

Analysis of Mining and Gas Threat to Mapped Regional Planning Interest Areas

In 2014, when introducing the Regional Planning Interests Act (RPIA), the Newman LNP Government said that it would ‘*address the power imbalance between farmers and resource proponents*’ and prioritise ‘*agricultural activity on what is a finite and critical resource for Queensland*’¹.

However, new analysis shows that mining continues to pose an enormous threat to areas identified as Regional Planning Interest zones under the RPIA. The *Regional Planning Interests Act 2014* (and associated regulation) is designed to ‘manage the impact of resource activities’ on areas of regional interest. It identifies four areas of regional interest:

1. Priority Agricultural Areas
2. Priority Living Areas
3. Strategic Cropping Areas
4. Strategic Environmental Areas

The Qld Government has mapped the extent of these four regional interest zones across Qld. As the analysis below indicates, these zones cover 11% of Queensland. The RPIA requires resource activities proposing to operate in these mapped areas to apply for a Regional Interest Development Approval (RIDA). The Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning is the decision-maker on the grant of such approvals. The Act provides a right of appeal against the grant of approvals to immediate neighbours.

New analysis provided below indicates, however, that the RPIA has not been effective in limiting resource threats to regional planning interest areas. In fact, the analysis reveals for the first time that 7.7 million hectares of mapped regional interest areas are covered by mining or gas titles, equating to 37% of all mapped regional interest areas in Queensland. Therefore, of the highest priority areas for agriculture, living areas and environment identified in Queensland, 37% of it is still being targeted for resource activities.

Regional Planning Interest Areas

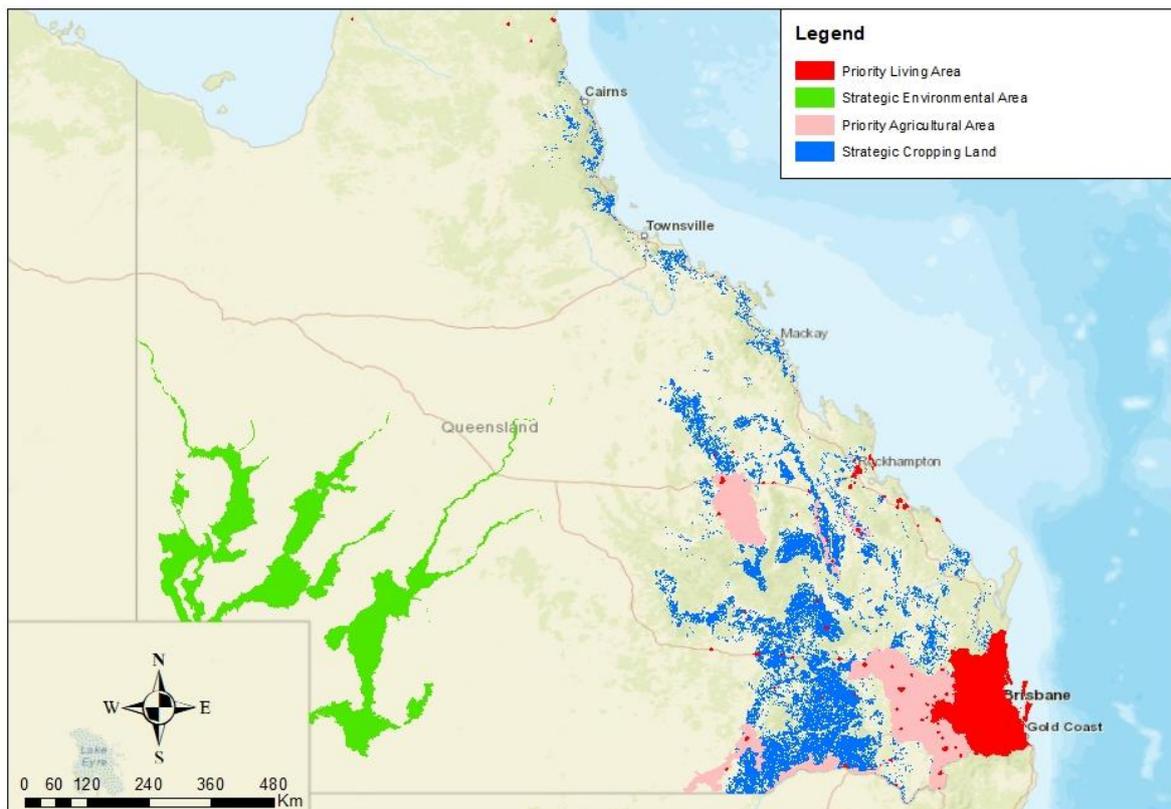
There are four regional planning interest categories contained in the Queensland Regional Planning Interests Act 2014. These include: Strategic Cropping Areas, Priority Agricultural Areas, Priority Living Areas, and Strategic Environmental Areas. The layers for each of these regional interest categories were downloaded from the Qld Government spatial database. The following data layers were utilised:

