Queensland Government
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

CTS 11179/16
Edocs No: 4605069

TO: **Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries**

TITLE	Cattle Tick Zones – Tick Line
ACTION REQUIRED	For decision
PRIORITY	Urgent
CRITICAL DATE	9 June 2016

EXPLANATION OF CRITICAL DATE AND ROLE OF SIGNATORY

The *Biosecurity Act 2014* and Biosecurity Regulations are due to commence on 1 July 2016.

The location of the tick line must be decided prior to commencement to allow publication on the web site as required in the Biosecurity Regulations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That you:

a. Approve the location of the boundary between the cattle tick free and cattle tick infested zones - more commonly referred to as the tick line.

Agreed / Not Agreed / Noted / Please Discuss

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The Honourable Leanne Donaldson MP
Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries
Member for Bundaberg

Date: / /

☐ Add to reading pack (for the Minister's Office use only).

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

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KEY ISSUES

1. Under the *Biosecurity Act 2014,* the management of cattle ticks in Queensland will be delivered through a new framework.

2. Part of Queensland will be declared through regulation as a cattle tick free zone and the remainder of the state a cattle tick infested zone. The tick line will exist by virtue of the two zones. Regulations will provide conditions for movement of cattle tick carriers eg cattle, horses across the line.

3. The tick line has existed in regulation since 1915. It is considered an iconic feature of Queensland agriculture.

4. The tick line is declared by the Queensland Government on behalf of the cattle industry to facilitate the maintenance of the integrity of the cattle tick free zone. Crossing the line is a decision made by livestock owners. The majority of livestock cross the line for personal benefit such as commercial advantage in the sale of cattle or for pursuit of leisure activities, for example, horse events.

5. Producers with cattle tick free properties in the free zone are able to move livestock to any market of their choice with no additional requirements and can manage their properties free from the risk of production loss due to cattle tick worry or tick fever. Producers with properties in the infected or control zones, or who are infected with cattle tick in the free zone, cannot move to locations in the free zone without inspection, treatment and certification requirements. There are financial and regulatory impacts as a result.

6. The tick line is not a single uniform unit but is complex in its nature and form. It is contiguous feature that crosses a range of natural ecosystems, landscapes and environmental microclimates along its length meaning that form the tick line takes is not consistent and the challenges to the line from cattle tick re-infestation vary.

7. The tick line is largely stable for the majority of its length as a result of environmental conditions and significant sustainable barriers. The line is under most pressure from incursions in districts where favourable environmental conditions support cattle tick survival.

8. Historically, the current control zone was created through industry voluntary eradication schemes undertaken in the 1990s and earlier in some areas. The success of eradication schemes has been variable across the state. The most significant factor in determining success of a program is the effect of environmental conditions – where conditions are favourable for cattle tick survival, the maintenance of eradication schemes has been less successful.

9. The submissions from the consultation identified four areas where difference exists between the current tick line and proposal for a new line. There are considered areas of higher risk of incursion due to different ecosystems, landscapes and environmental microclimates being:

    a. East Cooyar / Thornville district (SE Queensland) – Attachment 3
    b. South Burnett district (SE Queensland) – Attachment 4
    c. Taroom / Moura district (Central Queensland) – Attachment 5
    d. Torrens Creek / Pentland district (Northern Queensland) – Attachment 6

10. During the consultation, there was a strong preference from industry for maintaining the line in its current position.

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11. The opportunity to make several outstanding administrative changes to the tick line has been taken through the consultation period.

12. Strong feedback was received during the consultation period for a process to enable review of the new tick line to be developed. This would allow review and validation of the integrity of the free zone and the infested zone on a regular basis, particularly properties close to the line, to facilitate changes to the location of the line. A framework document on the process has been developed and will be presented to industry for their views and comments prior to finalisation.

