



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Culture and the Arts**
State Records Office of Western Australia

Information Sheet

Mining Leases

The Department of Mines began operations on 1 January 1894. Previously the regulation of mineral exploration and mining activities in Western Australia had been the responsibility of the Colonial Secretary's Office and the Lands Department.

For records of mineral leases, as per **Land Regulations 1872 – 1887**, see SROWA Consignment 5000, items 725-30 & 1383-88.

These records comprise:

Registers of Mineral Licences 1872-1883,
Applications for Pastoral & Mining Leases 1878-1882,
Descriptions of leases of Mineral Lands 1878-1883 & 1887-1888.

Gold Mining Lease Registers: Record Series 811

The Gold Mining Lease Registers held by the State Records Office (SRO) cover the period 1888 – 1960. Each Register contains details showing dates of application, grant and relinquishment, a description of the ground including the surrounding area, lease number, lessee, transfers and all encumbrances, fees paid including rents and survey fees.

These registers, which are fragile and unbound, may be examined only under strict handling conditions in the SRO Search Room. The Mineral Titles Division of the Department of Mines and Petroleum also holds microfilm copies of these registers.

Other Mining Lease Registers: Records Series 812 & 813

These are arranged in a similar format to the Gold lease registers. The records consist of two mineral lease registers 1892-1896 and one coal mining lease register, 1896-1910.

Indexes to Mining Tenements: Record Series 1028

The SRO holds nominal indexes names of leases and lease holders registered with the Department from 1892 to 1909. These indexes can be viewed on microfilm at SRO.

To find a lease, one needs to know the name of the lease or leaseholder. One can find these details in the Mining lease Indexes that are listed alphabetically by lease name or leaseholder, noting district and date lease cancelled.

Plans of Mining Leases: Record Series 3498

The State Records Office also holds cancelled plans of mining leases for the Goldfields districts. They form part of consignment number 2073. These plans may be ordered for viewing in the Search Room.

Department of Mines correspondence files: Record Series 20

This series consists of Mines Head Office correspondence files, which date from 1892. These files record the administration of mining legislation and regulations, mining companies and tenements, and related matters.

A numerical list of the files can be viewed on AEON at Record Series 20. If the name of the mining lease is known, e.g. *Sons of Gwalia*, one can do a *Simple Search* on AEON for relevant files.

Records of Mining Wardens and Registrars

The modern regulatory framework for the issue and regulation of gold mining 'miners' rights' and mining leases devolved from the Auriferous Lands Regulations of 1884 and the proclamation of the Kimberley Goldfield in May 1886. With the expansion of mining exploration additional Mining Wardens and Registrars were appointed to the various mineral fields. Mining Registrars were responsible for recording mining claims. Mining Wardens, who were also resident or stipendiary magistrates, presided over the Wardens' Courts; which were established in the major goldfields to settle mining disputes. By 1898 the Department employed 15 Wardens and over 30 Mining Registrars throughout the State.

The SRO holds records that originate from the offices of a dozen mining registrars and warden's courts. The larger collections of district mining records came from the following mining centres

Cue, Marble Bar, Norseman, & Phillips River (Ravensthorpe)

Please consult AEON and AN 17 (Courthouses) & AN 350 (Mines) for further details.