

Clearing Desktop Report – Short Form



1. PROPOSAL DETAILS

Proposal Name:	M016 Goomalling Merredin Road 41.95 – 42.11 SLK Removal of 4 trees		
Region/Directorate:	Wheatbelt		
Local Government Authority:	Dowerin		
Road/Bridge Name and No:	M016 Goomalling Merredin Road		
Proposal Location (SLK):	41.95 – 42.11		
TRIM Link to Spatial Data:	D22#287058		
EOS Number:	2650		
Expected Proposal Start Date:	May 2022		
Project No:	21114026	Task Code:	741.06

2. PURPOSE OF CLEARING

Wheatbelt has received several complaints regarding the danger to motorists of four trees that are dropping dead branches onto the road.

Four trees (three that are dead) are constantly dropping limbs over the road. One of the trees has one limb alive, but after removing the dead limbs, the remaining live limb will be leaning over the farmers fence, with no balancing limbs to stop it falling, so will also be removed.

A 24m Elevated Work Platform (EWP), Truck and Chipper will be used to remove the trees. The stumps will also be ground down to below soil level as it is located within the maintenance zone. Mulch will be blown back into road reserve if possible, or removed to approved spoil area. The Proposal area is void of understorey and no vegetation will be impacted from vehicle machinery movements.

LISC (D22#288005)

3. ALTERNATIVES TO CLEARING

As this Proposal is for the removal of four trees in the maintenance zone for safety reasons, then there is limited scope to alter the clearing. Only four trees (3 dead) are proposed to be cleared in a Degraded – Completely Degraded condition.

4. MEASURES TO AVOID, MINIMISE, MITIGATE AND MANAGE PROPOSAL CLEARING IMPACTS

There are limited measures to avoid, mitigate clearing impacts, being the removal of four trees due to safety issues.

The tree will be removed progressively using an EWP, minimising the impact of surrounding vegetation using other felling techniques. The tree will be mulched, with chip being used as mulch on the adjacent cleared road reserve. If there is no cleared road reserve adjacent to the tree, the chip will be removed offsite.

5. APPROVED POLICES AND PLANNING INSTRUMENTS

The clearing of native vegetation in Western Australia is regulated under the *Environmental Protection Act* (EP Act) and the Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004 (Clearing Regulations).

In addition to the matters considered in accordance with section 51O of the EP Act (see Section 1.3), Main Roads has also had regard to the following documents.

Environmental Protection Policies

- Environmental Protection (Peel Inlet - Harvey Estuary) Policy 1992
- Environmental Protection (Western Swamp Tortoise Habitat) Policy 2011

Other Legislation of relevance for assessment of clearing and planning/other matters

- *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (WA) (BC Act)
- *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (WA) (CALM Act)
- *Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947* (WA) (CAWS Act)
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act)
- *Planning and Development Act 2005* (WA) (P&D Act)
- *Soil and Land Conservation Act 1945* (WA)
- *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914* (WA) (RIWI Act)
- *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* (WA) (AHA)
- *Town Planning and Development Act (WA) 1928*

Relevant other policies and guidance documents

- Environmental Offsets Policy (Government of Western Australia, 2011)
- A guide to the assessment of applications to clear native vegetation (DEC, December 2014)
- Procedure: Native vegetation clearing permits (DWER, October 2019)
- Environmental Offsets Guidelines (Government of Western Australia, August 2014)
- Technical guidance – Flora and Vegetation Surveys for Environmental Impact Assessment (EPA, 2016)
- Technical guidance – Terrestrial Vertebrate Fauna Surveys for Environmental Impact Assessment (EPA, 2020)
- Approved conservation advice under section 266B of the EPBC Act for threatened flora/fauna/vegetation communities
- Approved Recovery Plans for threatened species
- EPBC Act Referral guidelines for the three threatened black cockatoo species
- Strategic advice - EPA

6. CLEARING AREA

Clearing Area (ha):	0.025	No. Trees Cleared:	4
Species Names:	Unsure but likely Wandoo, York gum, Morrel and/or Gimlet		
Easting and Northing:	117 14.788 -31 11.232		

