

Protecting Queensland's strategic cropping land:

A policy framework

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Vegetation Management and Land Planning
Department of Environment and Resource Management

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HAVE YOUR SAY

The Government has released its policy framework for strategic cropping land.

The policy framework will continue to be developed in consultation with the Strategic Cropping Land Stakeholder Advisory Committee and through development of the regulatory instruments underpinning the policy framework. This includes, later in 2010, releasing for public consultation a Regulatory Assessment Statement (RAS) outlining the potential impacts of the framework and a draft State Planning Policy.

In the meantime, should you wish to provide comments on the policy framework, please email sclenquiries@derm.qld.gov.au or phone 13QGOV (13 7468) by 30 September 2010.



Minister's foreword

Agricultural land resources are important to Queensland—they support economic growth in regional areas, strong regional communities and provide a resource base for growing food. They are a key State resource as Queensland grows.

The Queensland Government is committed to protecting the best of Queensland's cropping land resources. This land, strategic cropping land, is a finite resource that must be conserved and managed for the longer term.

Currently, our strategic cropping land resources are subject to a range of competing land use activities. These include agriculture, mining and urban development. Some of these activities can result in permanent alienation or unavailability of this land for cropping.

The new policy framework outlined in this document will give effect to the Government's commitment to protect Queensland's best cropping land and strike a balance between these competing interests as Queensland grows.

The framework includes new legislation planned to be introduced by the Government in early 2011. The legislation will ensure that proposed development that may impact on Queensland's best cropping land is assessed to ensure it does not cause permanent damage to this valuable resource. Developments such as coal seam gas, underground coal gasification, mining, urbanisation and permanent forest plantations will all be assessed.

Where land has already been designated for urban development, the framework will not apply. State infrastructure that provides significant community benefits such as roads, rail and powerlines, will also be exempt from the framework.

The legislation will describe how strategic cropping land is identified. A series of publicly-available maps will be the starting point for identifying strategic cropping land. These maps will be based on the best soil, land and climate information currently available. On-ground assessment may be necessary to confirm if a mapped area does in fact constitute strategic cropping land. The legislation will set out the criteria for determining this.

The new policy framework will provide a consistent process for assessing and deciding the merits of whether developments are able to proceed on strategic cropping land. It will lead to greater clarity and certainty for investment decisions by the agricultural, urban and resources sectors. It is part of a broader suite of policies to achieve long term co-existence between the resources, urban and agricultural sectors—all of which are critical to a strong Queensland.

While the technical elements and legislation to implement the policy framework are still to be finalised, the Government expects that proposed developments will take into account the clear intent of the new framework.

I encourage all interested parties to submit feedback on the framework by 30 September 2010.

The Honourable Stephen Robertson MP
Minister for Natural Resources Mines and Energy and the Minister for Trade

Introduction

The Queensland Government considers Queensland's best cropping land, defined as strategic cropping land, to be a finite resource that must be conserved and managed for the long-term for food production and regional growth.

Currently, 2.2 per cent of Queensland is estimated as being used for cropping. The best of this land will be identified as strategic cropping land. Strategic cropping land includes the best land currently being cropped as well as the best cropping land resources that could be cropped in future.

The Government has announced a new policy framework to protect Queensland's strategic cropping land resources. This document outlines this framework, including the legislative and planning tools that will be used to implement the new approach. Specifically, it sets out a plan for developing and implementing new legislation including an Act of Parliament for strategic cropping land resources.

The framework links with existing legislation including the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* (SPA) and resources tenure legislation, to assess proposed development activities that could impact on strategic cropping land resources. These activities include coal seam gas developments, underground coal gasification, mining, urbanisation and permanent plantations.

The new policy framework complements a range of existing Queensland Government initiatives that will achieve long-term co-existence between Queensland's expanding resources sector and growing population. It is specifically targeted at protecting cropping land as a resource. Other planning processes exist to address issues such as lifestyle and scenic amenity.

The framework will ensure Queensland's strategic cropping land resources are considered in land-use planning and development decisions to promote sustained economic growth in Queensland.

Background

The Queensland Government recognises land-use competition on cropping land resources is occurring across some of the State's most important economic sectors, including the resources, agriculture and urban development sectors. This competition is driven by increased global demand for energy, food and fibre as well as Queensland's strong population growth.

Development of the resources sector is vital and generates significant economic benefits in rural and regional Queensland. The mining, petroleum and gas industries continue to be the major contributor to Queensland's prosperity, contributing \$26.36 billion to the State's economy in 2006–07. During that period, Queensland also benefited from \$1.33 billion paid in royalties to the State, which was used to fund essential services and infrastructure throughout Queensland.

Cropping land resources and related industries are also key components of the Queensland economy. The agriculture and agri-food system generated \$22.7 billion dollars in 2006–07, and employed 272 471 Queenslanders. Availability of the land resource is critical in allowing the agricultural sector and associated regional and rural communities to adapt and respond to shifts in markets.

The Queensland Government has a long-standing commitment to the protection of cropping land. The *State Planning Policy 1/92 Development and the Conservation of Agricultural Land* (SPP 1/92) provides protection for agricultural land through local government planning schemes, where the land has been identified as 'good quality agricultural land' through the SPA.

A 2009 review of SPP 1/92 identified urban development and mining as continued threats to good-quality agricultural land. Urban threats include the physical encroachment of urban uses (such as urban subdivisions) and the cumulative effects of urban influences in the form of ‘rural lifestyle’ development. Recently, resources development, including mining and petroleum and gas industries, has emerged as another development pressure on these cropping land resources. Collectively, these development pressures cause a high level of uncertainty for the future of agricultural activities and investments.

Development of the Queensland resources sector is primarily regulated through the:

- *Mineral Resources Act 1989*
- *Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004*
- *Petroleum Act 1923*
- *Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009*
- *Geothermal Exploration Act 2009*
- *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*
- *Environment Protection Act 1994*

These Acts are collectively referred to as the ‘resources legislation’, and provide for grant of tenure and the issuing of environmental authorities for resource-related activities.

In February 2010, the Honourable Stirling Hinchliffe MP, Minister for Infrastructure and Planning released a discussion paper outlining a new policy and planning framework for public comment. A total of 389 submissions were received in response to the discussion paper, and a stakeholder advisory committee was formed with membership from peak bodies for the agricultural, resource and urban development industries, natural resource management groups and the Local Government Association of Queensland.