1. Strategic Cropping Areas – Electronic mapping data for Strategic Cropping Land in Queensland under the RPI Act 2014 v3.6
<http://qldspatial.information.qld.gov.au/catalogue/custom/detail.page?fid={72D1D D11-F6F4-40A2-A625-D7F00819FE09}>. The full extent of the layer was utilised
2. Priority Agricultural Areas – Regional planning interests - Priority agricultural
<http://qldspatial.information.qld.gov.au/catalogue/custom/detail.page?fid={260D16 07-DE59-ODE5-DB65-OCE503D24A41}>. The full extent of the PAA layer was utilised.

¹ <http://statements.qld.gov.au/Statement/2014/3/20/landmark-laws-deliver-revolution-in-regional-planning>

3. Priority Living Areas – Regional planning interests - Priority living area
<http://qldspatial.information.qld.gov.au/catalogue/custom/detail.page?fid={3F39ECF9-C637-4F10-8BCF-6099E78618C2}>. The full extent of the PLA layer was utilised.
4. Strategic Environmental Areas – Regional planning interests - Strategic environmental area
<http://qldspatial.information.qld.gov.au/catalogue/custom/detail.page?fid={54709F43-F94B-4707-A006-D5DE1E538ED5}>. the attributes used for this analysis were a subset of the full layer, comprising only the Channel Country and Fraser Island SEAs.

Map 1: Areas of regional interest mapped by the Qld Government



Altogether, these areas of mapped regional interest cover 20,714,129 hectares of Queensland, which equates to just 11% of the state. There is some overlap between the different categories, especially between the priority agricultural areas and strategic cropping areas, but the figure above excludes overlaps and represent total extant area. A map showing of each of the regional planning interest categories is provided in Map 1. The area of each mapped category individually is as follows:

RPI Category	Mapped Area (hectares)
Strategic Cropping Areas	10,017,403
Priority Agricultural Areas	4,298,440
Priority Living Areas	2,613,010
Strategic Environmental Areas*	6,665,655

*The Strategic Environmental Areas utilised in this analysis were limited to the Channel Country and Fraser Island SEAs.