7. EXISTING ENVIRONMENT AND SITE INFORMATION

Site Vegetation Description/Association:	Vegetation Association 1049 described as Medium woodland; wandoo, York gum, salmon gum, morrel & gimlet.
Site Vegetation Condition:	Degraded – Completely Degraded
Pre-European Extent Remaining (%):	56,618 ha (6.79%) remains at a Statewide level with 3,584 (5.36%) remaining at a LGA level

8. ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL AGAINST CLEARING PRINCIPLES

Is vegetation to be cleared at variance with:	Justification or Evidence:
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<p>Principle (a) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biological diversity.</p>	<p>It is proposed to clear four trees (likely Wandoo, York gum, Morrel and/or Gimlet) of which 3 area dead, and all located in maintenance zone, with little to no understorey.</p> <p>According to Main Roads GIS WA Herbarium layer (Figure 3), the closest records was <i>Boronia ericifolia</i> (P2), km of the Proposal area.</p> <p>According to Main Roads GIS Rare Flora layer (Figure 3), the closest record was <i>Conostylis wonganensis</i> (T) km of the Proposal area. No impacts on flora are expected.</p> <p>According to Main Roads GIS TEC/PEC layer (Figure 4), the Proposal area is not mapped as a PEC/TEC.</p> <p>DBCA Managed Lands (Namelcatchem Nature Reserve) are located more than 4.4 km west of the Proposal area.</p> <p>The Proposal area is not located within an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA).</p> <p>Although trees 1 and 2 are likely to be DBH, none of the trees were observed to contain hollows suitable for Black Cockatoo. As the trees are dead/dying, they do not offer foraging or breeding habitat.</p> <p>Based on the above, the Proposal area has limited biodiversity value and the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.</p>
<p>Principle (b) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of, a significant habitat for fauna indigenous to Western Australia.</p>	<p>According to Main Roads GIS Rare Fauna layer (Figure 3), the closest record was <i>Apus pacificus</i> (Fork-tailed swift), 4.5 km west of the Proposal area also in the Namelcatchem Nature Reserve.</p> <p>The DAWE Protected Mater Search Tool identified 23 Threatened (five birds, two mammals, 14 plants, one reptile and one spider) and 6 Migratory (one marine, one terrestrial and four wetland bird) species as potentially occurring in the 10 km study area. Due to the Degraded – Completely Degraded nature of the Proposal area, these species are unlikely to occur or be transient to the area.</p> <p>Of most interest is the Shield-backed Trapdoor Spider. The DAWE Species Profile and Threats Database for <i>Idiosoma nigrum</i> — Shield-backed Trapdoor Spider https://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicspecies.pl?taxon_id=66798 reports that in the Wheatbelt, the Shield-backed Trapdoor Spider typically inhabits clay soils (Anonymous 2010; Ecologia Environment 2009a). The Wheatbelt populations are in areas with more consistent annual rainfall, which is likely to be why the populations in these areas are primarily found in sheltered habitat (Anonymous 2010). In the Wheatbelt, populations are associated with eucalypt woodland and acacia shrubland (Anonymous 2010). Leaf litter and twigs are extremely important to the species as it provides material for the burrows, reduced soil moisture loss and increased prey availability (Anonymous 2010). The species avoids areas of dense leaf litter as juveniles are unable to dig their initial hole in such areas (Main 1992).</p> <p>Shield-backed Trapdoor Spider within the Study area are recorded within pockets of remnant vegetation, where there is a potential food supply, shelter and suitable open ground substrate, compared to the Proposal area which has a significant cover of agricultural weeds, and limited food supply and shelter. Accordingly, it is unlikely that Shield-backed Trapdoor Spider would occur within the very narrow and degraded road reserve where the Proposal area occurs.</p>