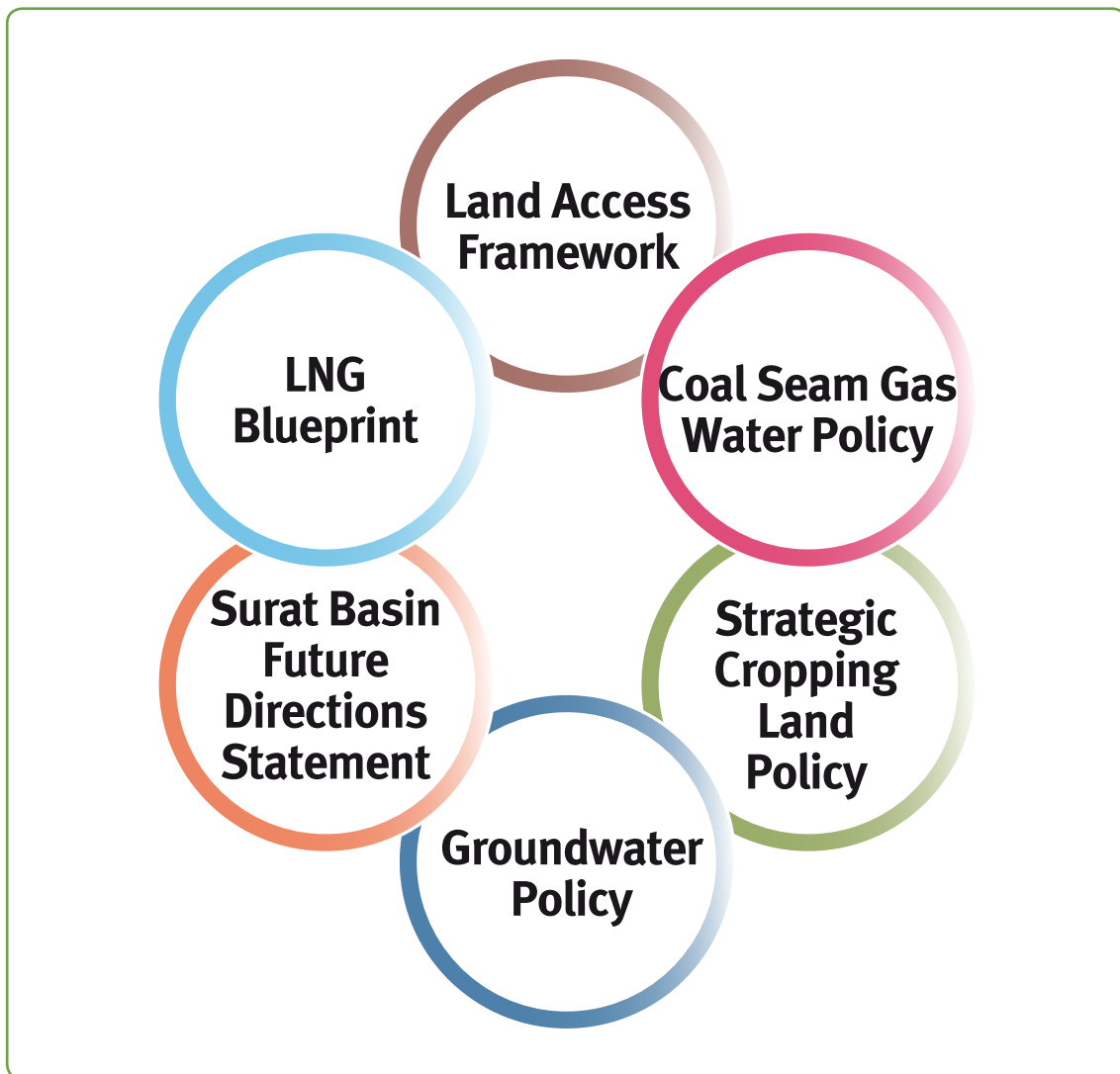


Related initiatives

Protection of land resources is one aspect of the complex interactions between agriculture and other land users, which include considerations such as groundwater, impacts on businesses at the local and regional level, and the broader environment. The strategic cropping land policy framework is a key component of an integrated set of policies across government that deal with the co-existence of the mining and agricultural sectors. These include the land access policy framework and the coal seam gas water policy, as shown in Figure 1.

The strategic cropping land policy framework will complement these other Queensland Government initiatives to achieve long-term co-existence between Queensland's expanding resources sector and growing population.

Figure 1: Current Queensland Government policies, which work together to manage the co-existence of the mining and agricultural sectors.



A new policy for strategic cropping land resources

The Queensland Government's policy is:

The best cropping land, defined as strategic cropping land, is a finite resource that must be conserved and managed for the longer term. As a general aim, planning and approval powers should be used to protect such land from those developments that lead to its permanent alienation or diminished productivity.

This policy intends to protect the best cropping land resources in the State so that they are able to be used for cropping and support a robust agricultural sector into the future.

Outline of the framework

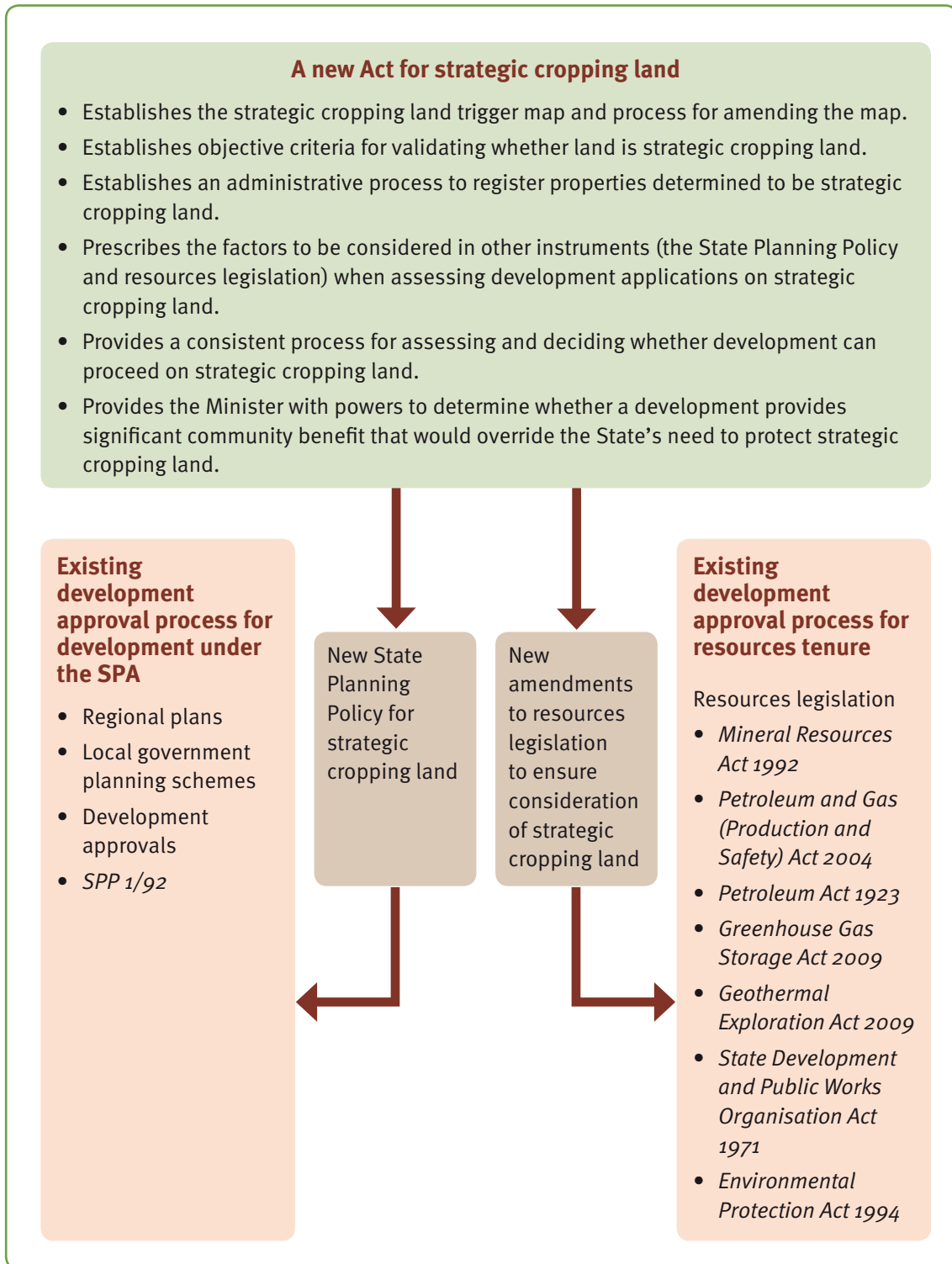
The framework to implement the policy will provide a comprehensive, state-wide approach applying consistent assessment to all types of development that may impact on Queensland's best cropping land resources.

Legislative and planning instruments will be developed to implement the policy. These are:

1. **A new Act specifically for strategic cropping land resources**—the legislation will describe how strategic cropping land is identified and will include an indicative map of where strategic cropping land resources may exist. Criteria will then be used for validating on-site whether the land is in fact strategic cropping land. The legislation will provide a consistent process for assessing and deciding whether development can proceed on strategic cropping land.
2. **A new State Planning Policy under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009***—in conjunction with the new Act, a new State Planning Policy will guide planning (including regional plans) and development assessment under the SPA. The new State Planning Policy will operate in tandem with SPP 1/92, which protects a broader range of agricultural land from development.
3. **Amendments to existing resources legislation**—amendments to resources legislation will be made to recognise the requirements of the new Act for strategic cropping land resources. These amendments will require assessment of the impact on strategic cropping land and will condition tenure accordingly. Further conditions for restoration and other environmental matters will continue to be addressed under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*.

These instruments will form an integrated package reflecting the common policy principles and decision-making processes outlined in this document. Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between these instruments.

Figure 2: Outline of the strategic cropping land legislative framework.



Policy principles, outcomes and application

Principles

The policy principles that will guide how Queensland's strategic cropping land resources will be protected and used to develop the new legislative and planning instruments are:

1. Relevant development should avoid locating or impacting on strategic cropping land.
2. Except in 'demonstrated exceptional circumstances', relevant development will not be allowed on strategic cropping land unless the site can be fully restored to strategic cropping land condition.
3. To be considered a 'demonstrated exceptional circumstance' it must be demonstrated that:
 - a. for resources development, the resource is not found at an alternative site in Queensland which is not on strategic cropping land; or for development assessed under the SPA, it cannot occur anywhere else other than on strategic cropping land, and
 - b. there is a significant community benefit from the development.
4. State, regional and local planning, and development assessment will include provisions for the protection of strategic cropping land.