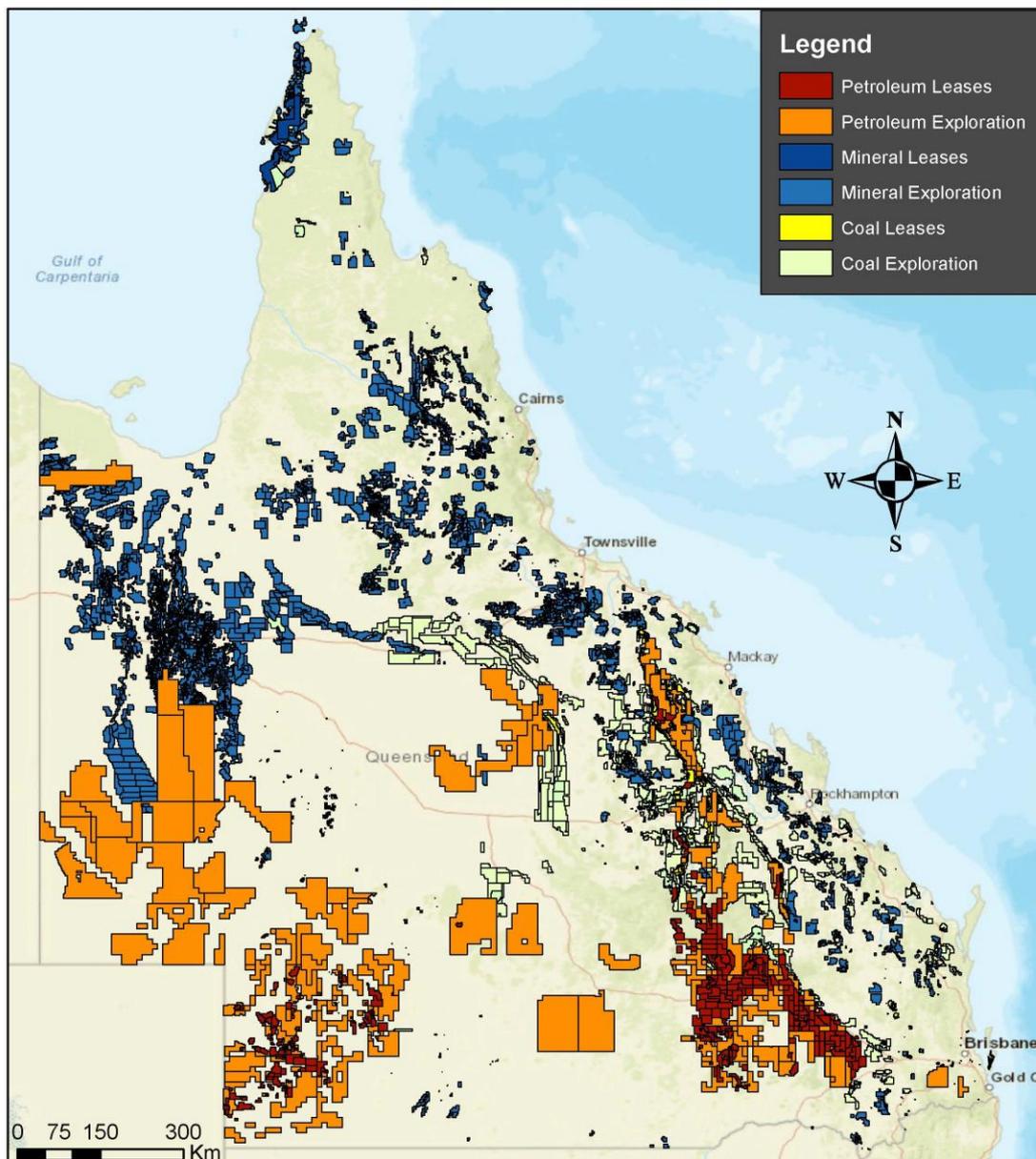
Mining and Gas Titles

The analysis assessed the regional planning interest categories above against all mining and exploration petroleum and production titles in Queensland. Title applications were excluded from the analysis. The following layers were utilised

- Exploration and production permits for coal and minerals - Queensland
<http://qldspatial.information.qld.gov.au/catalogue/custom/detail.page?fid={AD21DC89-CDA9-45DB-B5F3-589FE9F81C27}>

Exploration and production permits for petroleum - Queensland
<http://qldspatial.information.qld.gov.au/catalogue/custom/detail.page?fid={B0D192C5-4076-43E8-9A2C-94A0FA928AF9}>

Map 2: The distribution of mining and petroleum exploration and production titles