13. Based on the feedback from the consultation process (as provided at Attachment 3), three tick lines were presented for consideration and decision in the areas where difference in location has been identified:

    a. Proposal 1 - based on the utilisation of significant roads and rail infrastructure wherever practicable between the infested and free zone to provide a sustainable line.

    b. Proposal 2 - based on industry's submissions that would include the control and free zones being included into the new free zone, including some amendments to the line.

    c. Proposal 3 – alternate models using double fenced roads in high risk areas.

14. The option for an alternate proposal to be determined by the Minister at her discretion was also available.

15. On Monday 6 June, you accepted a verbal briefing from departmental officers on the location of the line. Based on that briefing and information you had gathered through consultations and delegations, you indicated a preference for the location of the line.

16. This preference has been mapped and is provided as Attachments 7 – 10. Hard copies of these maps have been provided to your office for your consideration and approval.

SENSITIVITY

High.

There is potential for increased financial impacts and regulatory burden on producers in the new free zone from the cost of eradication of cattle tick and movement requirements under the new regulations.

Additional costs would apply to properties that were free of tick previously in the free zone moved into the new infested zone as a result of movement requirements.

CONSULTATION – INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Corporate Communications.

CONSULTATION – EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Extensive consultation has been undertaken with producers, AgForce, Queensland Dairyfarmers' Organisation and other stakeholders, including the horse industry.

BACKGROUND

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1. The 500mm rainfall isohyet reflects the natural tick line by virtue that it is the most favourable environmental conditions that support cattle tick survival. Where the regulated tick line aligns to the isohyet, the tick line remains stable, particularly in North and Central Queensland.

2. Where the tick line is removed from the isohyet, the line is less stable and subject to frequent incursions into the current control and free zones. This is most obvious in south eastern Queensland, particularly the Burnett districts.

3. The Queensland Biosecurity Regulation – Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) undertaken in 2014 was the consultation instrument to determine the most suitable option for the management of cattle ticks under the *Biosecurity Act 2014* and the new Biosecurity Regulatory provisions.

4. The general consensus across industry stakeholders was that two cattle tick zones are preferred to reduce red tape and confusion. The current legislation provides for three zones – infested, control and free.

5. The public consultation process on the location of the tick line commenced in December 2015 and provided three options:

    - Option 1 – the current control zone is moved in its entirety into the new infested zone
    - Option 2 - the current control zone is moved in its entirety into the new free zone
    - Option 3 – the most sustainable tick line is redrawn in and around the current control zone.

6. A total of 979 responses to the on-line survey were received as of 29 February 2016 with a further 14 received after the closing date.

7. In addition to the on line survey submissions, a large number of private submissions were made and petitions received, including:

    - Petition (2540-16) Cattle tick management
    - Petition (2546-16) : Member for Nanango, Mrs Frecklington, from 203 petitioners, requesting the House to leave the free zone Coolabunia Malar region as tick free and not move the tick line
    - Petition (2558-16) Cattle tick management
    - Petition (2559-16) : Presented by the Member for Nanango, Mrs Frecklington, from 465 petitioners, requesting the House to direct that the cattle tick control area within Taroom, Wandoan and Auburn areas be included in the cattle tick free zone under the new Biosecurity Bill
    - Non-conforming petition regarding tick line in Wattlecamp/Cherbourg area
    - Non-conforming petition regarding tick line in Coolabunia (copy of 2546-16 petition)
    - Non-conforming petition regarding tick line in Yarraman/Cooyar area

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8. Departmental officers attended 19 industry consultation meetings during the consultation period and facilitated three review outcome consultation meetings at Kingaroy, Taroom and Moura.

9. It is important to note that the consultation was about the current control zone to determine the best option for the location of the tick line when the control zone is extinguished under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*. There was no intention to review the current infected zone with respect to the location of the line as part of the process other than changes considered and accepted related to existing control zone properties.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

N/A.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The impact on departmental staffing and resources could be significant depending on the proposal approved for the location of the tick line.

Inclusion of a large number of infected properties into the free zone will directly impact on staff available to service these properties and implement the surveillance program to validate the status and integrity of the free zone.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

An extensive communications strategy has been developed with Corporate Communications.