	<p>The Proposal area is within the mapped range of Carnaby's Black Cockatoo, but outside the range of Baudin's and Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo.</p> <p>Although trees 1 and 2 are likely to be DBH, none of the trees were observed to contain hollows suitable for Black Cockatoo (D22#1091179). As the trees are dead/dying, they do not offer foraging or breeding habitat. Tree 2 may offer roosting potential as it is the tallest of the four trees, however there are similarly high trees immediately adjacent to the Proposal area. No evidence of Black Cockatoos was observed by Main Roads staff.</p> <p>The four trees are highly unlikely to be significant habitat for fauna indigenous to Western Australia. Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.</p>
<p>Principle (c) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, rare flora.</p>	<p>According to Main Roads GIS Rare Flora layer (Figure 3), the closest rare/priority flora record was <i>Conostylis wonganensis</i> (T) km of the Proposal area. No impacts on flora are expected.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.</p>
<p>Principle (d) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of, a threatened ecological community.</p>	<p>According to Main Roads GIS TEC/PEC layer, the Proposal area is not mapped as a PEC/TEC.</p> <p>Further, being isolated trees in a degrade to completely degraded condition, it would not meet the requirements of Wheatbelt Woodlands TEC.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.</p>
<p>Principle (e) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is significant as a remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared.</p>	<p>One vegetation association of Beard (1049) has been mapped over the Proposal area, namely: Vegetation Association 1049 described as a Medium woodland; wandoo, York gum, salmon gum, morrel & gimlet</p> <p>The pre-European extent remaining of this Vegetation Association is 56,618 ha (6.79%) remains at a Statewide level with 3,584 (5.36%) remaining at a LGA level.</p> <p>The removal of four trees (three that are dead) (approximately 0.025 ha) in a Degraded – Completely degraded condition within the maintenance zone, equates to 0.0007% of this vegetation association at a LGA level, and is not likely to represent vegetation that is significant as a remnant.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.</p>
<p>Principle (f) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland.</p>	<p>Wandoo, York gum, Morrel and Gimlet are not representative of riparian vegetation. The closest waterway is approximately 500m west of the Proposal area.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.</p>
<p>Principle (g) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation.</p>	<p>DPIRD mapping indicates that the area has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4% very high to extreme water erosion hazard • 15% high to extreme wind erosion hazard • 0% very poor to poor site drainage potential • 7% moderate salinity hazard <p>The Australian Soil Resource Information System (ASRIS) has been used to determine the likelihood of Acid Sulphate Soils (ASS) occurring within the Proposal area. The ASRIS database (accessed 21-Mar-2022) indicates there is a low probability of occurrence within the Proposal area.</p> <p>The removal of four trees in a degraded to completely degraded condition is unlikely to cause appreciable land degradation, especially as the majority of the land where the vegetation is located is covered with road infrastructure and agricultural pursuits.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.</p>

<p>Principle (h) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to have an impact on the environmental values of any adjacent or nearby conservation area.</p>	<p>A search of Main Roads GIS shapefiles layers indicates that the closest nature reserve, conservation areas or Bush Forever Sites is the Namelcatchem Nature Reserve, located more than 4.5 km west of the Proposal area. Therefore, no impacts to these areas are anticipated.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.</p>
<p>Principle (i) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface or underground water.</p>	<p>The Proposal area is not located within a Public Drinking Water Source Area, groundwater area proclaimed under the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914 (RIWI Act) or catchment proclaimed under the Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947 (CAWS Act). It is located in a surface water proclaimed area under the RIWI Act.</p> <p>The removal of the trees may require some minor excavation below the surface, but as the Proposal is planned to occur over the summer months, will not intersect groundwater, will not require dewatering, and no change to surface or groundwater level or quality is expected.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.</p>
<p>Principle (j) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if clearing the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.</p>	<p>The removal of four trees in a degraded to completely degraded condition is unlikely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.</p> <p>DPIRD mapping indicates that the area has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0% moderate to high flood hazard • 5% moderate to very high waterlogging and inundation risk <p>A review of ArcGIS shapefiles has confirmed that the proposed works will not disturb or interrupt any natural drainage and surface run-off patterns.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.</p>
<p>Methodology Used and References:</p>	<p>Proposal Area (Figure 1) Contextual photographs of Proposal area (Appendix 1) Australian Soil Resource Information System (ASRIS) Mapping (http://www.asris.csiro.au/mapping/viewer.htm) DPIRD mapping (https://maps.agric.wa.gov.au/nrm-info/) Main Roads GIS Shapefiles</p>
<p>Completed By:</p>	
<p>Name</p>	
<p>Signature</p>	
<p>Job Title</p>	<p>Senior Environment Officer</p>
<p>Date</p>	<p>23-Mar-2022</p>

