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**Wild Rivers**

***Preserving Queensland's Natural  
Heritage***

# Outline

- What is a wild river?
- History of wild rivers
- How does wild rivers work?
- Case study – The Wenlock

# What is a Wild River?

- A wild river is a river that is in near natural condition and has all, or almost all, of its natural values intact, i.e. riverine processes and other natural values have not been significantly altered from their natural state.
- Wild Rivers:
  - helps sustain healthy ecosystems for native plants and animals
  - supports sustainable economic activities, such as grazing, fishing and eco-tourism
  - provides unique opportunities for recreation and tourism.
  - Wild Rivers does not stop all development

# History of Wild Rivers

- 2004 – Election commitment – 19 river basins identified
- 2005 – *Wild Rivers Act 2005* passed
  - First six river basins proposed – Fraser Island and Hinchinbrook Island and four in Gulf Of Carpentaria
  - Draft Wild River Code released
- 2006 – Legislative Amendments made in response to community feedback (WOLA 2006)
- 2007 – Legislative Amendments (WOLA 2007)
  - First six Wild River basins declared
  - Wild Rivers Code finalised

# History of Wild Rivers cont'd

- 2008 – Four areas proposed as wild river areas on Cape York (Archer, Stewart, Lockhart, Wenlock)
- 2009 – Election Commitment Lake Eyre Basin
  - Archer, Stewart and Lockhart river basins declared
- 2010 – Wenlock Basin declared
  - Lake Eyre Basin Policy Consultation Paper
  - Legislative Amendments made in response to community feedback from LEB and issues raised by stakeholders elsewhere (WOLA 2010)
  - Cooper Creek basin declaration proposal (consultation period closed 30 June 2011)

# Declared Wild River Areas

- 10 wild river areas declared -
  - Fraser
  - Hinchinbrook
  - Gregory
  - Morning Inlet
  - Settlement
  - Staaten
  - Archer
  - Lockhart
  - Stewart
  - Wenlock

# Potential wild river areas on Cape York

- Eight Cape York river basins proposed in 2011/12
  - Jeannie
  - Holroyd
  - Coleman
  - Olive-Pasco
  - Ducie
  - Jacky Jacky
  - Watson
  - Jardine



# Current status

- One declaration proposal is currently being considered by the Minister for Environment
- Cooper Creek Basin
- submissions closed 30 June 2011
- Georgina/Diamantina Basins declaration proposal is scheduled for release soon