PREVIOUS REF/S

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Summary of the proposed tick lines provided for consideration

Attachment 2: Summary of the Cattle Tick Survey Responses

Attachment 3: East Cooyar / Thornville district (SE Queensland) - map of tick line proposals

Attachment 4: South Burnett district (SE Queensland) - map of tick line proposals

Attachment 5: Taroom / Moura district (Central Queensland) - map of tick line proposals

Attachment 6: Torrens Creek / Pentland district (Northern Queensland) - map of tick line proposals

Attachment 7: Pentland / Torrens Creek (NQ) – map of tick line amended

Attachment 8: Moura / Taroom – map of tick line amended

Attachment 9: South Burnett – map of tick line amended

Attachment 10: East Cooyar / Thornville – map of tick line amended

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Business Group	Animal Biosecurity & Welfare		
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Date:	27 / 04 / 2016	19 /5 / 2016	08 / 06 / 2016

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Attachment 1: Summary of Tick Line Proposals for Consideration

Proposed Tick Line 1:

This proposal is Option 3 from the consultation process and provides a sustainable location of the tick line due to environmental conditions and use of significant sustainable barriers eg double fenced major roads, train lines. This option would minimise the risk of incursions into the new free zone with the least requirement for additional husbandry practices.

This proposal would carry forward approximately **130 known infected properties** into the new free zone. These properties would be required to meet the new requirements of the regulations, including an obligation to eradicate cattle tick at their cost.

This proposal drew heavy criticism during the consultation primarily due to the concern of producers moving from the free zone to the infested zone and perceived adverse impacts on property values and marketing options. This option would move approximately 1 040 properties in the current free and control zones back into the infested zone and will create angst and community dissatisfaction.

This proposal would have the greatest impact in the Burnett districts.

Proposed Tick Line 2:

This proposal is primarily Option 2 from the consultation process and is the preferred option from industry based on majority of the responses and submissions from industry groups and individuals. There are some areas where different industry groups or submissions are contradictory to other submissions and a majority agreement has been used to describe this option.

In general, this option places most of the previous control zone into the new free zone along the line. A small number of properties would be moved into the infested zone based on submissions received.

This proposal would include approximately **350 known infested properties** into the new free zone. These properties would be required to meet the new requirements of the regulations, including an obligation to eradicate cattle tick at their cost. This may be challenging for individual producers due to the constant challenge of reinfestation created by favourable environmental conditions.

This proposal is the one supported by industry and most closely reflects the location of current tick line location. This was the topic of several petitions to the Queensland Parliament reflecting the strength of feeling of industry on the topic.

This proposal places the greatest demand on departmental resources to service these properties and implement the surveillance program to validate the status and integrity of the free zone and monitor compliance with the regulations. It is expected that the number of infested properties in the new free zone will increase as surveillance activities are undertaken. This would reflect identification of previously unknown infestations, or of previously unreported infestations.

This proposal would have the greatest impact in the Burnett districts.

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Proposed Tick Line 3:

This proposal is an alternate solution for the control zone in the Burnett area between Monogorilby to Cooyar where the current tick line is under most pressure from new incursions.

This proposal would use double fenced roads (not major roads) and is consicered to not provide the same level of protection against the risk of incursions into the new free zone as in Proposal 1. This option would rely on increased application of husbandry practices to minimise the risk of incursions into the new free zone.

This proposal could carry forward approximately **200 known infested properties** into the free zone. These properties would be required to meet the new requirements of the regulations, including an obligation to eradicate cattle tick at their cost.

This proposal reflects the historical knowledge of inspectors in the local districts. This proposal would result in approximately 190 free zone and 399 control zone properties in the current free and control zones back into the infested zone and could be expected to cause some community dissatisfaction.

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Attachment 2 – Summary of Cattle Tick Line Survey Responses

Q1 What is your Property Identification Code (PIC)?