Outcomes

The new policy framework will deliver the following outcomes:

- protection of strategic cropping land resources—ensuring Queensland's capacity to grow crops is maintained
- certainty for landholders, development proponents, industry and the community about the requirements for development on strategic cropping land
- development that temporarily diminishes productivity of the land will, at the end of the development, restore the land to strategic cropping land condition
- development that permanently alienates strategic cropping land will not proceed except under special circumstances. The project must demonstrate that there is no alternative site other than on strategic cropping land. The Minister may then declare the project to be Excepted Development because it provides a significant community benefit.

Application

While the new laws are yet to be enacted, the Government expects that proponents will take this framework into account in advancing their particular projects. For resources developments, the policy will be applied in the assessment of resources tenure. For other development, the policy will be applied through the Integrated Development Assessment System (IDAS) under the SPA.

Relevant development

The policy will apply to development that will permanently alienate or temporarily diminish productivity of strategic cropping land resources.

Examples of high-impact developments that may permanently affect strategic cropping land include open-cut, long-wall mining, underground coal gasification and large water storage ponds. These activities can result in long-lasting changes to the soil caused by new construction, extensive excavation, subsidence or contamination of land.

Similarly, urban development can permanently affect the land through activities such as the construction of permanent structures, subdivision and land use conflict.

Permanent alienation of the land may also result from large-scale forest plantations or revegetation projects that are unable to be harvested or cleared due to a legal commitment (for example, a commitment to sequester carbon or provide environmental benefits).

The policy will apply to activities that have a temporary affect on strategic cropping land. These are activities where the land is able to be restored to strategic cropping land at a later date. For example, activities such as pipelines or wells associated with petroleum and gas production and geothermal developments generally have a smaller footprint and may have a temporary impact. With appropriate management, these activities can co-exist with agricultural development. These activities will still be assessed under the new policy framework to ensure appropriate conditions requiring full restoration are applied.

Exempt development

The policy recognises that some developments are critical to deliver essential services to communities. State infrastructure, such as roads under the *Transport Infrastructure Act 1994* and powerlines under the *Electricity Act 1994*, will be exempt from the requirements of the framework.

The policy will not apply to existing development approvals, or areas that are already designated for urban development under existing statutory regional plans and local government planning schemes.

Cropping activity and necessary supporting infrastructure will be exempt from the policy.

Definition and mapping of strategic cropping land

What is strategic cropping land?

Strategic cropping land is a scarce natural resource identified by soil, climatic and landscape features that make it highly suitable for crop production.

How will strategic cropping land be identified and mapped?

A series of publicly-available maps will be the starting point for determining whether an area is strategic cropping land. The maps will be based on the best soil, land and climate information currently available.

On-ground assessment will be necessary to confirm if a mapped area is strategic cropping land. The legislation will set out the criteria for determining this.

The general criteria for identifying strategic cropping land will be:

1. The site meets the designated suitability classification scheme standards, which will require suitability for a range of crops.
2. The land is within the strategic cropping land climatic zone.
3. The land use does not preclude cropping.

This criteria will be further refined as the new policy framework and legislation is developed.

Guidelines will be developed to assist landholders and developers identify whether their land is or is not strategic cropping land. These guidelines will assist to minimise the costs to landholders and developers.

Where land is identified on the map **and** is confirmed as strategic cropping land using the criteria, development on this land will be assessed under the policy framework.

Draft trigger maps of Queensland's strategic cropping land are provided in Appendix A. These maps were prepared using land suitability data and a climate constraint of 500 millimetres average annual rainfall. These maps are expected to overestimate the area of land that will meet the criteria for strategic cropping land.

Important note: The maps are not a definitive measure of the extent of strategic cropping land at a property or local level. The maps indicate an area where strategic cropping land is expected to exist but it is the on-ground assessment against the criteria that will define the extent of strategic cropping land at a site level. Future changes to the maps will occur based on the final criteria and revisions of the maps will be informed by on-ground assessments where they are available.

The new legislation for strategic cropping land resources will provide mechanisms for landholders to apply to amend the map. For example, landowners can apply to have their land included on the map, where they can demonstrate their land (not currently included on the map) meets the criteria for strategic cropping land.

Similarly, if it is demonstrated that land currently mapped as strategic cropping land does not meet the criteria, the map will be amended to exclude the land.

Decision-making process

The framework provides a consistent approach to assessing the impact of development on strategic cropping land resources by applying common decision-making requirements to all types of proposed development (Figure 3).

The Government will use these common decision-making requirements to determine whether the development or tenure application on strategic cropping land should be approved, conditioned or refused.

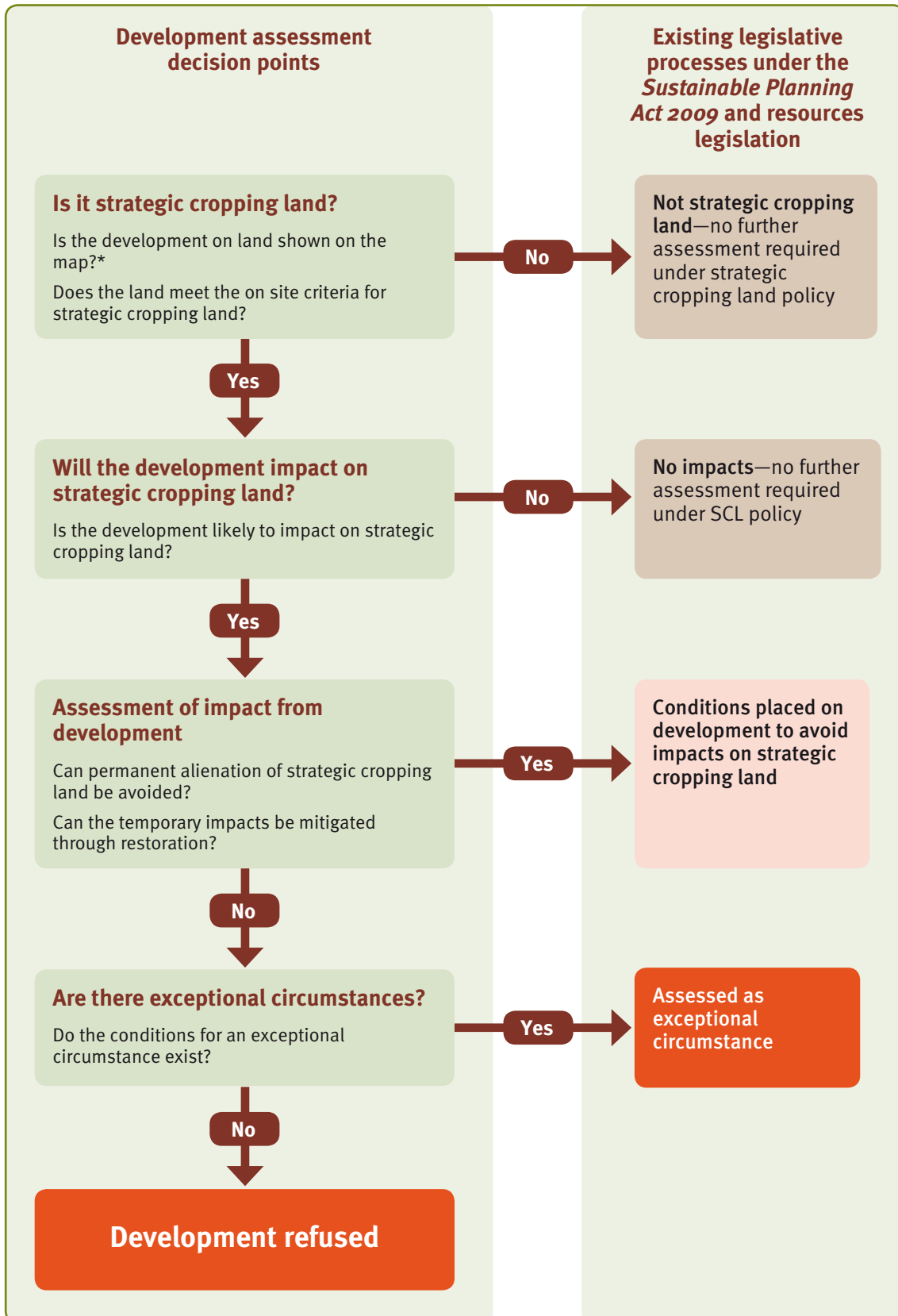
The decision about strategic cropping land will be made as early as possible in the development or tenure assessment process to provide certainty regarding development prospects.

