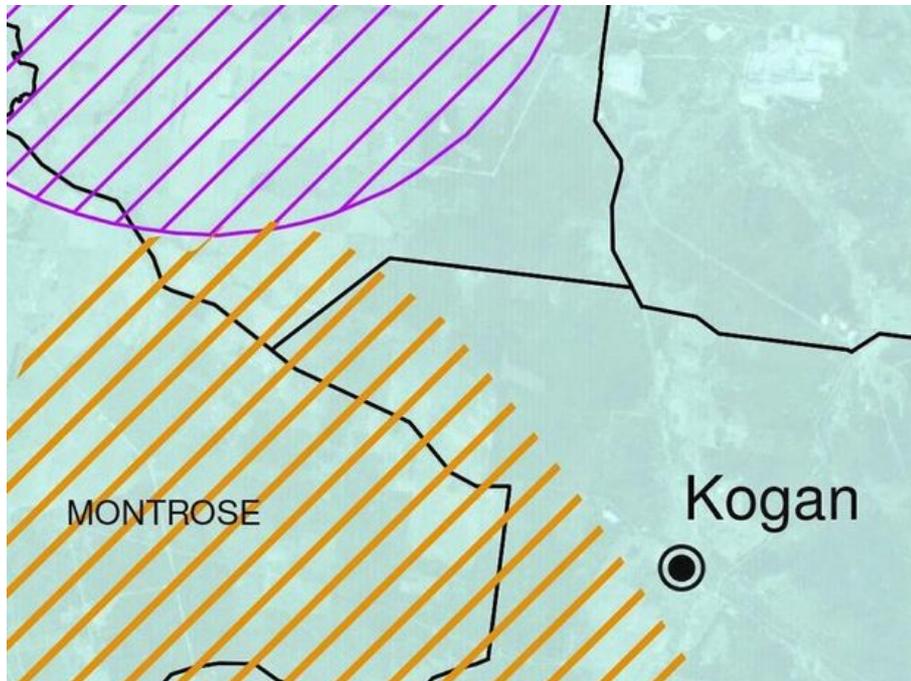


Further 47,000ha under contamination investigation

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This map provides information about the Hopeland and surrounding region excavation caution zone and investigation area.

Queensland Department of Environ

THE State Government has marked an additional 47,000 hectares of land south of Hopeland as an "Investigation Area", after further testing found "hydrogen contamination at potentially hazardous levels" outside the existing Linc Energy Excavation Caution Zone (ECZ).

The additional area covers over 200 affected properties across the Montrose, Kogan and Beelbee districts.

The results of the testing were only made public by the Department after a secret report was leaked to the media.

The Department's website dedicated to advising affected landholders was quietly updated on February 16 to include an amended map with the additional investigation area included.

The Government website can be accessed [here](#).

DEHP advises that the same cautionary advice that applies to the current ECZ now also applies to the additional investigation area.

The Government have advised that caution should be used when excavating deeper than two meters in depth, recommended gas monitoring, ventilation of areas of disturbance and confined spaces and the removal of ignition sources.

Tom Marland, principal of Marland Law, who represents landholders already affected by the current ECZ at Hopelands has said that the news is devastating for affected landholders.

"The ECZ and the extent of contamination is not reducing it is expanding rapidly" Mr Marland said.

"To have an area literally double overnight on the back of fairly limited testing is a major concern".

"To make matters worse, there has been no formal announcement by the Government, the Department or Minister Miles. They have just uploaded a new map onto their website. Quite frankly, that is disgraceful but given the Governments track record on the management of this matter, I am not surprised" said Mr Marland.

State Environment Minister Dr Steven Miles said all impacted landholders were being contacted to advise them of the widened investigations.

"EHP's advice in relation to the excavation caution zone and the investigation area remains that people wishing to excavate below two metres should take precautions before doing so.

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"The risks posed by the hydrogen contamination are manageable, and it's important that people know that, despite media reports, EHP is not banning anyone from excavating."

Dr Miles said EHP was conducting a letterbox-drop of information for landholders in the investigation zone.

EHP is also offering free farm health assessments for concerned property owners and the department's communications continue to emphasise that testing over the past two years has shown surface soil, water and air quality remains safe.

"The risk associated with the hydrogen is primarily a flammability risk, and this risk is manageable providing precautions are taken," Dr Miles said.

"As well, the contaminant gas dissipates readily and quickly in the open air."

Dr Miles said EHP would continue to conduct tests in the region, and maintain ongoing communication with the local community.

"Our priority has always been to ensure the local community remains safe and is made aware of the extent of the contamination and its impacts, and this will continue to be the case," Dr Miles said.

Marland Law will be holding a town hall meeting at Kogan at the Kogan Community Centre at 10am to 12pm on Saturday, March 11, 2017 for affected landholders and the community to gain further information in relation to the new investigation area.

Marland Law is also holding a further community meeting at 3pm to 5pm on Saturday, March 11, at the Chinchilla Club Hotel for landholders currently affected by the ECZ.

Landholders interested in attending the meeting in Kogan or Chinchilla can RSVP to Bjorn Morrison 0466 954 784 or bmorrison@marlandlaw.com.au.

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