Q2 Are you submitting this response as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

- 94% Individual

Q3 Which category best describes your involvement in the livestock industry?

- 91% Grazing property owner

Q4 Which livestock do you currently work with?

- 94% cattle

Q5 Do you support the tick line being positioned to provide the greatest possibility of security and sustainability for the free zone?

- 90% Yes

Q6 Where practicable should the tick line be buffered by a double fence boundary?

- 77% Yes

Q7 Which of the following would form a suitable buffer between the infested and free zone?

- 85.7% Roads
- 52% Railway line
- 41% Dams or lakes
- 45% River
- 46% Other (please specify) any double fence areas, national parks.

Q8 Where roads are used as a buffer, which type of road would be appropriate?

- 56% Major highway
- 53% Significant high traffic major road
- 70% Any double fenced road
- 33% Other (please specify)

Q9 How strongly do you support Option 1? The current free zone should become the new free zone.

- 60% Strongly disagree
- 9% Disagree
- 8% Unsure
- 11% Agree
- 9% Strongly agree

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Q10 How strongly do you support Option 2? The current free zone and control zone should become the new free zone.

- 13% Strongly disagree
- 7% Disagree
- 8% Unsure
- 10% Agree
- 60% Strongly agree

Q11 How strongly do you support Option 3? The free zone should be created by aligning the tick line using major double fenced roads to create a buffer where practicable. The line for Option 3 on the map is an example only. This option would allow the line to be moved to the most sustainable location. If you prefer this option please provide any details specific to your property and where you feel the line should be located in the following question.

- 57% Strongly disagree
- 6% Disagree
- 11% Unsure
- 10% Agree
- 14% Strongly agree

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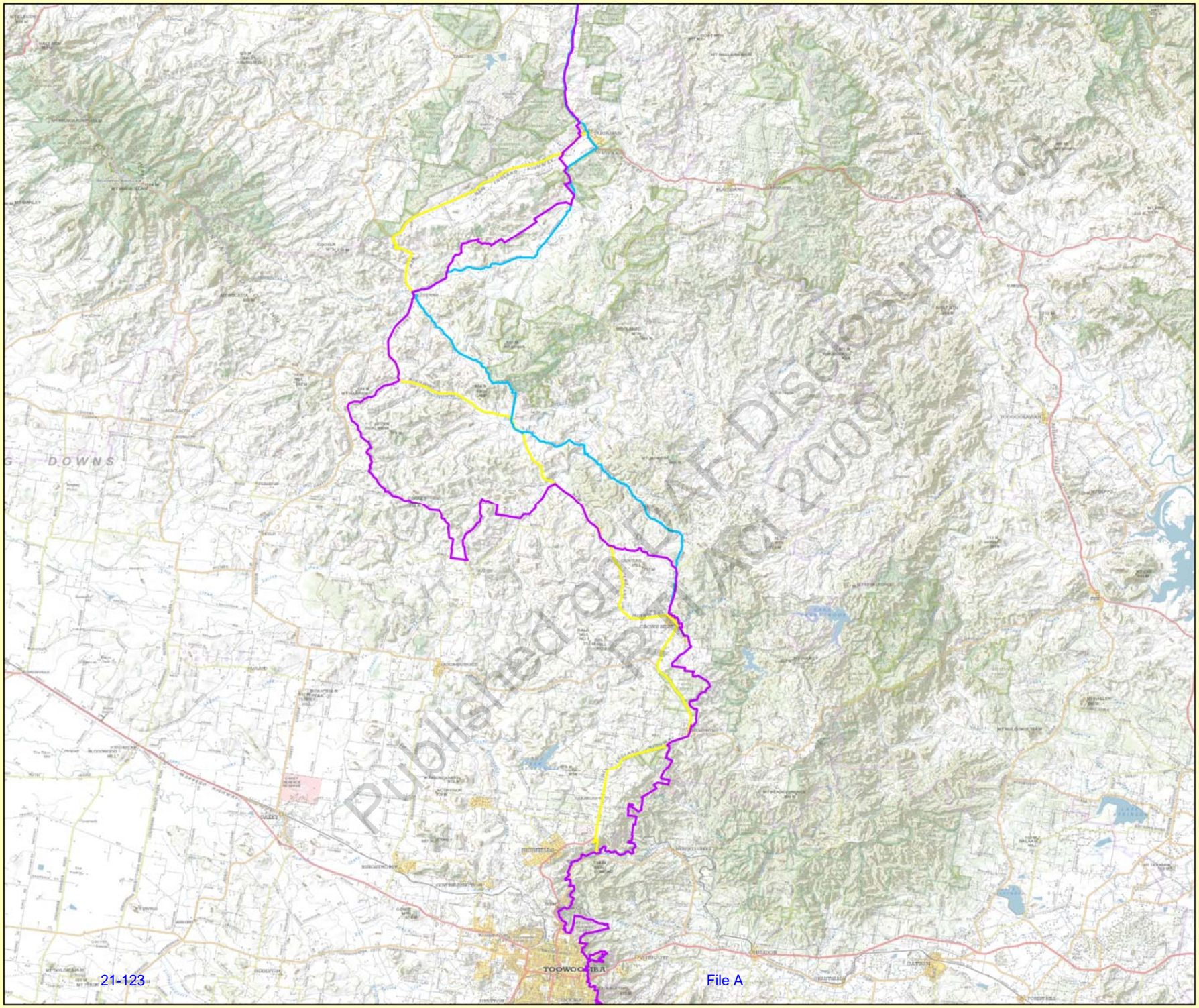

