



Queensland Sapphire Miners Association Inc.

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Queensland Economic Recovery Plan submission.
Furnished by Queensland Sapphire Miners Association, inc.

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Our Association represents some 1,800 Small Scale Miners, inside the boundaries of the several declared Recreational fossicking areas, across the Central Queensland Gemfields. Four Regional Communities and small businesses are seasonally dependent upon these two recreational activities, to survive. Being some 60 - 95 km from Emerald, these are the only two major activities or incentives, to generate seasonal economic return, to enhance tourism.

(1). What could be done at a local level, to increase the benefits of Tourism.

Specific localities require attractions, activities or incentives, specific to the individual tourist -

- . Be of a required standard; and
- . Be appropriate needs, wants and desire, for the particular tourist; and
- . Provide a satisfying or rewarding gem experience; and
- . Generate positive social media; and
- . Have reasonable local Community facilities; otherwise.

there is a tourism problem, not with the tourist, but with the demographics and management behind those existing incentives, fossicking and mining activities.

Demographics and management issues include -

- . Tourism being totally dependent upon two activities, Small Scale mining and Recreational fossicking, across the Central Queensland Gemfields.
- . Local Government not acknowledging and supporting, but disregarding, those significant legislative restrictions, impacting and preventing tourism.

- . State and Local Government funding Gemfields tourism strategies introduced, before the base restrictions are addressed.
- . Expense, distance and time, in flying or driving to the Gemfields.
- . Post Covid 19, has seen significant increase in intrastate tourism, which has not equated to the Gemfields. Tourists are generally coming or going from the western Dinosaur locations, which appear to have more tourism appeal.
- . Significant reluctance on the part of visiting Recreational fossickers include -
 - . No appealing family tourist attractions or activities.
 - . Recreation based on time and disposable income.
 - . Physical and manual work associated with Recreational fossicking.
 - . Worked out or inaccessible fossicking areas.
 - . No gem satisfaction for effort.
 - . An activity which does not suit all.
 - . Fossicking areas demised under contrary legislation.
 - . Negative social media.

Remove satisfaction, expectation and aspirations from regional tourism, and you remove all basis for tourism.

(2). How do you want Queensland tourism to be defined in the 2020's.

Exciting, interesting, encouraging and promoting return visits.

(3). How do we make the best use of our tourism assets e.g., what's missing?

New Areas for mining and fossicking with access.

(4). What practicable measures can be and should be taken to ensure tourism helps regenerate National environments and bring greater awareness as well as economic benefits.

Family friendly facilities e.g. Toilets, water points and basic showering facilities.

(5). Do you see emerging trends or emerging changes that we must consider?

Statistically, Governments fossicking licences issued, in Emerald, Clermont and the Gemfields areas, show, year on year, slightly increased licences. Individual fossicking areas, have reported, a continual decrease in tourists, each and every year, over past several years, thereby supporting an obvious increase in gold prospecting licences in Clermont. This decrease in tourism is commensurate with avoidance of fossicking areas through no gem satisfaction.

The Governments own statistics for 2019, shows Central Highlands to Keppel Island, tourism statistics as -

Overnight visitor - International	69,000	Domestic	1,164,000
Expenditure -	\$51m		\$617m
Average length of stay -	13.7		3.9
Day trips -			1,506,000
Expenditure			\$286m.

Compare with Government fossicking / prospecting licence statistics for 2019 -

- Emerald - Agent Fossicking licenses issued - 1,385.
- All 40 State-wide Fossicking areas licenses issued - 9,272.
- Agent fossicking camping permits issued - 472.
- All State-wide fossicking camping permits - 888.

Clermont gold prospecting and the Gemfields recreational fossicking activities, attract only about 2.6% of the 2,670,000 Central Queensland tourists, returning about .28% of your Central Queensland visitor expenditure. These statistics, show that there are serious issues to be addressed. Tourism will not go forward without first, addressing the base problems and Small-Scale mining and Recreational fossicking activities, are failing tourism.

Capricorn Tourism and Economic Development are well aware of the Gemfields situation. Past and I believe the current Capricorn Destination Tourism Plan, promotes fossicking and the Gemfields, but it is rhetoric, under the current circumstances.

(6). What are your ideas for the future of Queensland's tourism industry?

- . Attractions, activities, disposable income and location, drive tourism.
- . Regional recreational activities are the only tourist activities and incentives.
- . The Queensland Resource Industry Development Plan provides for Government to support regional mining activities which will contribute after Covid 19.
- . The Recreational fossicking areas are diminished to the extent of being unviable.
- . The Small-Scale mining industry across the fossicking areas, have produced little commercial sapphire for decades, and therefore, does not contribute to any sapphire production. Most retail sapphire sales are from overseas markets.
- . Commercial sapphire ground is still on adjoining grazing properties, not legislatively accessible.
- . Resumption of known sapphire ground would future proof both Industries into the next century, thereby promoting tourism and support small businesses.

(7). What do you see as obstacles to progress?

- . Gemfields Local small businesses, due to location, are only viable from March to October. Some close their doors during the hot months.
- . Failure by Department of Resources to acknowledge or address the underlying legislative issues.
- . Failure of Local Government to acknowledge and give support.
- . Overcome negative social media.

(8). What should Queensland be doing to re-set, transform and embrace, the opportunities a Post Covid 19 would present.

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