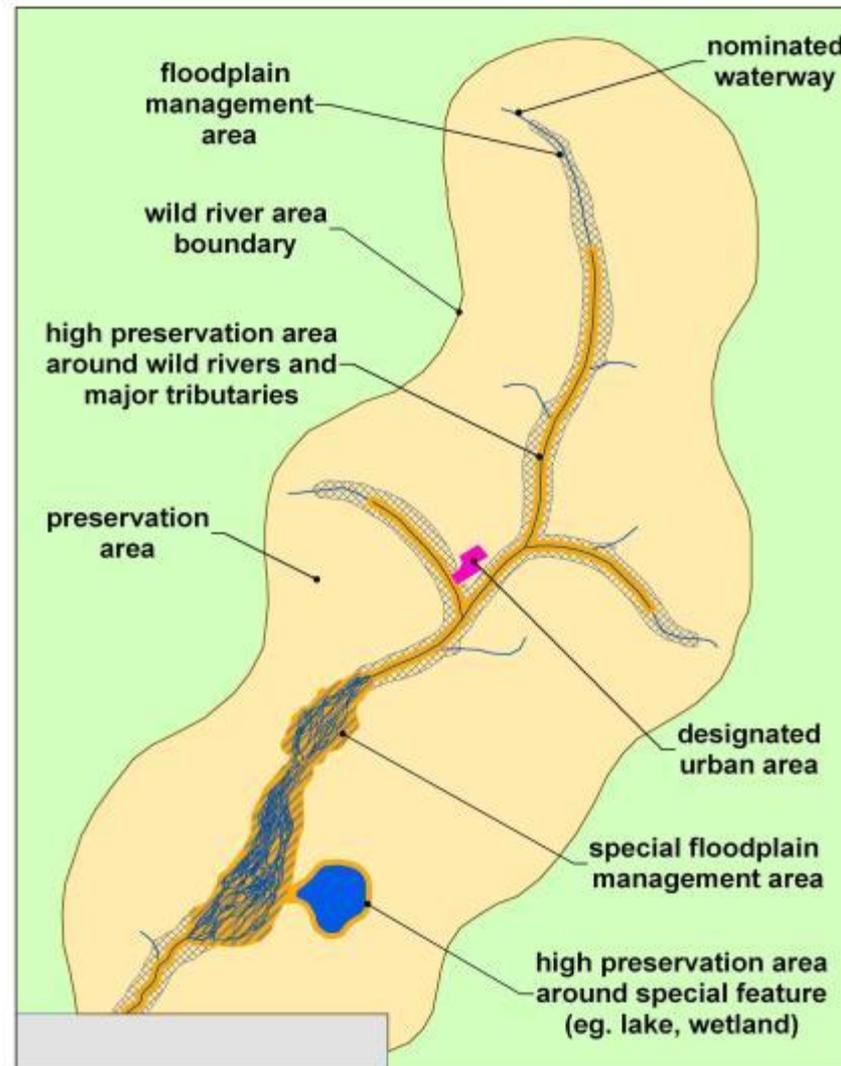


# Natural values

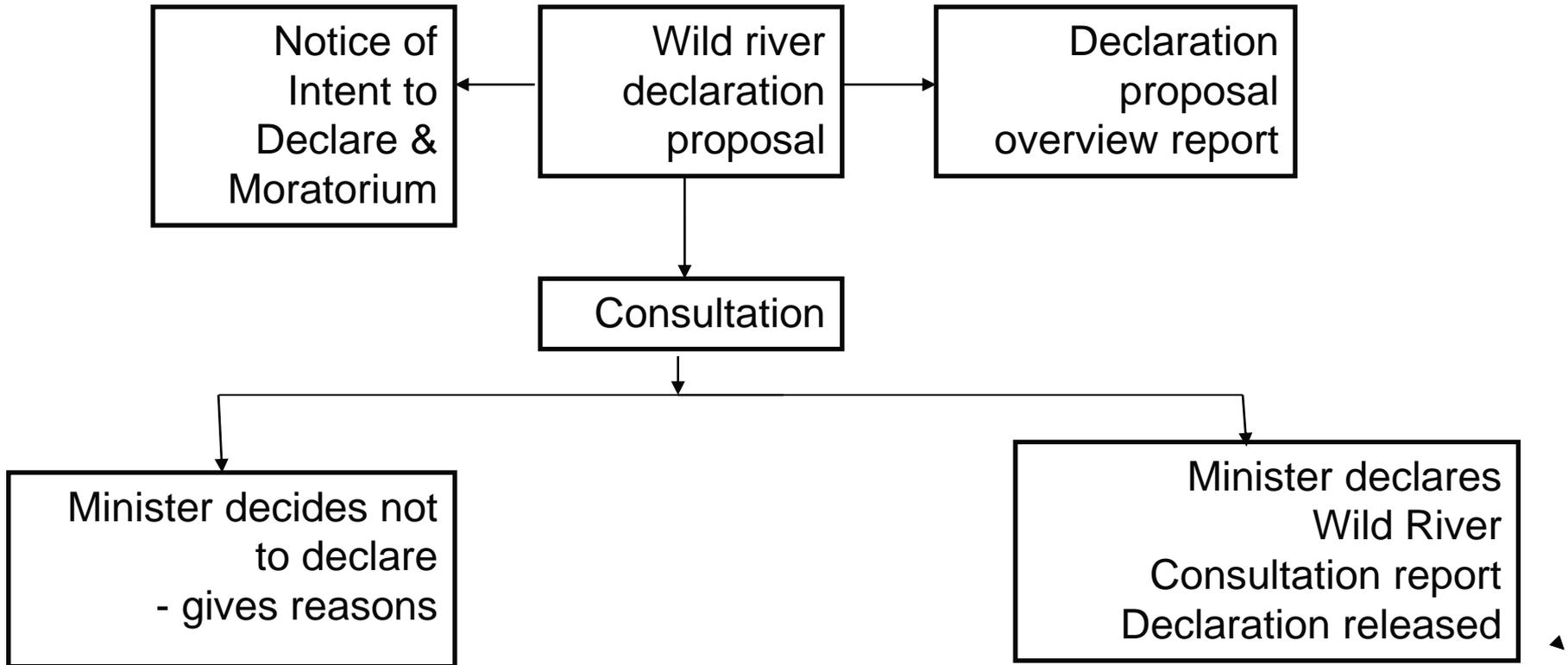
- hydrologic processes
- geomorphic processes
- water quality
- riparian function
- wildlife corridor function



