



# **The Hon Chris Hartcher**

## **Minister for Resources and Energy**

### **Special Minister of State**

### **Minister for the Central Coast**

---

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

---

Friday 16 August 2013

### **NSW GOVERNMENT TO IMPLEMENT LIGHTNING RIDGE WILCOX REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

The NSW Government today released its Final Response to the Wilcox Report commissioned to review the Lightning Ridge opal mining industry's interaction with landholders.

Resources Minister Chris Hartcher announced that a Bill will now be prepared to implement the appropriate legislative changes.

"Opal mining issues at Lightning Ridge, particularly compensation and land access, have long been a source of community concern," Mr Hartcher said.

"Despite commissioning four reviews on this matter, the previous Government did not act on a single one of them.

"This Government's Final Response outlines immediate and longer term actions and demonstrates that we are acting to address opal mining issues at Lightning Ridge."

The Final Response has been informed by an extensive consultation process involving a broad range of stakeholder input.

As a first step, minimum compensation rates will be set at \$100 per annum for mineral claims and \$100 per annum plus 10 cents per hectare for opal prospecting licences.

"Feedback from stakeholders indicates that setting compensation rates will significantly reduce conflict between landholders and miners," Mr Hartcher said.

"Compensation will be paid directly to the landholder by the miner and changes to the approval process for small scale titles will ensure landholders are paid before mining work commences on their land.

"Alternative dispute resolution procedures will also be introduced so that where possible, disputes can be resolved in a quick and inexpensive manner, without the need for a court hearing.

"If cases do need to be heard in the Land and Environment Court, a range of measures have been introduced to make it an easier and more accessible process for the residents of Lightning Ridge.

"The changes will ensure that landholders are notified of mining titles granted over their land before mining work begins, and that they are provided with more information about the title."

It is anticipated that a Bill implementing the required changes will be introduced into Parliament during the Spring Session.