

Mining records



Research Guide to mining records
at Queensland State Archives

Queensland State Archives (QSA) is the official repository for Queensland Government records selected for permanent retention because of their continuing value. The archived public records are from state government departments, state courts, local government authorities and statutory authorities. The records are in our facility at [Runcorn, Brisbane](#), and open records are available for viewing in the Reading Room, free-of-charge.

Queensland State Archives holds an extensive collection of mining records about the development and government administration of the Queensland mining industry. There are separate series of records for the three main types of mining; gold, coal and base metals, as specified in the legislation including the *Coal Mining Act 1925-1989* and the *Mining Act 1898-1986*.

The main finding aid for records held at QSA is the [Queensland State Archives' online catalogue](#) (known as ArchivesSearch).

The following citation abbreviations are used throughout our catalogue:

ITM	QSA Item (describes the item)
PR	Physical Representation (generally the original or microfilm copy)
DR	Digital Representation (for a digital image)
S	Series ID (for a series of records)
A	Agency ID (for the creating or responsible agency).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that our catalogue contains images, names and voices of people who have died.

Brief history and mining legislation

From 1859 until January 1862 the Colonial Secretary's Office administered the mining industry in Queensland.

From 1862 until 1874, the Lands and Works Department ([S13757](#), Correspondence Received) and the Works Department ([S16455](#), General Correspondence) provide a record of activities. These include coal in the Ipswich area; copper at Peak Downs, Kariboe Creek, Mount Perry, Mount Coora, Mount Clara, Dee River, Daintree, and Keelbottom Creek; goldfields at Etheridge, Gympie, Talgai, Clermont, Ravenswood, Cape River, Charters Towers and the Palmer Goldfields; and tin mining at Stanthorpe, Star River, Cannibal and Granite Creeks, Tinaroo, Herberton and Tate River.

There are few records about specific mines and miners from 1860 -1870. Legislation did not require that the working of mines be provided to the government. There were no mines reports, and records in the Departmental correspondence was not recorded in register format.

The *Goldfields Act 1874* established the office of Mining Warden to regulate the issues of miner's rights and auriferous leases, and the extent of jurisdiction of mining wardens on goldfields. The Act provided for the management of goldfields through local mining warden's offices. The Mines Department was established as a separate Department in 1876.

Mineral selections could be freehold. They were administered by local lands commissioners, under the *Mineral Lands Act 1872* and the various Crown Lands Acts.

Lands and Works ([S13757](#), Correspondence Received) and Public Lands Department ([S6363](#), General Correspondence) contain information about mineral selections. Details about holders of mineral selection land tenures are on certificates of title. The passing of the *Mineral Lands Act 1882* provided for mineral leases rather than freeholds. These mining leases were published in the *Queensland Government Gazette*.

Coal legislation

The New South Wales *Registration and Inspection Act 1854* was nominally in force in Queensland.

Regulations for non-competitive sale of Crown lands containing coal were introduced in 1865. Areas from 80 acres to 640 acres could be purchased and if one ton of coal per acre was mined and sold in the first year and the balance of the purchase price paid to the government, the land could be freeholded. The Burrum River coalfield was the first coal mining area developed under these regulations. Reductions to the minimum area were made under the *Crown Lands Act 1868*, and subsequent amendment in 1872.

The first legislation providing for the supervision of coal mines was the *Mines Regulation Act 1881* which established an active Inspectorate of Mines. The *Employers Liability Act 1886* extended the provision of workers compensation to miners. Coal mining lease tenures, of up to 320 acres, were introduced under the *Mineral Lands (Coal Mining) Act 1886*, which came into operation in February 1887.

Licenses for prospecting for coal from 1888 to 1955 can be found under the name of the prospector by using the following:

Index to Coal Mining Licence Register

12/01/1888-23/07/1954

[S7367](#)

Register of Prospecting Licences for Coal

11/02/1889-02/12/1954

[S6649](#)

The *Mining Act 1898* abolished the Office of Mineral Lands Commissioner. All existing Commissioners were appointed as Mining Wardens, and control of mining fields and gold fields was amalgamated into one office.

Under the *Mining Act Amendment Act 1930* authority to prospect on private lands was introduced and with later legislation, there was a shift from the small miner to mining companies.

Mining records

Mines Department

General Correspondence

Circa 1/1/1874–Circa 31/12/1969

[S7645](#)

Alphabetical Registers of Letters Received

Circa 1/9/1874–Circa 31/1/1921

[S14241](#)

Mining Leases

Search the online index [Mineral leases 1871-1940](#) for leases described in the series below.

If an [online QSA index](#) is available, we recommend researchers search this. The content of online indexes has been sourced directly from original records. Digitised copies of many original registers and indexes are also available in the [QSA catalogue](#), and digitised copies of some microfilmed original records are available on Reading Room computers.

Gold Mining Leases

Circa 1/8/1871–Circa 31/7/1919

[S18221](#)

Gold mining leases (GML) include the name of the applicant, period of the lease, where situated, area of land, date of commencement of lease, minimum number of miners to be employed, county and parish, description and sketch map of boundaries of lease, transfers and amount of rent.

