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Landowners threaten Kokoda visitor ban. 29/09/2006. ABC News Online

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Landowners threaten Kokoda visitor ban

Landowners near the Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea are threatening to ban visitors to the site unless a gold exploration project is allowed to go ahead.

Kokoda ... Company says locals will be angry if gold exploration project is scrapped. (ABC TV)

There is growing opposition in Australia to the exploration, with Prime Minister John Howard calling for the project to be abandoned.

The Australian company Frontier Resources says it has the permission of the locals to go ahead with the exploration.

The company's managing director, Peter McNeil, says the landowners will react angrily if the project is scrapped.

"I think you'll find that if that occurs, the landowners in our area will shut down the Kokoda Trail and no-one will use it," he said.

"They have told me that they will shut it down if things go bad because basically there are people walking through their backyard, thousands of people walking through their backyard all the time and I wouldn't put up with it, but they do."

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