Where impacts will occur (permanent alienation of strategic cropping land), proponents will be required to demonstrate that either:

- there are no alternative sites
- the strategic cropping land can be fully restored
- the proposal is of significant community benefit.

This decision-making process allows development proponents to be fully informed of the expectations of government, and enables them to make decisions fully aware of the impacts that strategic cropping land requirements may have on a development project.

Figure 3: Decision points for development on strategic cropping land.

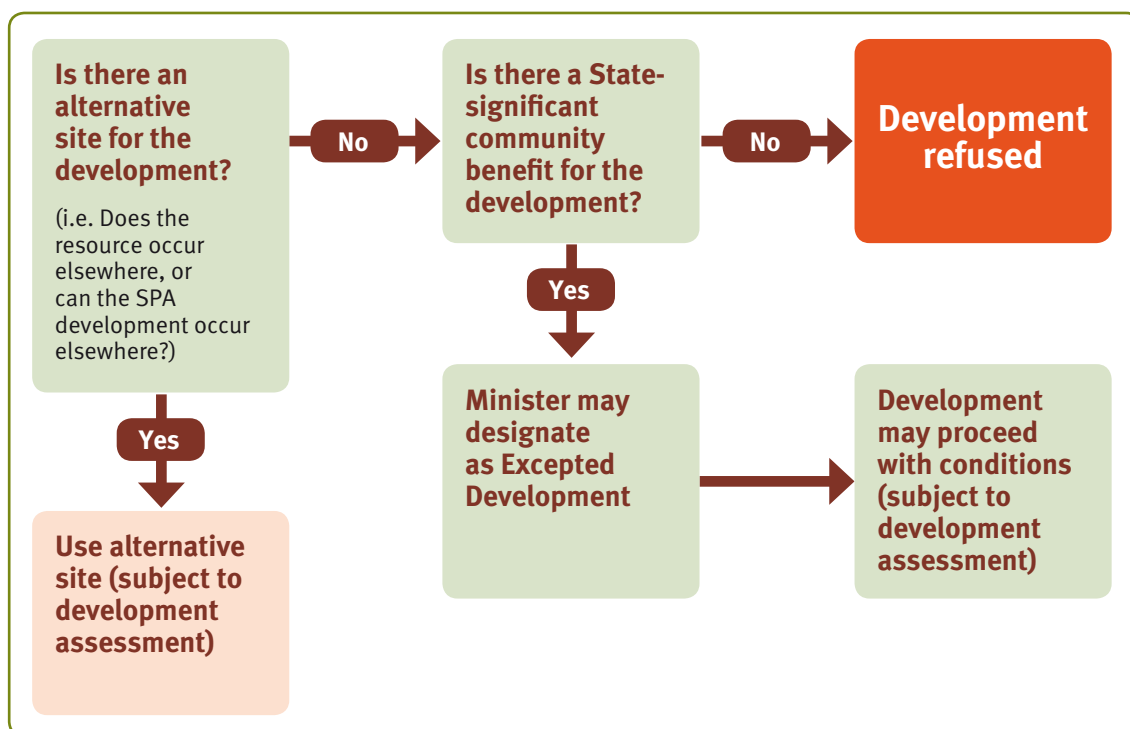


* Landholders whose land is not identified in the map who can demonstrate that they have land that meets the criteria can apply to have the land considered as strategic cropping land.

Process for determining exceptional circumstances

In the rare and unlikely event, where a proponent can demonstrate that: for development under the resources legislation, the resource exists nowhere else; or, for development assessed under the SPA, it cannot occur anywhere else other than on strategic cropping land, the Minister may designate the project as an Excepted Development (with conditions), provided there is a significant community benefit. This decision-making process is outlined in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Process for determining exceptional circumstances.



Incorporating strategic cropping land considerations in the planning system—a new State Planning Policy on strategic cropping land

A new State Planning Policy will ensure that the new Act for strategic cropping land is reflected in the land-use planning system. This will be consistent with the decision-making process described in Figure 3.

Development, such as urban development, large-scale tourism and industrial estates, is subject to the SPA and will remain so.

State planning policies provide a way for the State to express its interest in a matter. These also provide policy direction for regional plans and for local governments when they make a planning scheme. State planning policies can also include assessment criteria and requirements that must be met when assessing development applications.

The State Planning Policy will not require assessment of areas that are already designated for urban development in regional plans or local government plans.

The State's current planning instrument for protecting agricultural land, SPP 1/92, will continue.

SPP 1/92 protects a broad range of agricultural land including land that may be used for grazing, cropping and other agricultural activities. Because of its broad coverage, it currently protects land that will now be determined to be strategic cropping land under the new policy framework and which will be dealt with by a new State Planning Policy for strategic cropping land. Before areas are designated for urban development, significant public consultation and assessment processes are undertaken including consideration of agricultural land under SPP 1/92.

SPP 1/92 will continue to apply to the broader range of agricultural land not captured under the new State Planning Policy. Where there are any inconsistencies between SPP 1/92 and the new State Planning Policy, the new policy will prevail.

Incorporating strategic cropping land considerations for mining, petroleum and gas proposals—amending resources legislation

Resources sector legislation will be amended to ensure that the new strategic cropping land legislation is considered in tenure assessment.

These amendments will include establishing processes for consideration of strategic cropping land in decision-making, requiring proponents to demonstrate how the development will avoid permanent alienation, and for imposing conditions on activities to ensure they do not permanently alienate strategic cropping land resources or diminish the productivity of strategic cropping land resources.

This will involve addition of a new step to the tenure assessment process. Currently, tenure is not issued until both the assessment processes (tenure and environmental authority) are complete. This means, in some instances, significant investment by the proponent in terms of providing information and undertaking detailed and extensive assessments through, for example, the environment impact assessment process. The strategic cropping land policy framework is designed so that decisions regarding strategic cropping land values and impacts can be made up front, without needing further investment in other assessment processes.

This will be consistent with the decision-making process described in Figure 3.

Restoration considerations and conditioning will continue to occur through the issuing of environmental authorities under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*.

Next steps

Queensland Government officers will continue to develop the policy framework in consultation with the Strategic Cropping Land Stakeholder Advisory Committee and through development of the regulatory instruments underpinning the policy framework.

The Strategic Cropping Land Stakeholder Advisory Committee comprises of representatives from:

- Agforce
- Queensland Farmers Federation
- Queensland Resources Council
- Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association

- Queensland NRM Groups Collective (represented by Fitzroy Basin Association and Queensland Murray-Darling Committee)
- Urban Development Institute of Australia
- Local Government Association of Queensland
- Future Food Queensland
- Planning Institute of Australia (Qld Branch)
- SEQ Council of Mayors.

Later in 2010, a Regulatory Assessment Statement (RAS) will be publicly released to further outline the extent of any potential impacts on stakeholders. Preparation of a RAS is part of the Queensland Government's commitment to adopting best practice regulatory principles and ensures that regulation is developed in a rigorous and transparent manner.

Further refined maps of strategic cropping land and final criteria will be released as part of the RAS. An opportunity for public comment and feedback on the framework including the indicative maps of strategic cropping land will be provided at this time.

Public consultation will also be required on the draft State Planning Policy, which will be a new instrument under the SPA.

The Government is aiming to have the new legislation introduced in early 2011.

Commencement

The new legislation for strategic cropping land State Planning Policy and amendments to resources sector legislation will commence upon assent of the new legislation by the Parliament. While the new laws are yet to be enacted, the Government expects that proponents will take this framework into account in advancing their particular projects.

The Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) will work with proponents to explain the policy framework and the application of the strategic cropping land criteria.

On assent of the new legislation, the Government will apply the new decision-making framework to all new and undecided resources development applications.

On commencement of the State Planning Policy, the decision-making framework will apply to all new applications, and where an application has not yet been decided the assessment will be consistent with the commencement arrangements under the SPA.

The State Planning Policy will not require assessment of areas that are already designated for urban development in regional plans or local government plans.

Further information

For further information on the strategic cropping land policy framework, refer to the DERM website at <www.derm.qld.gov.au>.