Altogether, mining and petroleum titles cover 46.5M hectares of Queensland which equates to 25% of the state. There is some overlap between petroleum and mining titles, but the figure above is total area and excludes overlaps. Map 2 shows the distribution of exploration and production titles for mining and petroleum. The area of each category within Queensland is as follows:

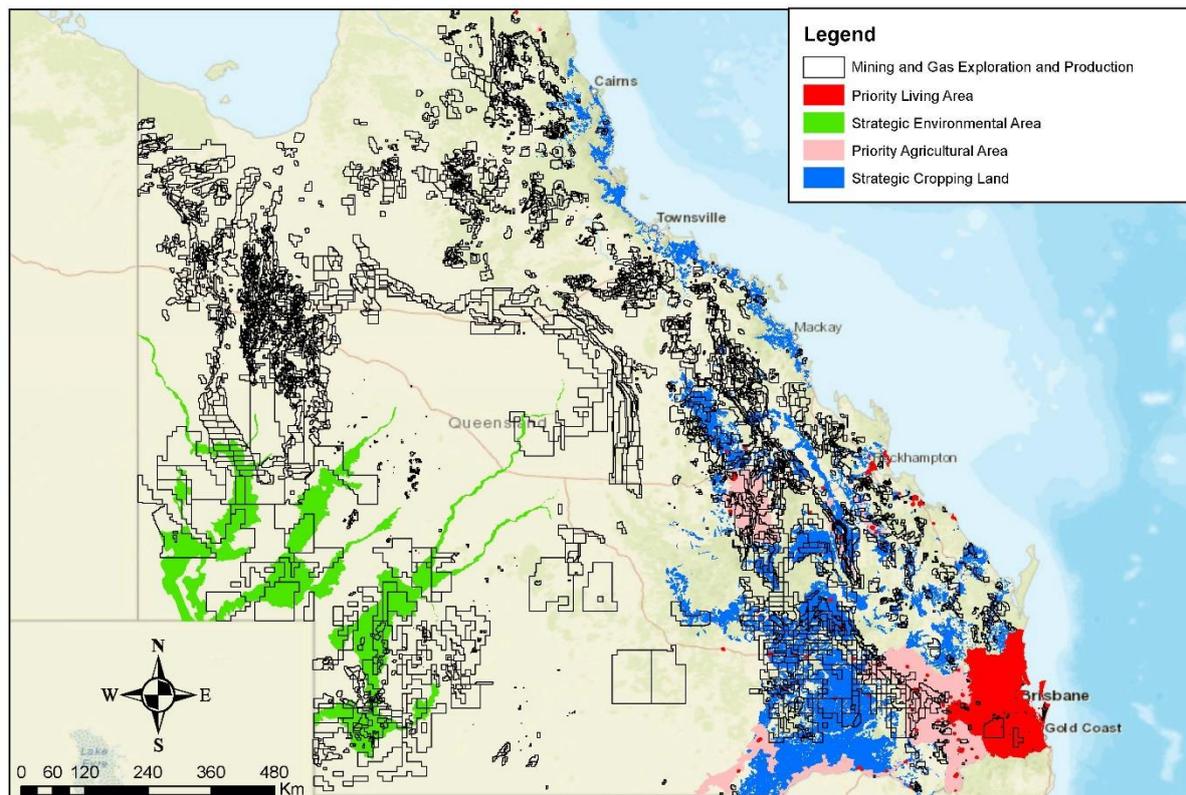
Type	Mapped Area (ha)
Petroleum exploration titles	20,799,457
Petroleum production leases	3,539,727
Mining exploration titles	26,090,436
Mining leases	1,314,756

NB For the purposes of this analysis, mineral development licences were classified as exploration titles.