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Tickline Proposals
Snapshot 4
Invasive Plants & Animals
HAT JOB 4761

Proposal_3
Proposal_2
Proposal_1

N

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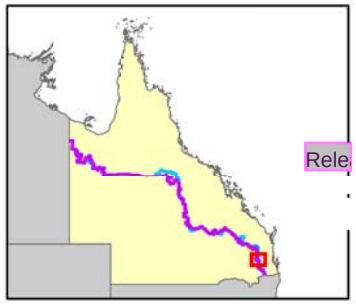
Metres



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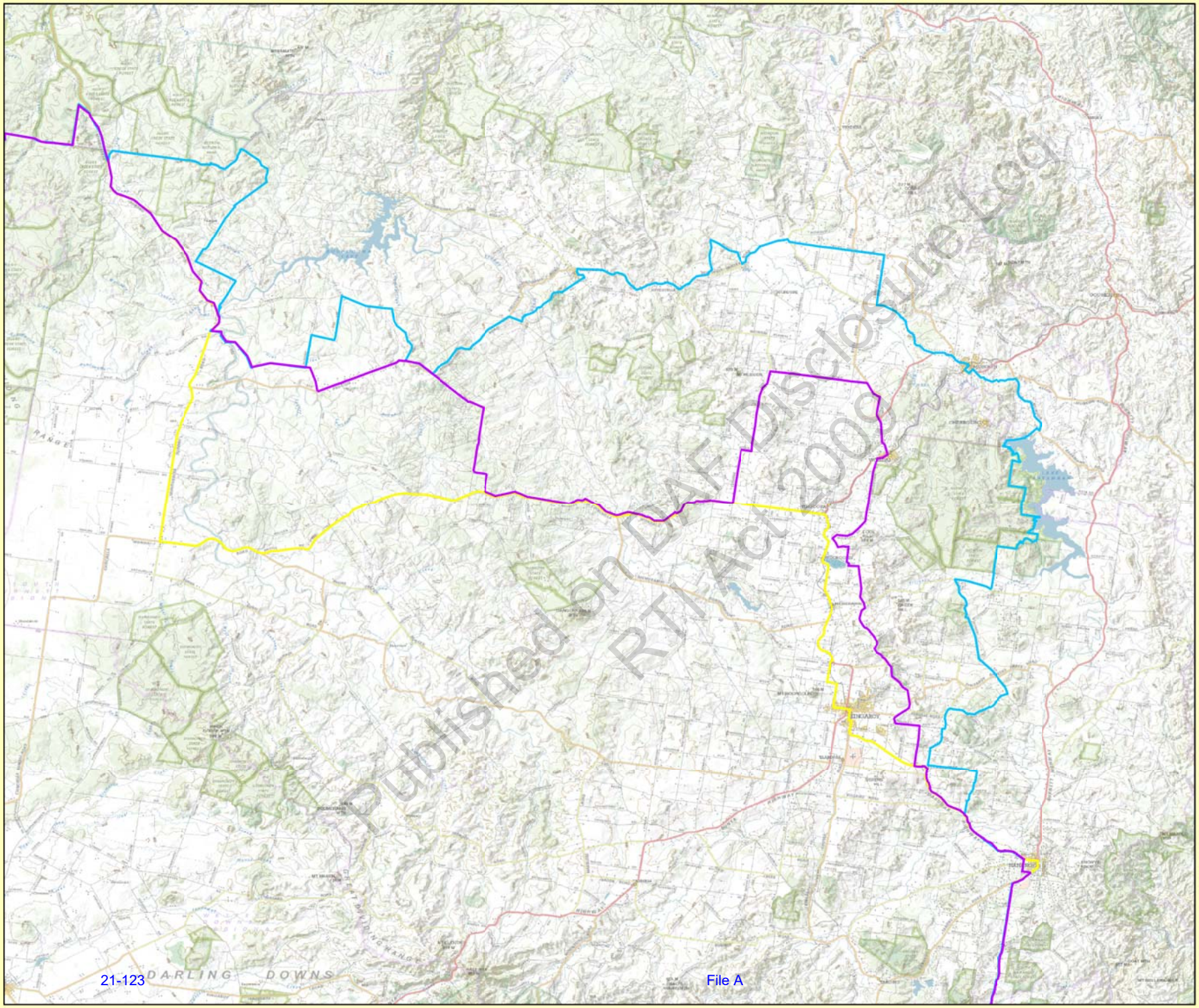

Tickline Proposals
Snapshot 3
Invasive Plants & Animals
HAT JOB 4761

Proposal_3
Proposal_2
Proposal_1

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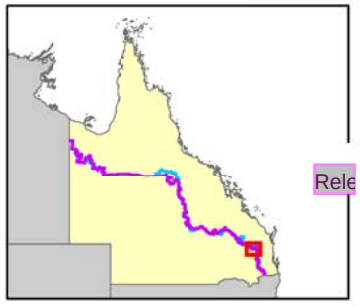