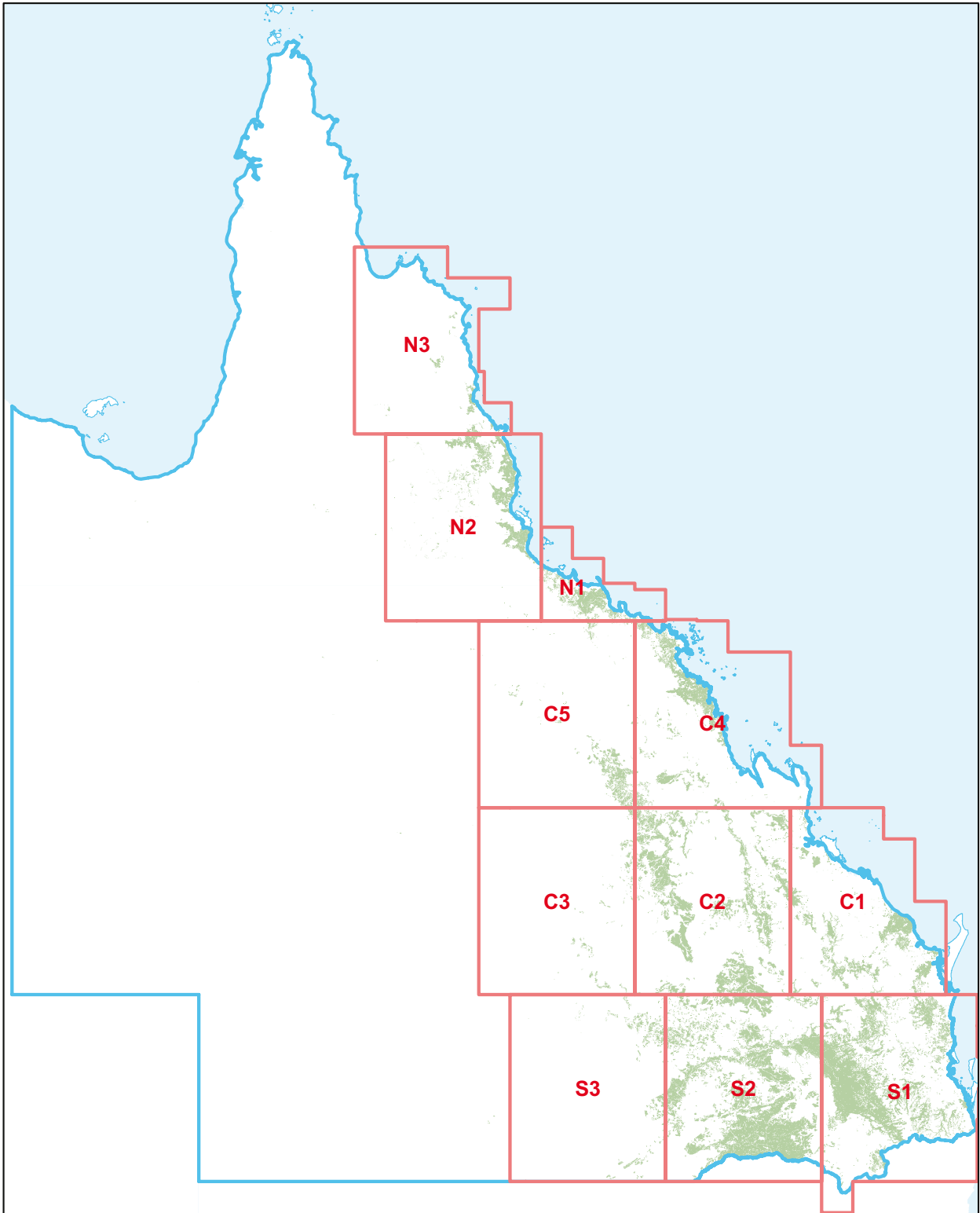
Glossary

Term	Definition
Alternative site	<p>Land, other than strategic cropping land, on which development can reasonably be located.</p> <p>There is an alternative site for resource development when the resource can reasonably be obtained elsewhere in Queensland. For other development, there is an alternative site when the development can be located on land that is not strategic cropping land, and where the development is not prevented on these alternative sites by other laws.</p> <p>The ownership of the land of the alternative site and business needs are not relevant considerations for determining whether a suitable alternative site exists.</p>
Excepted Development	In special circumstances, the Minister may declare a project to be Excepted Development if there is no alternative site and there is a significant community benefit .
Exempt Development	<p>Developments that are exempt from consideration under the framework. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing development approvals, or areas that are already designated for urban development under existing statutory regional plans and local government planning schemes. Cropping activity and necessary supporting infrastructure will be exempt from the policy. Infrastructure that is required to deliver essential services to the community such as energy and transport, where the infrastructure is being developed under the <i>Electricity Act 1994</i> or <i>Transport Infrastructure Act 1994</i>.
Relevant development	<p>Development that will temporarily diminish productivity of strategic cropping land or will permanently alienate the land. This includes urbanisation and mining, but excludes some agriculture and State infrastructure.</p> <p>There are two key types of relevant development:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Development that causes temporary diminished productivity</i>—where development that impacts upon the soil resource and/or prevents cropping activity, but where the land can be fully restored following cessation of the use. <i>Development that will permanently alienate</i> strategic cropping land including where: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a development will endure for 50 years or more, and prevents cropping during that time or in the future (e.g. urban development); or a land use where a legal impediment prevents the land from being used for cropping for 50 years or more (e.g. permanent forest plantations with a covenant securing carbon rights); or a development that causes long-lasting impacts that prevents or reduces cropping capability such as subsidence, changes to the soil structure or contamination (e.g. minerals extraction); or a development likely to cause a land-use conflict or where reconfiguration of lots result in fragmentation and small lot sizes that would impact on the productivity of strategic cropping land. An example of development likely to cause conflict is high density urban development.
Permanent alienation	Permanent alienation occurs when a use located on or near to strategic cropping land will endure for 50 years or more, and prevents cropping during that time or in the future. For example, where a legal impediment prevents the land from being used for cropping (e.g. covenants for carbon forests or voluntary declarations), permanent plantations, urban development, extraction activities that endure for longer than 50 years, or where long-lasting impacts occur that prevent cropping such as new construction, subsidence, changes to the soil structure or contamination of the land.
Restoration	Where the land is strategic cropping land prior to a development commencing, and is reduced to a status where it is not strategic cropping land during the life of the development, the land is brought back to strategic cropping land classification, once the development has ceased.
Significant community benefit	The Minister can declare, in special circumstances, that a development presents a scarce or overwhelmingly significant opportunity of benefit to the State, which is more significant than the State's interest in protecting strategic cropping land resources from permanent alienation. This could include a social or community service, or an economic benefit to the State that overrides the need to protect strategic cropping land resources from permanent alienation. While economic benefit may be relevant, the significance of the project cannot be based on economic benefits alone.