Gold mining leases between August 1931 and 11 October 1948 are combined with Mineral Leases MIN/O 48-56 (Item IDs: 211499 - 211507). Volumes may also include leases such as Auriferous Lease (AL), Coal Mining Lease (CML), Water Race Lease (WRL) and others.

Within volumes, leases are listed according to volume number and page number, which are recorded on the last page of each lease. For example, the online index shows that William Henry Couldery's 1880 lease is listed in Volume 5, p.62, which is found on the last page of the entry in the register.

Mineral and Water Race Leases

16/9/1910–30/11/1933

[S9132](#)

Mineral Leases

21/1/1884–11/10/1940

[S18222](#)

Mineral leases provide details of gold or minerals sought, location and boundary of the lease, the date of the lease commencement, name of the applicant, period of the lease and amount of rent.

Index to Coal Mining Licence Register under the Act of 1886

12/1/1888–23/7/1954

[S7367](#)

This index is arranged by Mineral Land Commissioner's District, and numerically by number of licence within each district. Details include licence number, name and folio number.

Letterbooks

Letterbooks contain letters sent by the Mines Department and Geological Survey of Queensland officials including correspondence with mining wardens, other departments, private organisations and individuals about administrative issues, geological reports, assay samples, artesian water supplies and the Inspectors of Mines.

Letterbooks

26/6/1874–31/1/1921

[S14246](#)

Letterbooks

30/1/1883–31/1/1921

[S18220](#)

Letterbooks

Circa 1/8/1877–Circa 30/6/1923

[S7060](#)

Local Mining Warden's offices

Mining Warden's records include registers of claims, leases, water rights, miners rights, wardens court minute books, cash books, miners homestead leases, workers compensation claims, and statistics of machinery and mining production and tailings areas. Search the online index [Miners rights 1874 – 1880](#) for licenses.

Lands Department

Mineral Selections Registers

Circa 1/1/1868–Circa 31/12/1883

[S10364](#)

These registers record details about land granted as mineral selections to individuals, groups, or companies. Each selection is numbered in sequential order. There is an index to holders of the selections in the front of some volumes. Information given in the register of grants of mineral selections includes name of selector, location and acreage of selection, a description of the land, and which mineral is to be mined.

Residential tenures on gold and mineral fields

Miners Homestead Lease card registers

01/03/1871– 17/08/1995

[S19420](#)

Early residential tenure on goldfields was the town allotments where holders of business licenses had erected buildings when the town reserve was surveyed – refer to *Goldfield Town Lands Act 1869*. Miners homesteads were provided for in the *Goldfields Homestead Act 1870*. Holders of miner's rights, business licenses, and other authorised adults with six months residence on the goldfield could apply for homesteads of up to 40 acres. Residence applications were recorded in either registers of residence areas or in registers of applications for all forms of mining tenures for the local Mining Warden's Office.

Other sources of information

This guide is not an exhaustive list of mining records held at QSA. Searches in [ArchivesSearch](#) using keywords for agencies such as those listed below, may also be worthwhile:

- Resources Department
- Mines Department
- Assistant Mining Registrars, for specific regions
- Geological Survey of Queensland
- Inspector of Mines, for specific regions
- Mining Wardens, for specific regions
- Mineral Lands Commissioner, for specific regions, for the years 1872–1898.

You may also find the following guides, indexes and publications helpful:

- [Research guide to miners' homestead leases](#). This guide includes records of the Mining Wardens, lease applications and maps.
- [Mineral leases 1871-1940](#). This index to mining leases was created by the Mines Department and the Mining Wardens across Queensland. It includes gold, mineral, coal and water race leases.
- [Miners' rights 1874-1880](#). This index to registers of miners licenses and business licenses issued mainly between 1 November 1874 and 31 May 1876 was created by the Warden's Offices at Maytown, Edwardstown, Palmerville and Kingsboro.
- **Annual reports.** For published information including annual reports presented to Parliament for the Mines Department from 1877, the Government Geologist, Inspectors of Mines and Geological Survey Reports on Mining Fields and prospecting expeditions, search the *Queensland Votes and Proceedings* available at the State Library of Queensland.
- [GeoResGlobe](#). This online resource created by the Geological Survey of Queensland offers an interactive experience to view Queensland's mining and exploration data. GeoResGlobe is a minerals and energy resources spatial viewer. Users of GeoResGlobe can access over 600 spatial data layers that include themes such as exploration, production and historical resource authorities, geological and geophysical data, native title areas, administrative boundaries and more. Of particular relevance for historical research is the [How to view historic permits in the GeoResGlobe](#) webpage.
- [Queensland Globe](#). Queensland Globe provides an online interactive experience to view Queensland's location-based information. This online interactive tool is managed by the Department of Resources and turns physical, geographical and spatial data about a particular location into map format.

Need more information?

Check our online catalogue [ArchivesSearch](#).
Phone us on (07) 3037 6777 or you can [email](#) an archivist.