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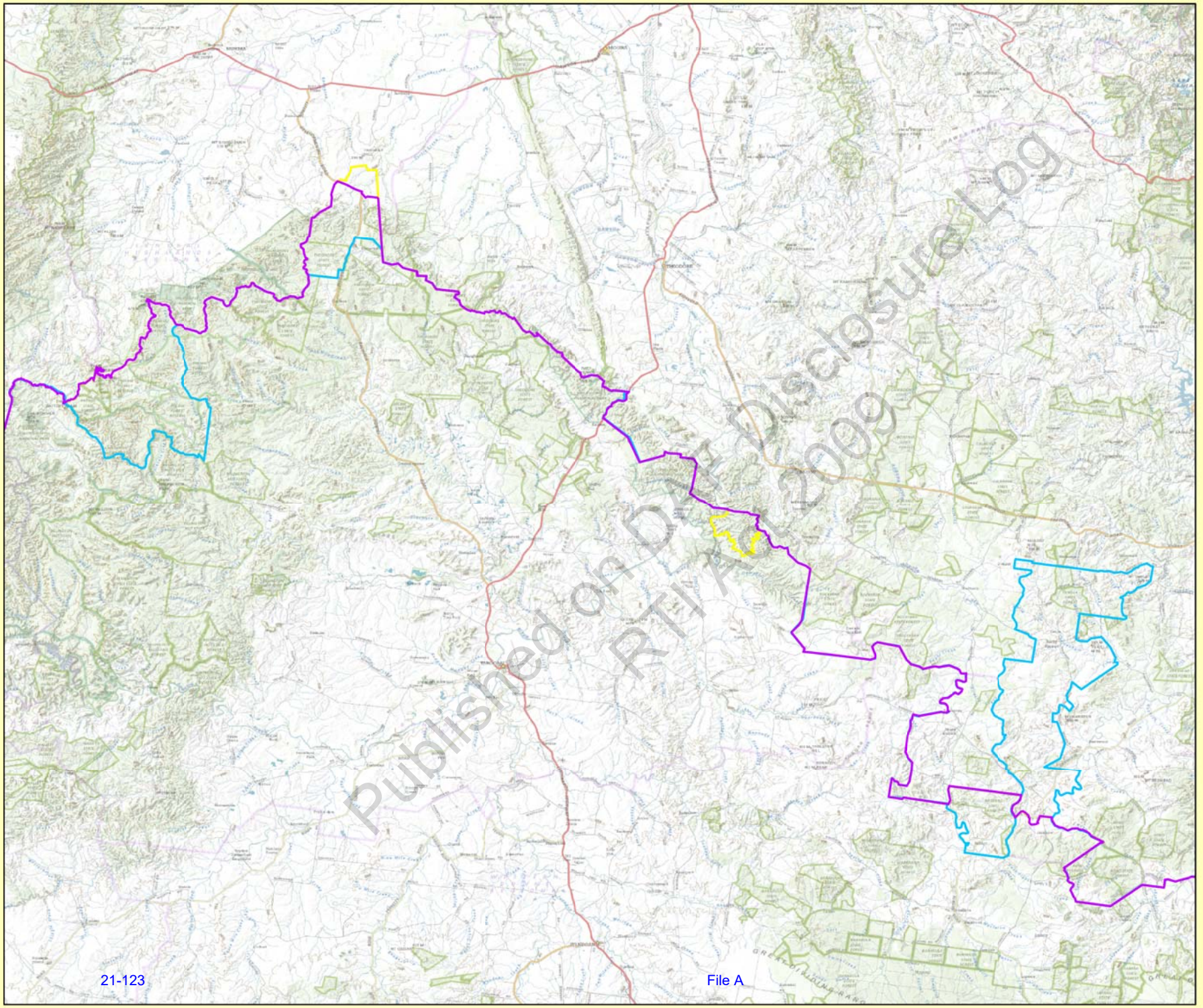

Tickline Proposals
Snapshot 2
Invasive Plants & Animals
HAT JOB 4761

Proposal_3

Proposal_2

Proposal_1

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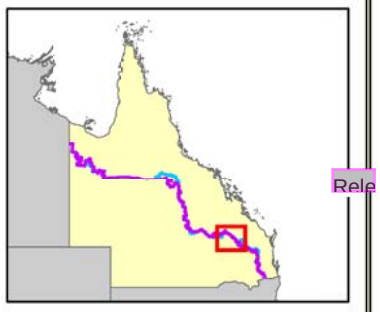
Metres