Methodology and Results

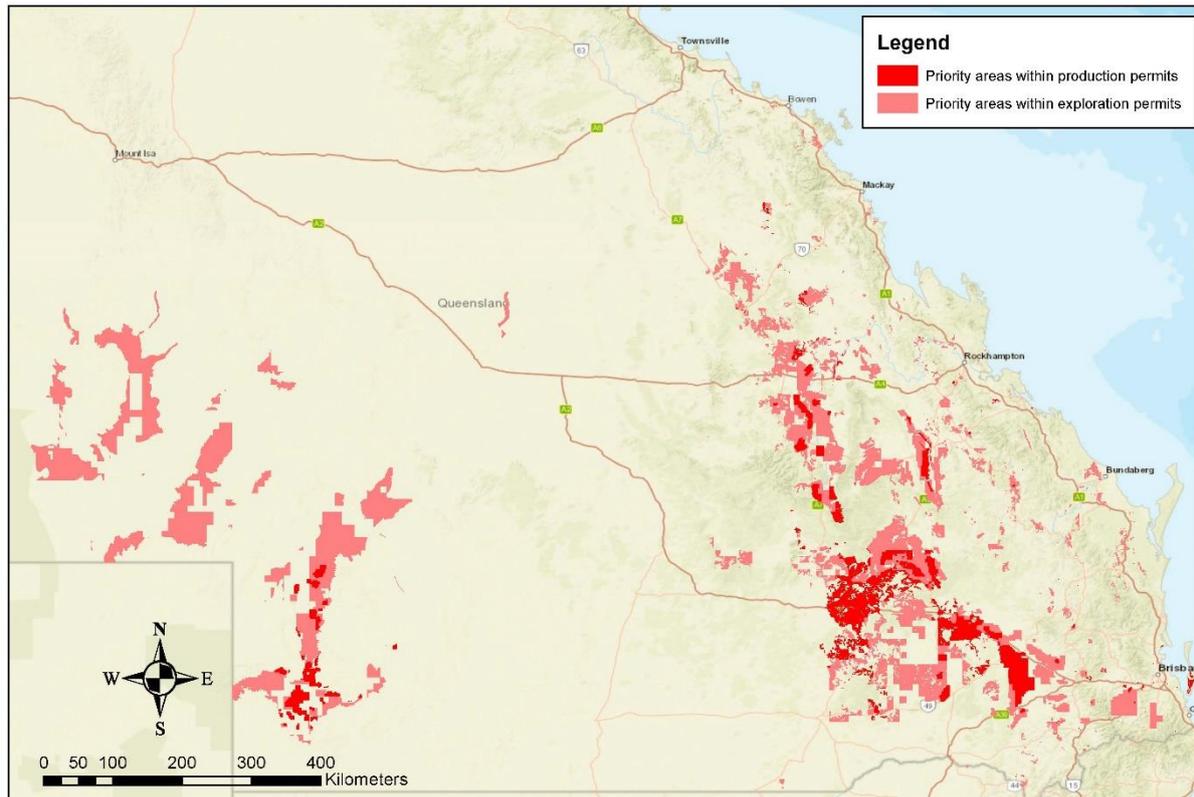
The data was mapped and analysed in ArcGIS9. Initially, the full distribution of mining and petroleum titles was overlaid on top of the regional planning interest categories, and this is displayed in Map 3.

Map 3: Mining and petroleum titles overlaid on top of areas of regional interest



The regional planning interest categories were then intersected with the exploration permits and production permits. Map 4 shows the resultant distribution of all regional planning areas within production titles and all within exploration titles. In this analysis, where there were overlaps between production and exploration titles, production titles were given precedence.

