fossickers and campers who have been using the land for many years for public recreational purposes.**

The sale of such land anywhere in NSW does nothing to help regional tourism. It just makes it harder for visitors to go and stay in regional areas. NAPFA has contributed positively to try to develop regional tourism in NSW including through submissions to the Upper House inquiry into Tourism in Local Committees (unfortunately you were not there when we were called before the Committee.) We also met with then Minister for Crown Land Andrew Stoner about the processes of sale of Crown Roads to highlight the threat to public access by the sale of such roads without consideration to the needs of fossickers, fishermen and other recreational users; and contributed to the recent review into Crown Lands. So our credentials and interest in such matters is known.

Lands such as Lot7210 need to be preserved in public ownership and not sold off without a thorough and proper consultation process that identifies the users who will be disadvantaged by such a sale and seeking their input. It is surprising that such a block can be considered to be disposable in the first instance. My understanding was that Crown Lands generally will not endorse land for sale that has water frontage and has ongoing public recreational value.

I am aware that individual fossickers are very concerned about this and are also lodging their own personal objections. However this request to you is on behalf of the 1000 members of our association.

I look forward to news that the sale of this block has been discontinued. I am happy to correspond further as required with you or your Crown Lands department.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Dangaard

President

NSW & ACT Prospectors and Fossickers Association Inc