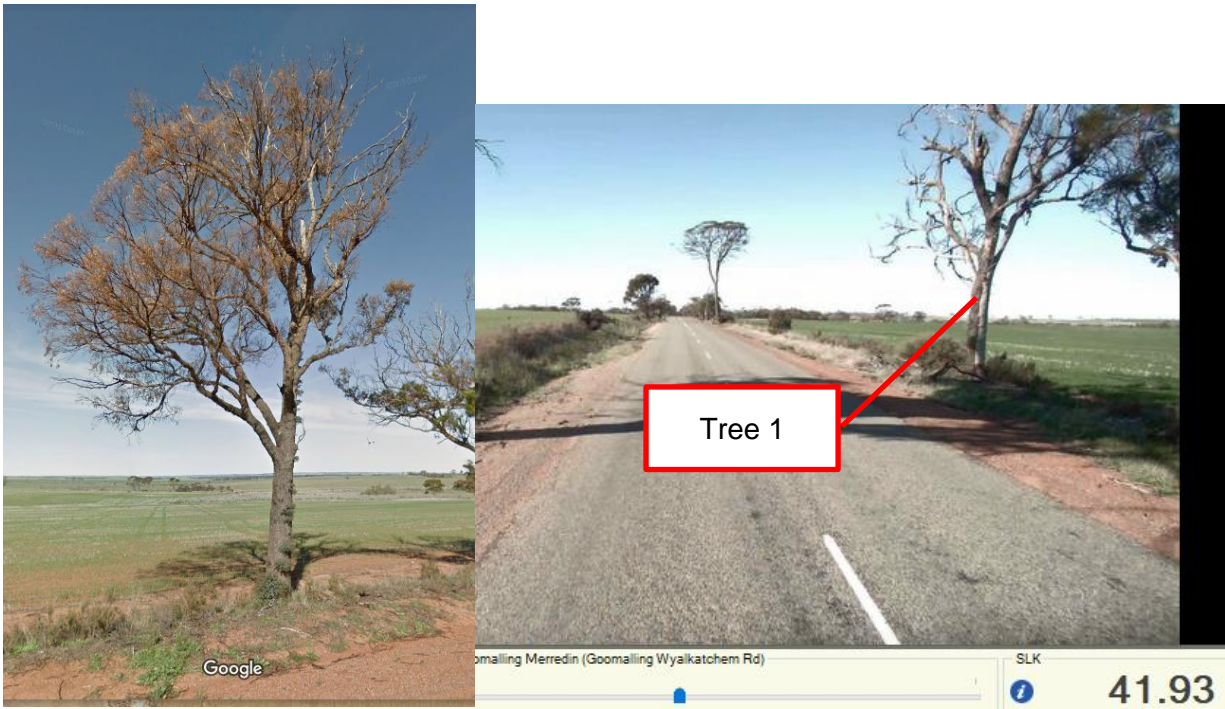
Once all sections are completed, send the form to CRSP for review and endorsement.

<p>DECISION ON CLEARING ASSESSMENT</p>		
<p>Clearing Assessment</p>	<p>ENDORSED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>REFUSED <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Comments</p>		
<p>Name</p>		
<p>Signature</p>		
<p>Job Title</p>	<p>Environment Officer</p>	

Date

31/03/2022

Appendix 1: Figures and Photographs



Tree 1 – 41.95 - looking south (taken 2015)

Tree 1 from IRIS looking east (IRIS)



Trees 2, 3 and 4 – looking east (taken 2015)


Goomalling Wyalkatchem Rd
0042.06
 Lat/Long: -31.187188, 117.246377

 SINGLE






Goomalling Wyalkatchem Rd
0042.08
 Lat/Long: -31.187235, 117.246560

 SINGLE



Tree 2 – marked by farmers to indicate dangerous tree (taken 2022)