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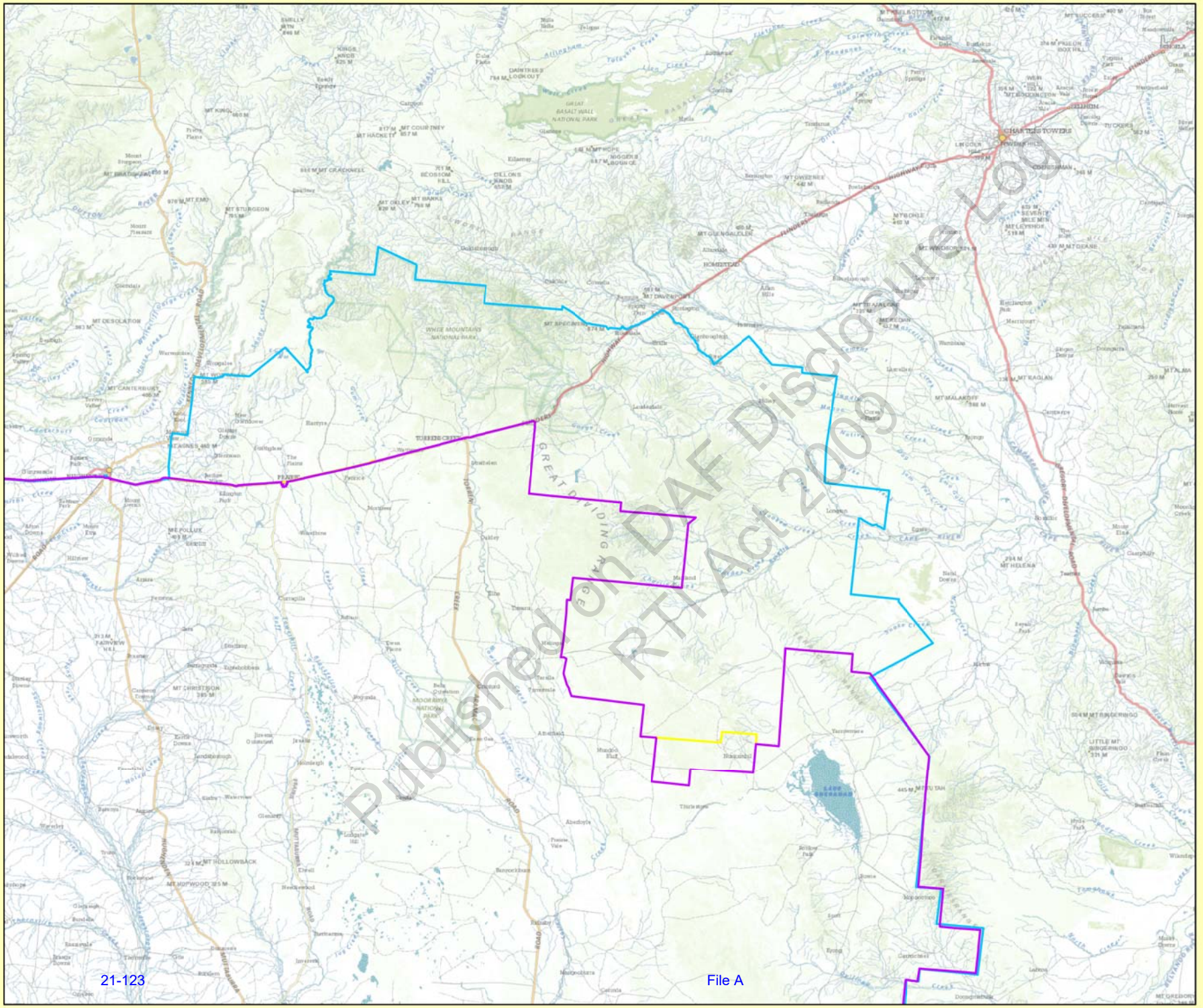

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Tickline Proposal 3
Snapshot 1
Invasive Plants & Animals
HAT JOB 4761

Proposal_3

Road

DCDB

COVER_TYP

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PropertyDetails

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Metres

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Tickline Proposal 3
Snapshot 2
Invasive Plants & Animals
HAT JOB 4761

Proposal_3
Road

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PropertyDetails

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QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT

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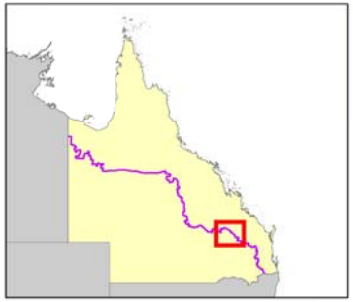

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Tickline Proposal 3
Snapshot 3
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Proposal_3
Road

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QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT

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Proposal_3
Road

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QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT

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