Appendix A

Strategic cropping land: draft trigger maps



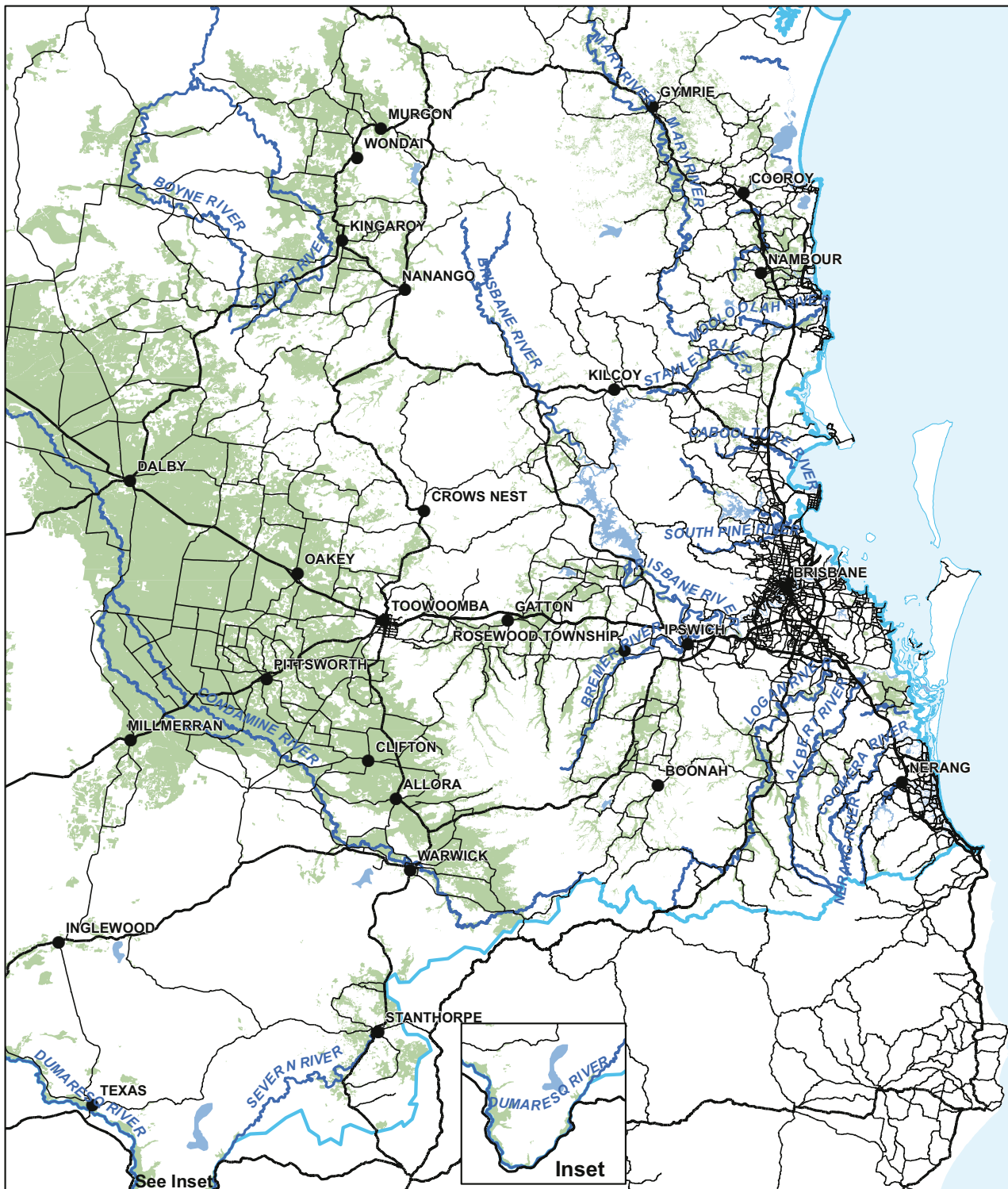
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KEY MAP

Strategic Cropping Land - Draft Trigger Map Subject to on-site assessment

- Map Boundary
- Strategic Cropping Land





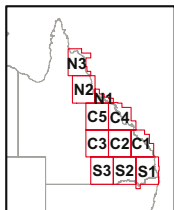
Strategic Cropping Land - Draft Trigger Map Subject to on-site assessment

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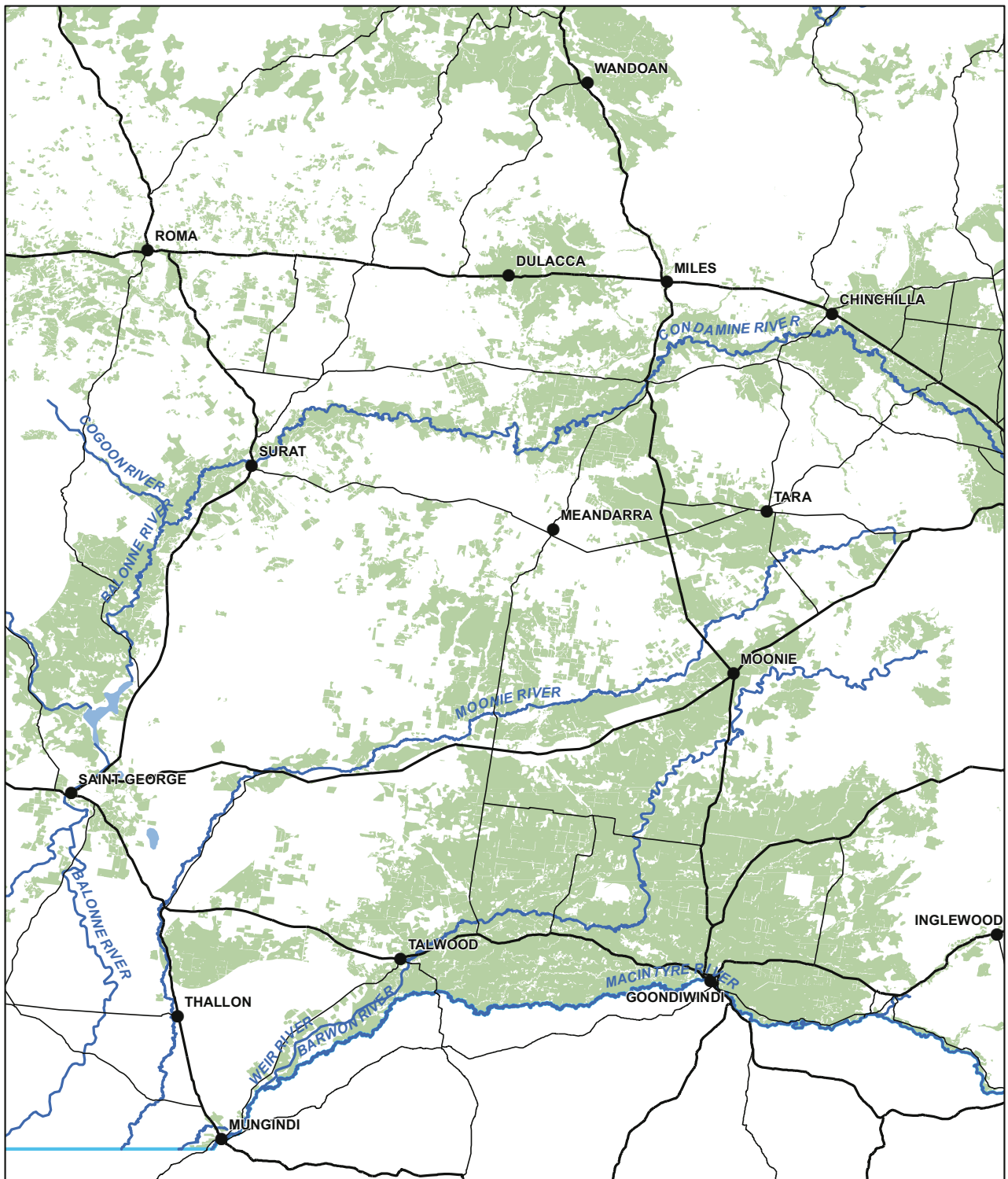
- Towns and Cities
- Major Roads
- Major Rivers
- Strategic Cropping Land

This map is indicative of where strategic cropping land exists. This map is prepared using land suitability data and represents versatile cropping lands, agricultural land class A. Production from agriculture or plantation in the 1999 Queensland Land Use Mapping Program dataset has been used in selected locations where land suitability data is insufficient. Land is excluded from the mapping where it has remnant vegetation, or is in a national park, state forest, timber reserve or forest reserve. Land is excluded from the mapping where it is within the urban footprints for Far North Queensland or South East Queensland, or is in a collection of small cadastral parcels. Areas that have an average annual rainfall of less than 500 mm and are not irrigated have been removed. Further on-ground assessment against specific criteria will be used to identify the best cropping land (strategic cropping land).



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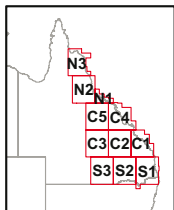
Strategic Cropping Land - Draft Trigger Map Subject to on-site assessment

0 20 40 80 Kilometres

This map is indicative of where strategic cropping land exists. This map is prepared using land suitability data and represents versatile cropping lands, agricultural land class A. Production from agriculture or plantation in the 1999 Queensland Land Use Mapping Program dataset has been used in selected locations where land suitability data is insufficient. Land is excluded from the mapping where it has remnant vegetation, or is in a national park, state forest, timber reserve or forest reserve. Land is excluded from the mapping where it is within the urban footprints for Far North Queensland or South East Queensland, or is in a collection of small cadastral parcels. Areas that have an average annual rainfall of less than 500 mm and are not irrigated have been removed. Further on-ground assessment against specific criteria will be used to identify the best cropping land (strategic cropping land).

