



The Hon Chris Hartcher

Minister for Resources and Energy

Special Minister of State

Minister for the Central Coast

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW GOVERNMENT RELEASES WILCOX RESPONSE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

The NSW Government has today released its response to the Wilcox Report commissioned to look into the Lightning Ridge opal mining industry and its interaction with landholders.

The Government's response will be released for a period of two months to allow the community and stakeholders to have say in the management of the opal mining industry.

Chief Justice of the Industrial Relations Court and former Federal Court judge, Murray Wilcox, was commissioned by the NSW Government to undertake the independent review.

Resources Minister Chris Hartcher said the proposals contained in the Government's response are designed to address concerns about compensation and access to appropriate dispute resolution.

"The Government is proposing that land access compensation be set at \$100 plus 10 cents per hectare for opal prospecting licences and \$60 per annum for mineral claims, with a review every five years," Mr Hartcher said.

"It is also proposed to introduce alternative dispute resolution procedures so disputes can be resolved without the need for a court hearing and to assist people without legal representation through the dispute resolution process.

"Back in September I announced that security deposit rates would remain at pre-1 July levels. The Mining Regulation 2010 will be amended to reflect this."

The Government response also discusses what potential legislative frameworks may best suit opal mining in the future.

"After the public comment period, submissions will be considered to develop a plan for implementation and will give a clearer position on the continued management and operation of the opal industry," Mr Hartcher said.

"Opal mining and agriculture are the primary industries supporting Lightning Ridge. Management of the opal mining industry and its interaction with landholders is critical in ensuring the continued prosperity of both parties."

The Wilcox Report can be viewed at <http://www.resources.nsw.gov.au/extras/wilcox-report>

Submissions are invited by email to minerals.comments@industry.nsw.gov.au or by post addressed to:

Wilcox Report Comments
PO Box 344
Hunter Regional Mail Centre NSW 2310

Submissions close on 3 February 2013.