

# RECREATIONAL PROSPECTING AND FOSSICKING

Recreational prospecting or fossicking is a popular activity. You can fossick in many of our national and state parks, as well as on private property. You can search for gold, other minerals and gemstones.

## Do you need a permit that allows for fossicking?

Yes, a Miner's Right is required for prospecting in Victoria. A Miner's Right is a permit allowing you to search for gold, gemstones and other minerals.

It must be carried with you while prospecting and produced if asked for. Children under the age of 18 years do not need a license when accompanied by an adult with a Miner's Right.

## Where do I get a Miner's Right and how much does it cost?

A Miner's Right can be purchased online at: [earthresources.vic.gov.au/fossicking](http://earthresources.vic.gov.au/fossicking) or at an Earth Resources office (for locations call **1300 366 356**).

A Miner's Right costs \$25.20 and is valid for 10 years.

## What equipment can I use?

You are only permitted to use hand tools such as metal detectors, picks, shovels, sieves and pans.

You must not:

- use any equipment for excavation other than non-mechanical hand tools,
- use explosives,
- remove or damage any tree or shrub,
- disturb any Aboriginal places or objects, and
- disturb any historic place, object or archaeological site/relic on the land.

The holder of a miner's right must repair any damage to land arising out of the search for minerals as soon as possible and prior to leaving a search area.

## May I fossick on private property?

You can fossick on private property, with the consent of the landholder.

Consent may be subject to conditions and may be withdrawn at any time by the person who granted it. In case of any disputes, it is in the interest of the prospector to seek consent in writing.

## Exploration by Numbers

# 5431

recreational prospecting and fossicking licences (Miner's Rights) issued in 2017-18

# 92

Minerals exploration licences (commercial licences) were issued or renewed in 2017-18

# 206

minerals exploration licences currently active in Victoria

## Did you know?

Nicknamed Friday's Joy, a massive gold nugget (weighing 4.1kg) was unearthed in central Victoria in 2016. Buried 30cm below the ground, the nugget was unearthed by a long-term prospecting enthusiast who had been fossicking on weekends for over a decade.

## Am I able to fossick where an exploration company is operating?

Where there is an exploration licence over the area, you do not need the permission of the licensee but, if it is on private land, you do need consent from the landholder or the occupier.

Where there is a mining, retention or a prospecting licence over the area, you will also need the permission of the licensee.

## Is fossicking permitted in State and National parks?

Prospecting is permitted in designated areas in the following parks:

For all minerals and gemstones	
Beechworth Historic Park	Kooyoora State Park
Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park	Kara Kara National Park
Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park	Paddys Ranges State Park
Heathcote-Graytown National Park	Greater Bendigo National Park
Reef Hills State Park	Enfield State Park
Warrandyte State Park	Steiglitz Historic Park
For gemstones only	
Cape Liptrap Coastal Park	Great Otway National Park
Kooyoora State Park	Warby-Ovens National Park
Mornington Peninsula National Park	

You do not need permission to fossick on most Crown land and in the national parks as set out in the tables above. However, you must keep to the designated areas which can be located by contacting Parks Victoria (13 1963).

## May I fossick in waterways?

You can fossick around some waterways in Victoria – in the water as well as on the banks and adjoining reserves. There are many rivers, streams and lakes, however, where water quality and habitats require protection. These rivers and streams are off limits. A long list of waterways where you cannot fossick is provided here: [earthresources.vic.gov.au/fossicking](http://earthresources.vic.gov.au/fossicking)

Fossicking is not permitted in areas that are exempt under the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990*.

### Did you know?

In Victoria, all minerals belong to the Crown, even on private land. A miner's right transfers the ownership of any minerals found while prospecting, to the holder of the miner's right. A miner's right is required, even if you are prospecting on your own land. A miner's right gives the holder the right to remove any minerals discovered by him or her from the land.

## Minimising your footprint while fossicking

To minimise impacts from fossicking activities:

- keep vehicles to public tracks and roads,
- take all rubbish home,
- minimise any damage to vegetation including the ground layer, and
- immediately restore the area as originally found, i.e. backfill any holes dug and replace leaf litter.

## Budding geologists in your family?

The Geological Society of Australia Instagram page has over 7520 followers! Geologists from all over Australia have been submitting amazing images - you will see lava tubes, caves, folds, mines, building stones and much more. Instagram is a great way to reach kids who may be thinking of geology as a University degree. [instagram.com/geologicalsocietyofaustralia/now](https://www.instagram.com/geologicalsocietyofaustralia/now)

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Earth Resources Information Centre;  
Phone **1300 366 356**; [mdv@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:mdv@ecodev.vic.gov.au)

The Prospectors and Miners Association of Victoria (PMAV)  
[pmaav.org.au](http://pmaav.org.au)

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