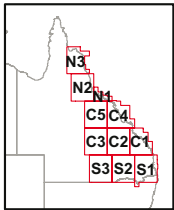
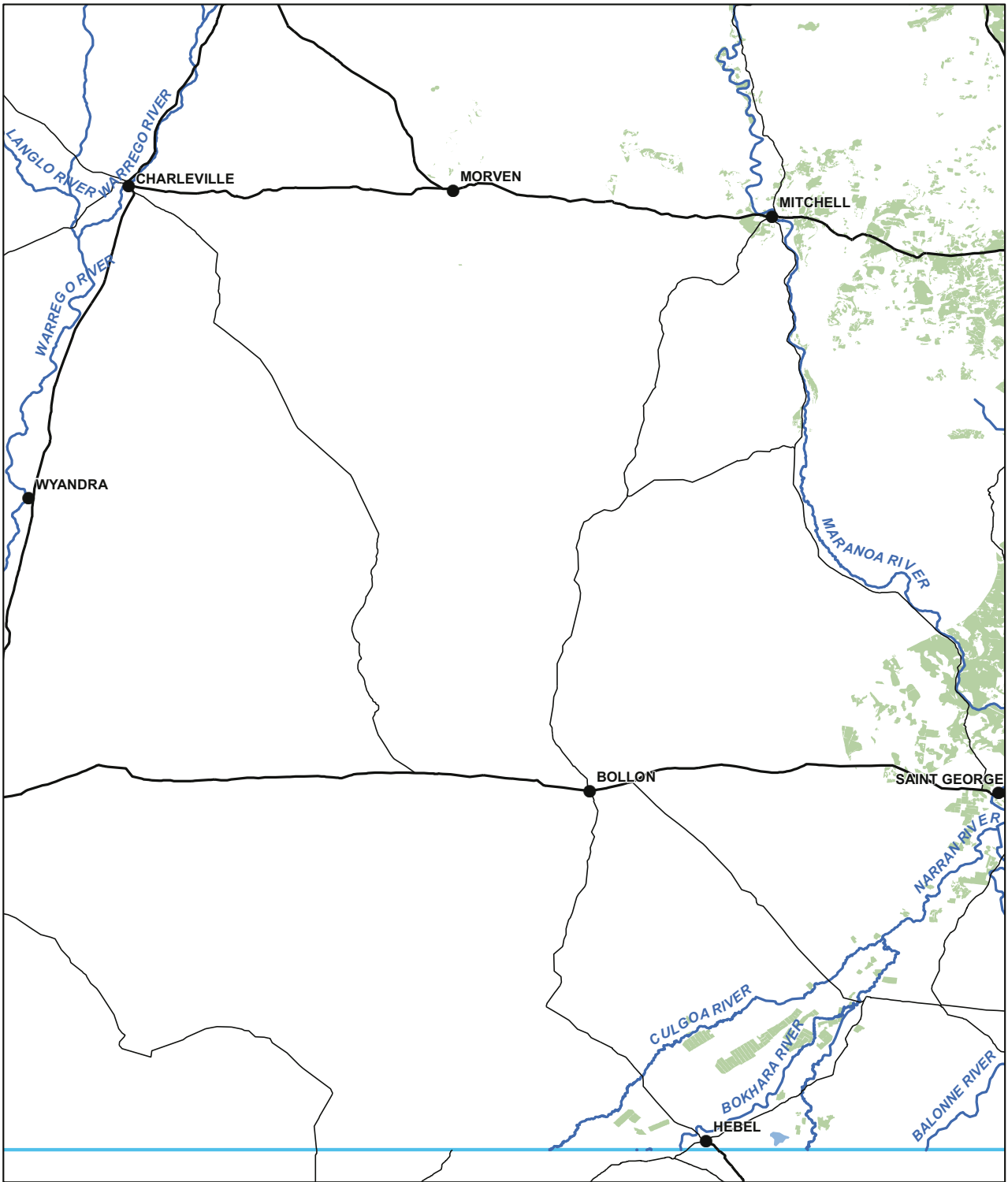


- Towns and Cities
- Major Roads
- Major Rivers
- Strategic Cropping Land



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S2



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S3

Strategic Cropping Land - Draft Trigger Map Subject to on-site assessment

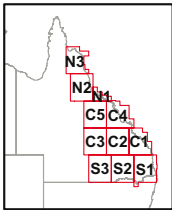
0 20 40 80 Kilometres

This map is indicative of where strategic cropping land exists. This map is prepared using land suitability data and represents versatile cropping lands, agricultural land class A. Production from agriculture or plantation in the 1999 Queensland Land Use Mapping Program dataset has been used in selected locations where land suitability data is insufficient. Land is excluded from the mapping where it has remnant vegetation, or is in a national park, state forest, timber reserve or forest reserve. Land is excluded from the mapping where it is within the urban footprints for Far North Queensland or South East Queensland, or is in a collection of small cadastral parcels. Areas that have an average annual rainfall of less than 500 mm and are not irrigated have been removed. Further on-ground assessment against specific criteria will be used to identify the best cropping land (strategic cropping land).



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- Major Roads
- Major Rivers
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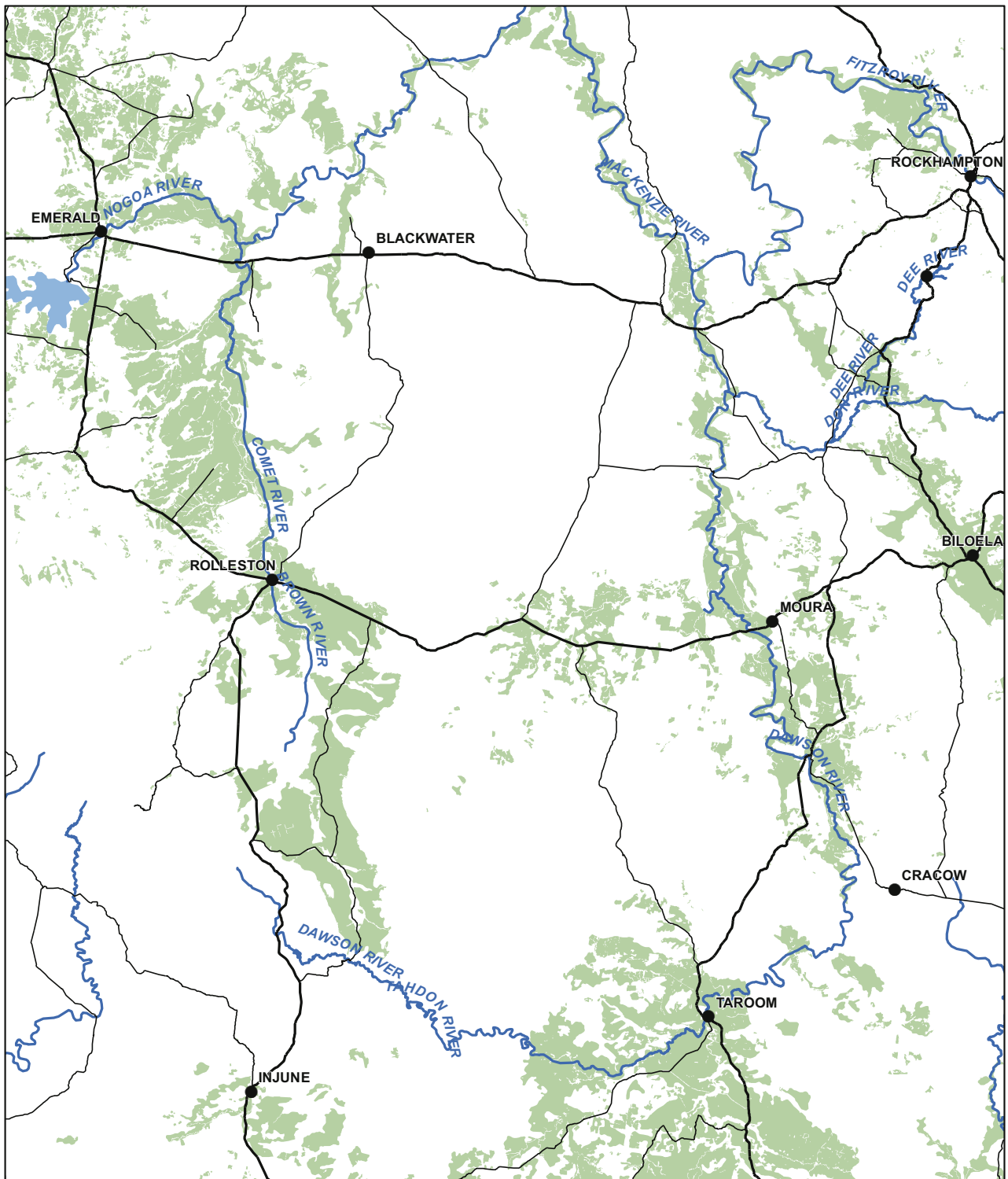
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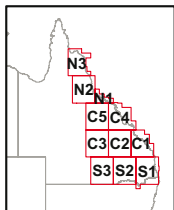
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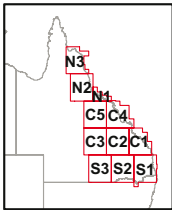
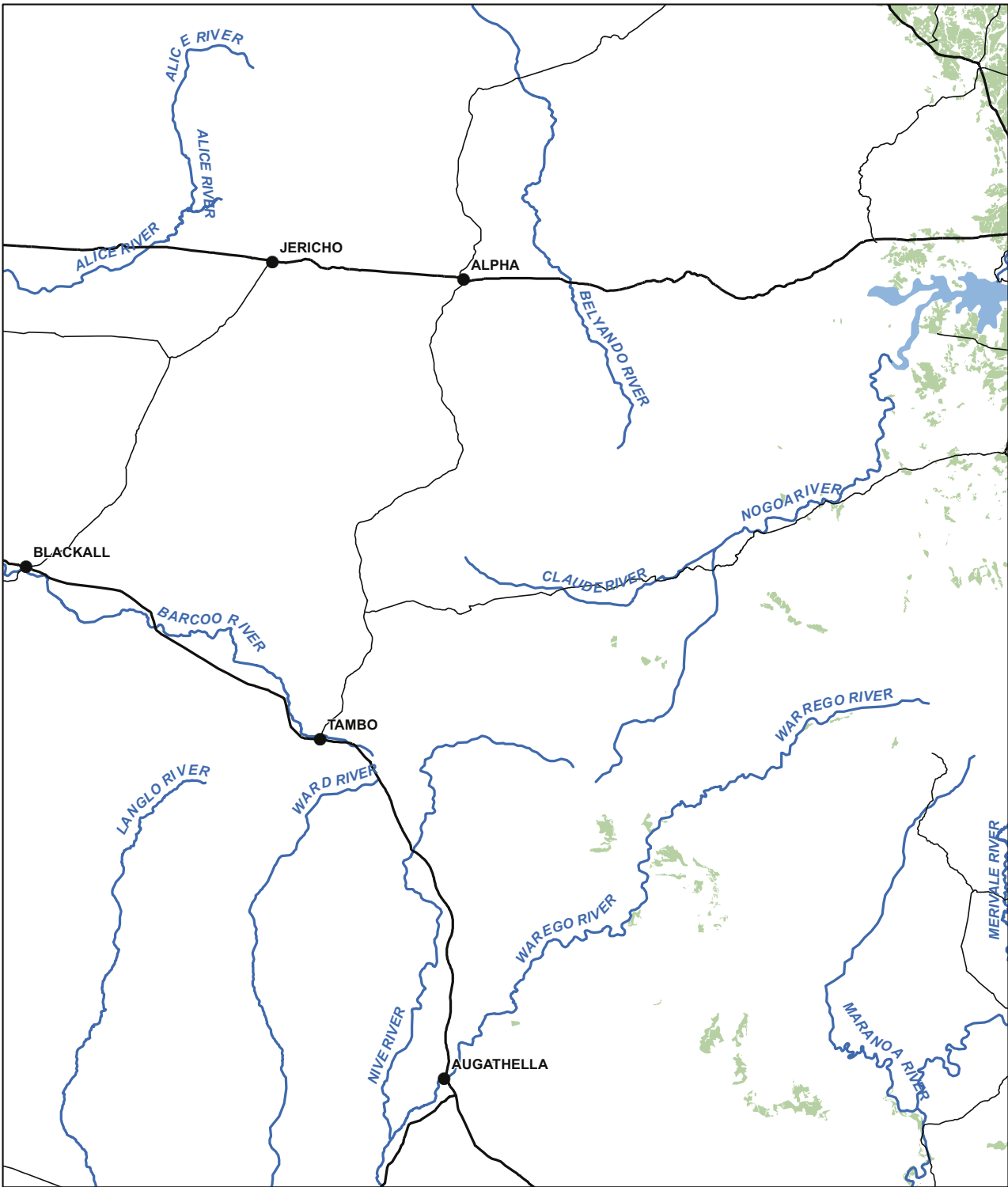
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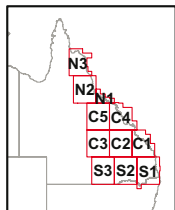