Map 4: All regional interest areas within production and exploration titles



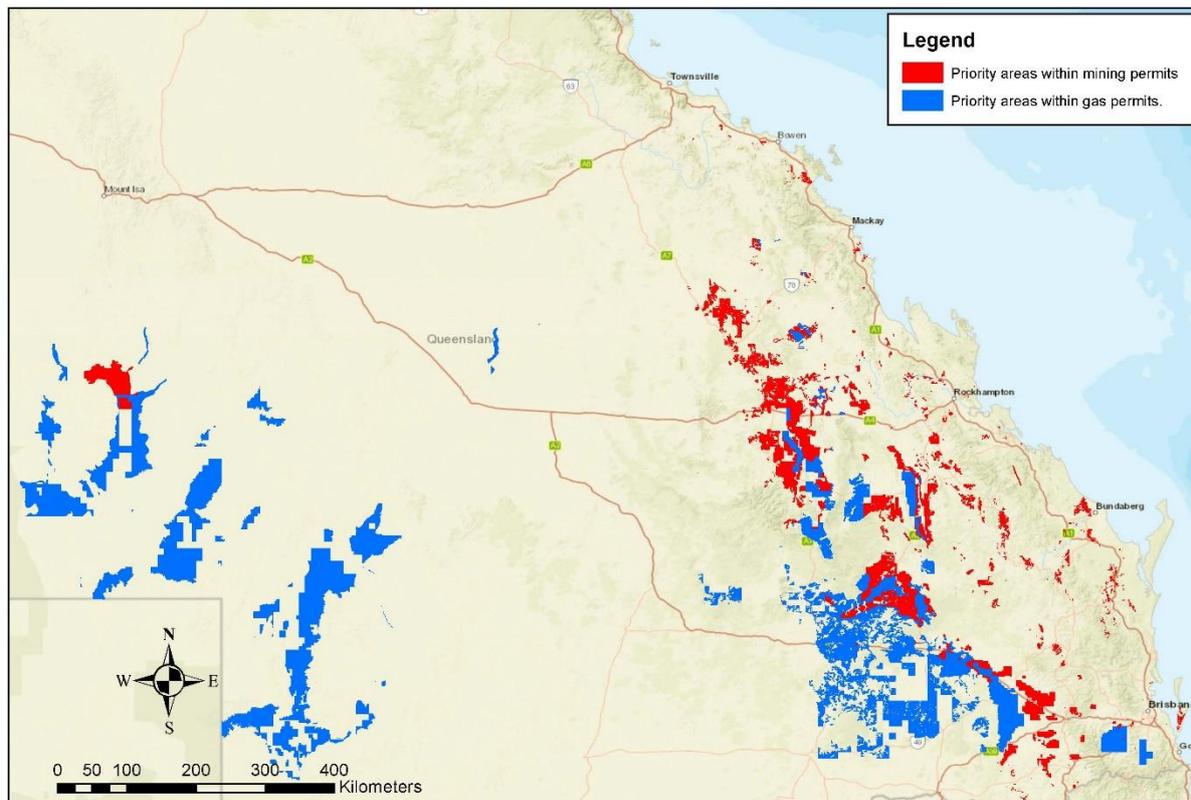
The total area of regional planning interest categories within production titles is 1,581,040 ha, and the total area within exploration titles only (ie excluding any overlaps with production titles) is 6,118,973 ha. Therefore, the total area of mapped RPI areas with mining and petroleum titles is 7.7M hectares, which equates to 37% of all areas of mapped regional interest in Queensland. The area of each interest category within production and exploration titles is provided in the table below:

RPI Category	Production titles (ha)	Exploration titles (ha)
Strategic Cropping Areas	1,175,293	3,732,039
Priority Agricultural Areas	467,741	1,248,833
Priority Living Areas	43,254	214,575
Strategic Environmental Areas	243,351	3,160,622

Analysis was also conducted to identify the extent to which regional interest areas were constrained by petroleum titles vs mining titles. Map 5 shows the intersection between regional planning areas with mining titles and petroleum titles. In this map, where there were overlaps between petroleum and mining titles, mining titles were given precedence. The area of each interest category within mining and petroleum titles is provided in the table below:

RPI Category	Mining titles (ha)	Petroleum titles (ha)
Strategic Cropping Areas	2,347,906	2,559,426
Priority Agricultural Areas	1,011,527	705,047
Priority Living Areas	69,009	188,820
Strategic Environmental Areas	0	3,403,973

Map 5: All regional interest areas within mining and petroleum titles



This report written and produced by Lock the Gate Alliance