Goomalling Merredin (Goomalling Wyalkatchem Rd) SLK
  **42.01**

Tree 2 from IRIS looking east (IRIS)



Trees 3 and 4 from IRIS looking east (IRIS)



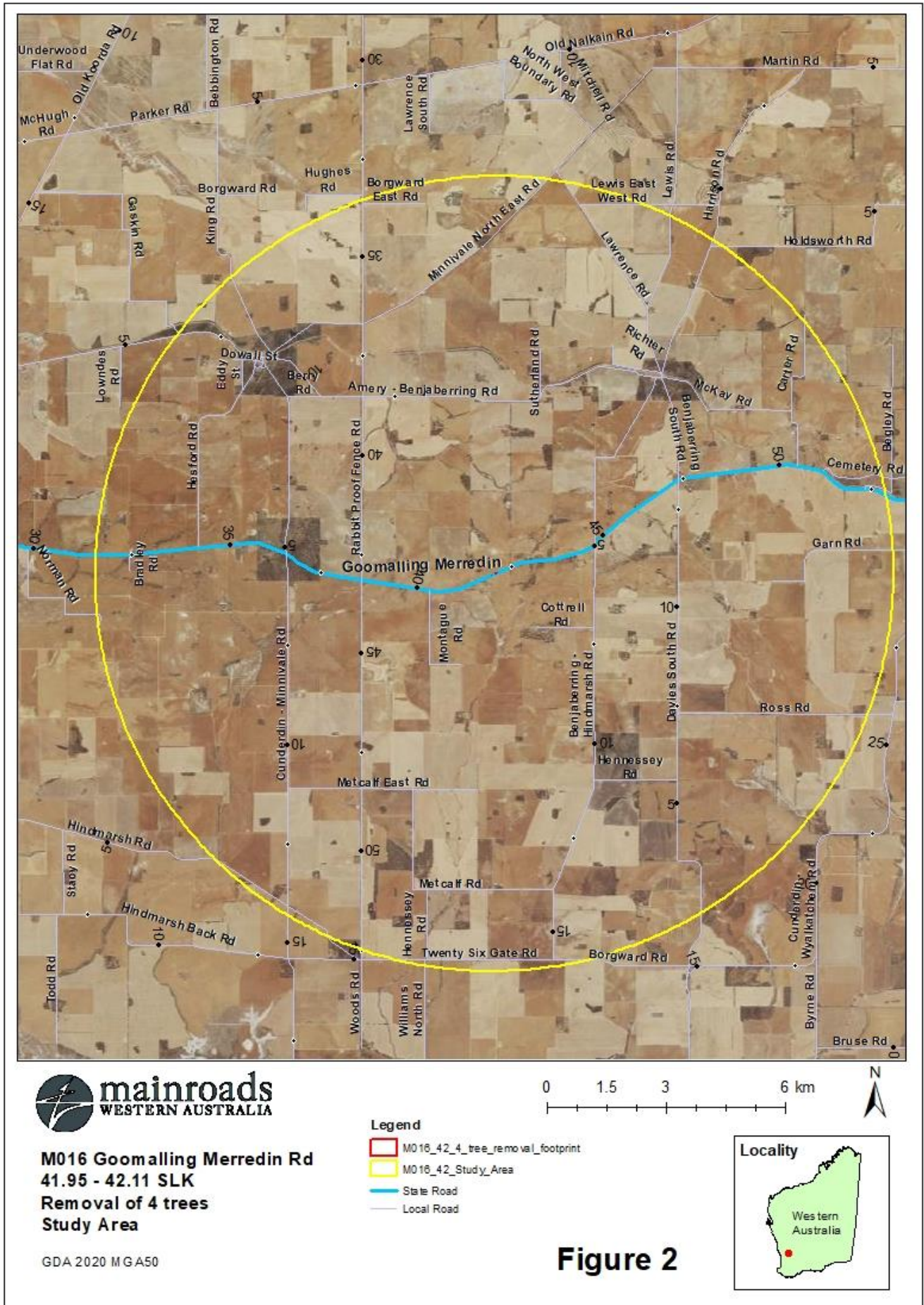
Tree 3 - looking south (taken 2015)