# What is a wild river area?

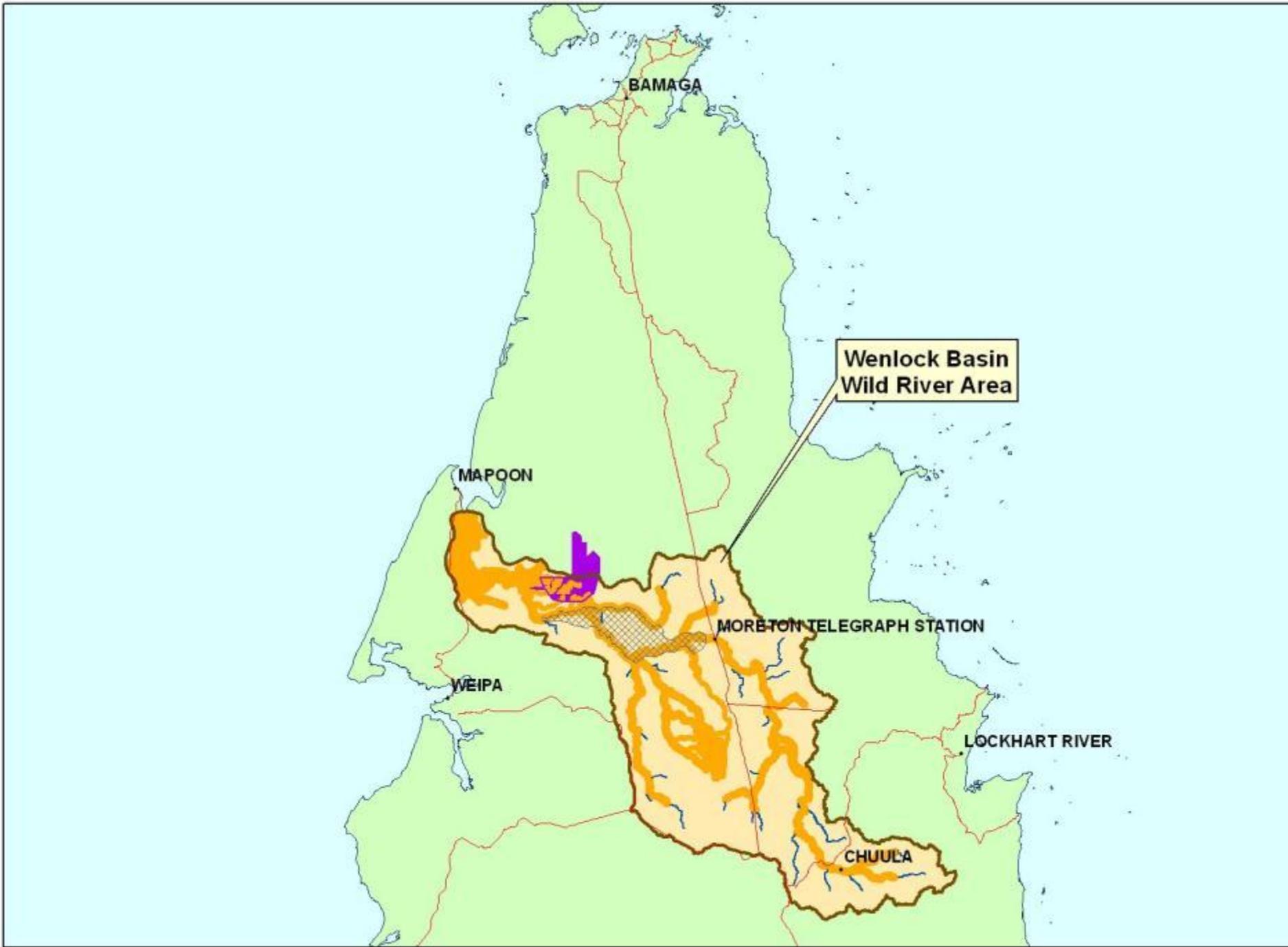


# How is a declaration made?



# Case study :The Wenlock

- Located on the west coast of Cape York Peninsula, is one of the world's most pristine ecosystems.
- Features rare and threatened plants, birds and marine and estuarine species, including endangered spear-toothed sharks, dugongs, Australian snub-fin dolphins and estuarine crocodiles.
- The highest diversity of freshwater fish species of any Australian river, including the Whiptail Ray, Freshwater Sole and endangered freshwater sawfish.
- Rainforests of the Wenlock provide crucial habitat for the Palm cockatoo, spotted Cuscus, Magnificent Riflebird, Trumpet manucode, Orange-footed Scrub fowl and Amethystine Python.
- Sets up a practical framework for preserving the natural values of this special part of Queensland's natural heritage in a way that acknowledges and meets the needs of different stakeholders.



