


Cumulative impacts on biodiversity

Loss of biodiversity to competing landuse is an issue of global concern. Despite government and community efforts in central Queensland, landuse changes have lead to a continual decline in biodiversity through loss of native species and habitats.

There is a community perception that mining is becoming a significant factor in biodiversity loss.

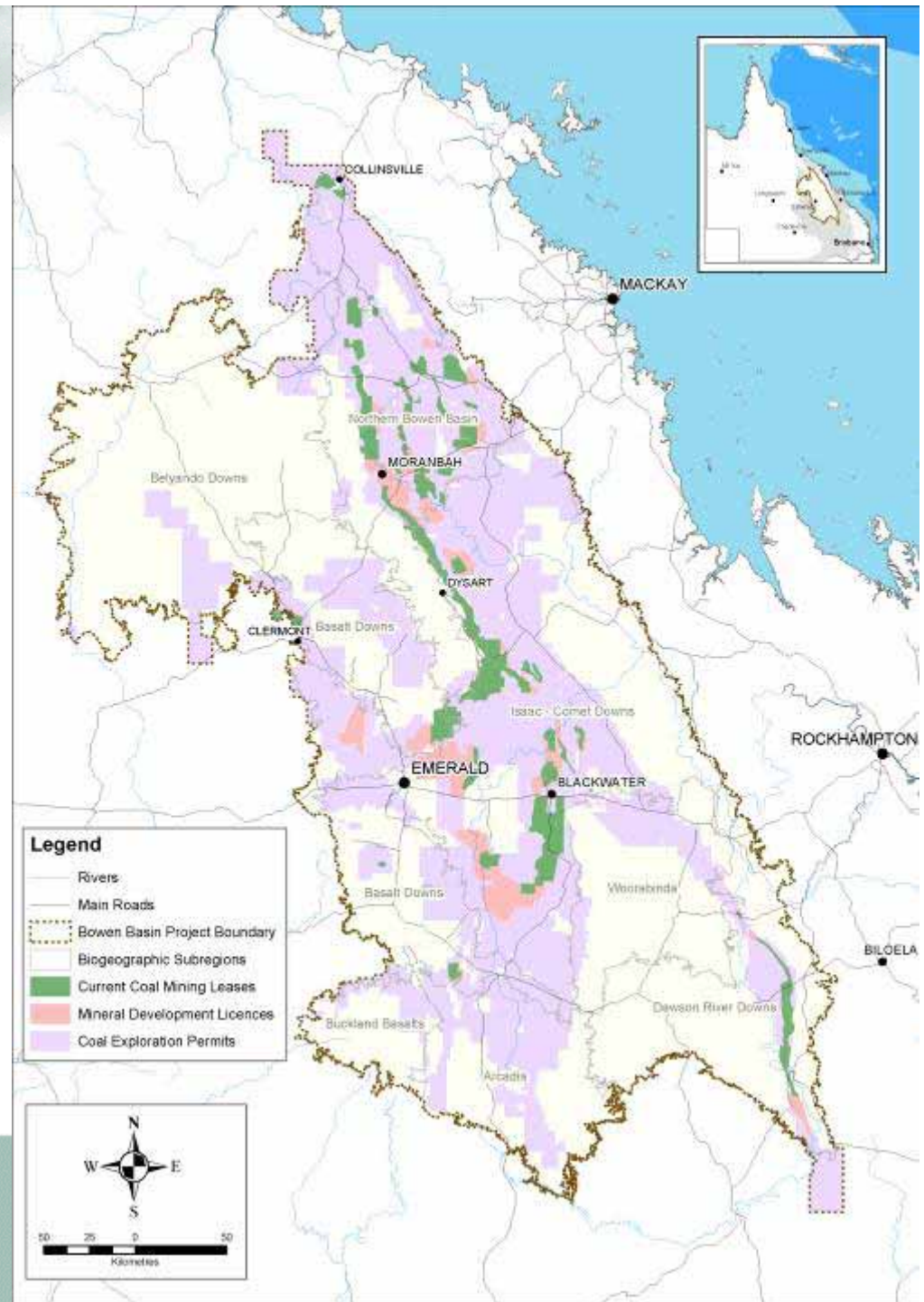


Mining's contribution to this loss has been relatively small.

More than 30 coal mining operations in the Bowen Basin, but the industry has accounted for only 2.4% of all clearing of land in the 4 most coal rich biogeographical subregions.

Mining has an expanding footprint, whereas broadscale clearing of remnant vegetation by other industries has ceased.

Mining leases issued over ~ 750,000 ha of central Queensland, with another 4 million hectares of land covered by exploration permits.



Mining companies have become the ‘accidental managers’ of a relatively high proportion of land that is significant for biodiversity conservation in the region.

There has been less incentive for landholders to clear vegetation where there is a likelihood of future mine development. Consequently, many of the larger patches of remnant vegetation survive where coal resources have been identified.

The most heavily cleared ecosystems have become endangered and now a high proportion of their remaining extent lies above coal resources.

Cumulative impacts

Direct loss of endangered ecosystems by clearing for open cut mining.



Three (Commonwealth defined) ecological communities comprising 24 (Queensland) regional ecosystems found in the Bowen Basin are listed as threatened by legislation.

Cumulative impacts

Loss of habitat for endangered and vulnerable species.



Belyando cobbler's peg *Trioncinia retroflexa*

Fifty-eight species listed as threatened by legislation potentially impacted by mining. There is limited information on presence, habitats, and ranges of native animals and the threatening processes affecting some species.

Cumulative impacts

Disrupting wildlife corridors, particularly east west corridors across the Isaac – Comet Downs subregion.



Little land (less than 1%) in the the four sub-regions where most mining occurs is currently reserved for conservation purposes.

Endangered communities are poorly represented in protected areas.

The region does offer opportunities for greater conservation. These exist because of the relatively high extent of remnant vegetation and regrowth of threatened ecological communities and the ability of brigalow and bluegrass communities to recover from disturbance provides an opportunity to manage sufficient land to secure their regional survival.