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PRESS RELEASE

Investigation Area extends ECZ at Hopelands

The Department of Environment and Heritage has placed an "Investigation Area" over 47,000 hectares of Land south of the current 34,000-hectare Excavation Caution Zone at Hopelands. The additional area is a result of the presence of hydrogen above flammable limits at several testing sites undertaken by the Department in recent months. The additional area covers over 200 affected properties. The results of the testing were only made public by the Department after a secret report was leaked to the media.

No formal announcement has been made by the Government or Minister Steven Miles but the Governments website dedicated to advising affected landholders was quietly updated on the 16th of February to include an amended map with the additional investigation area included. The Government website can be accessed [here](#).

The Governments website 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 2 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.

Marland Law will be holding a town hall meeting at Kogan at the **Kogan Community Centre at 10am to 12pm on Saturday the 11th of March 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 the 11th of March 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