See Inset

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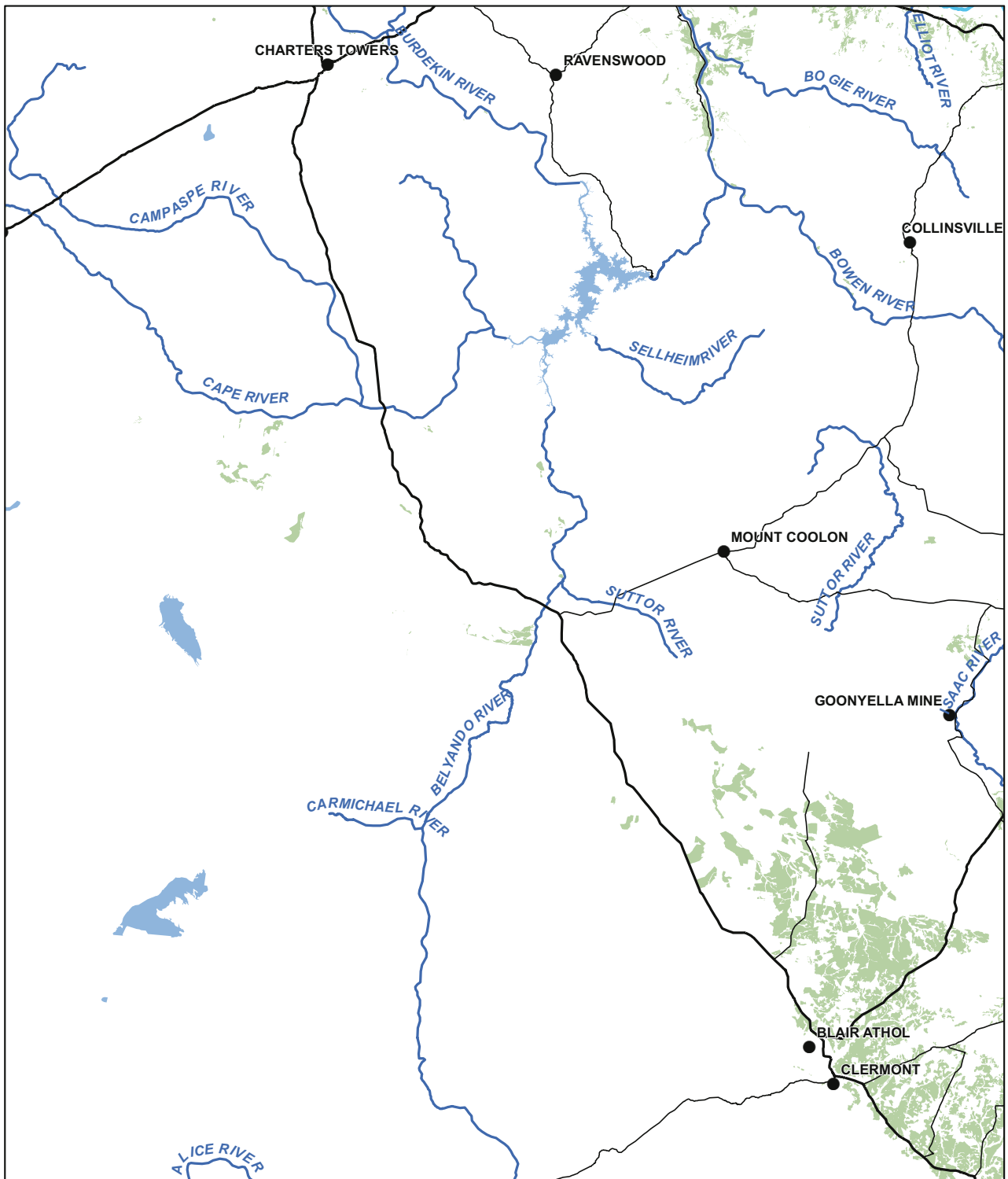
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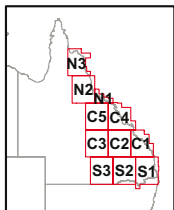


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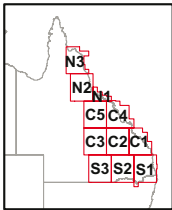
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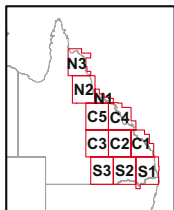




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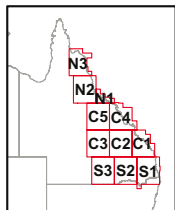
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