BAMAGA

Wenlock Basin  
Wild River Area

MAPOON

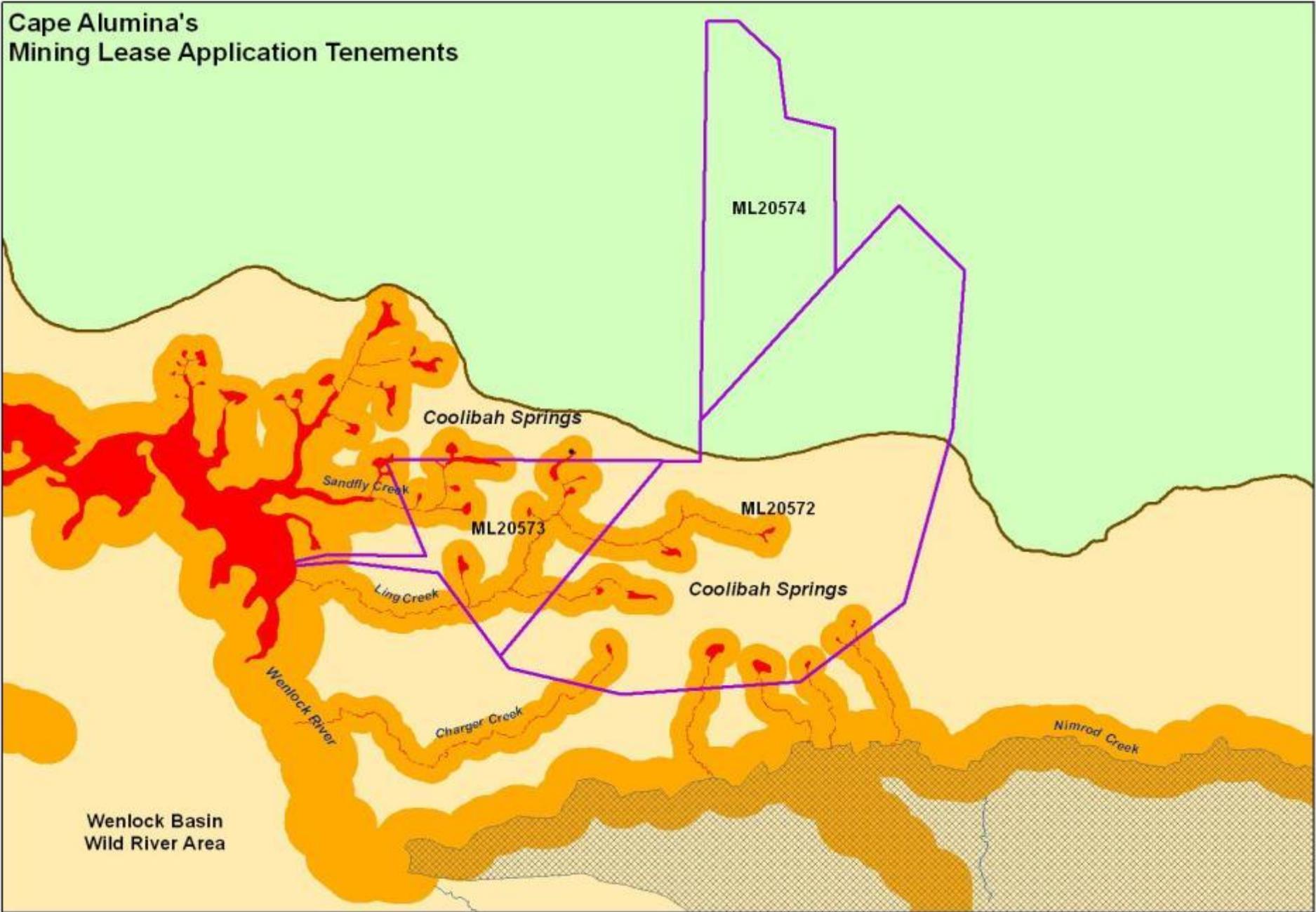
MORETON TELEGRAPH STATION

WEIPA

LOCKHART RIVER

CHUULA

# Cape Alumina's Mining Lease Application Tenements



# Coolibah Springs



# Summary

- Wild Rivers is nation leading and innovative Legislation
- Cheaper to protect than to rehabilitate
  - Protection of undisturbed systems is not a recurring opportunity. It occurs only once – after that, there is only restoration.
  - e.g. restoration in the Murray River alone will involve an investment of \$498m (Hatton MacDonald et al., 2001)
  - Wild Rivers is a pragmatic approach that provides for both protection and development