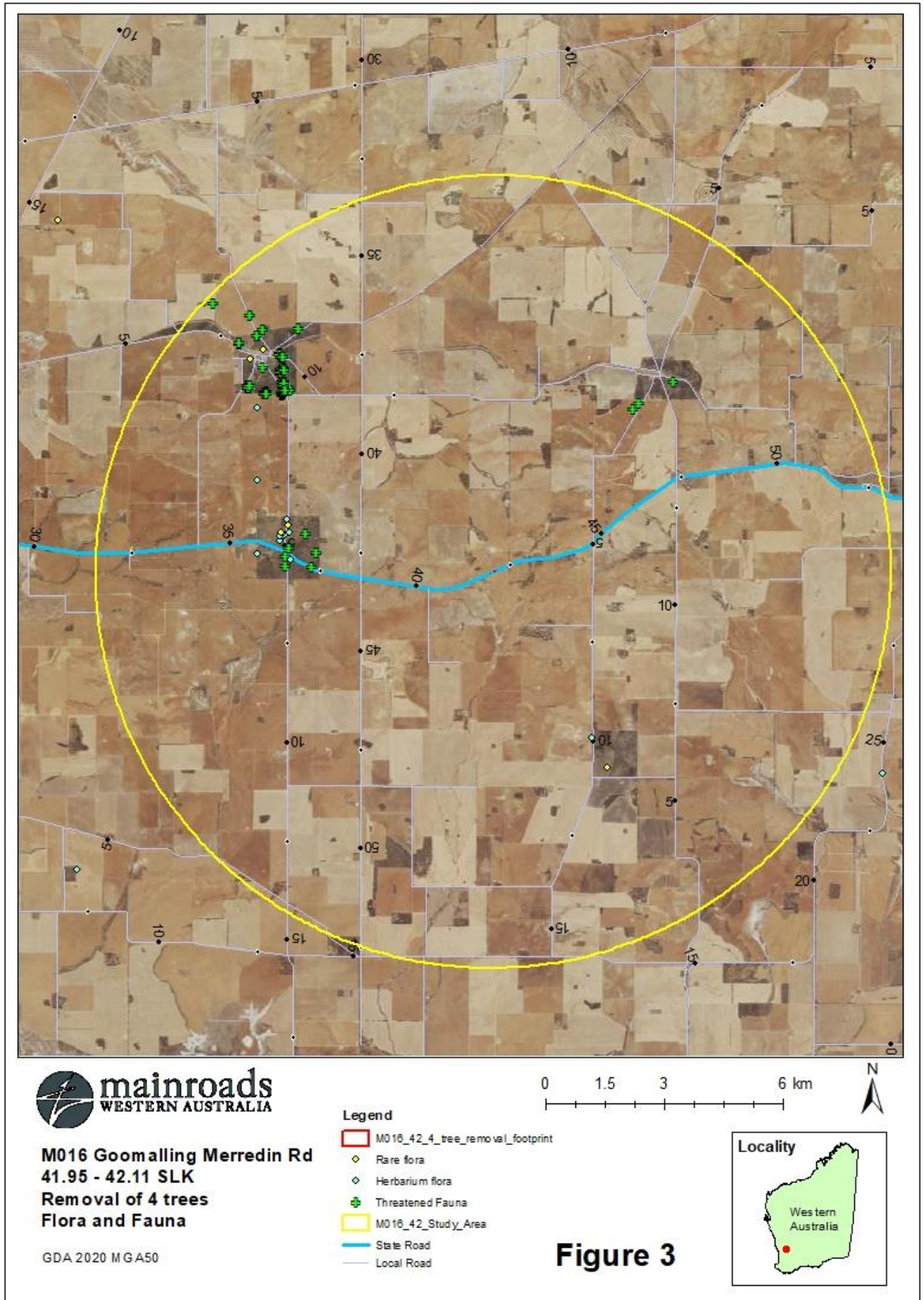


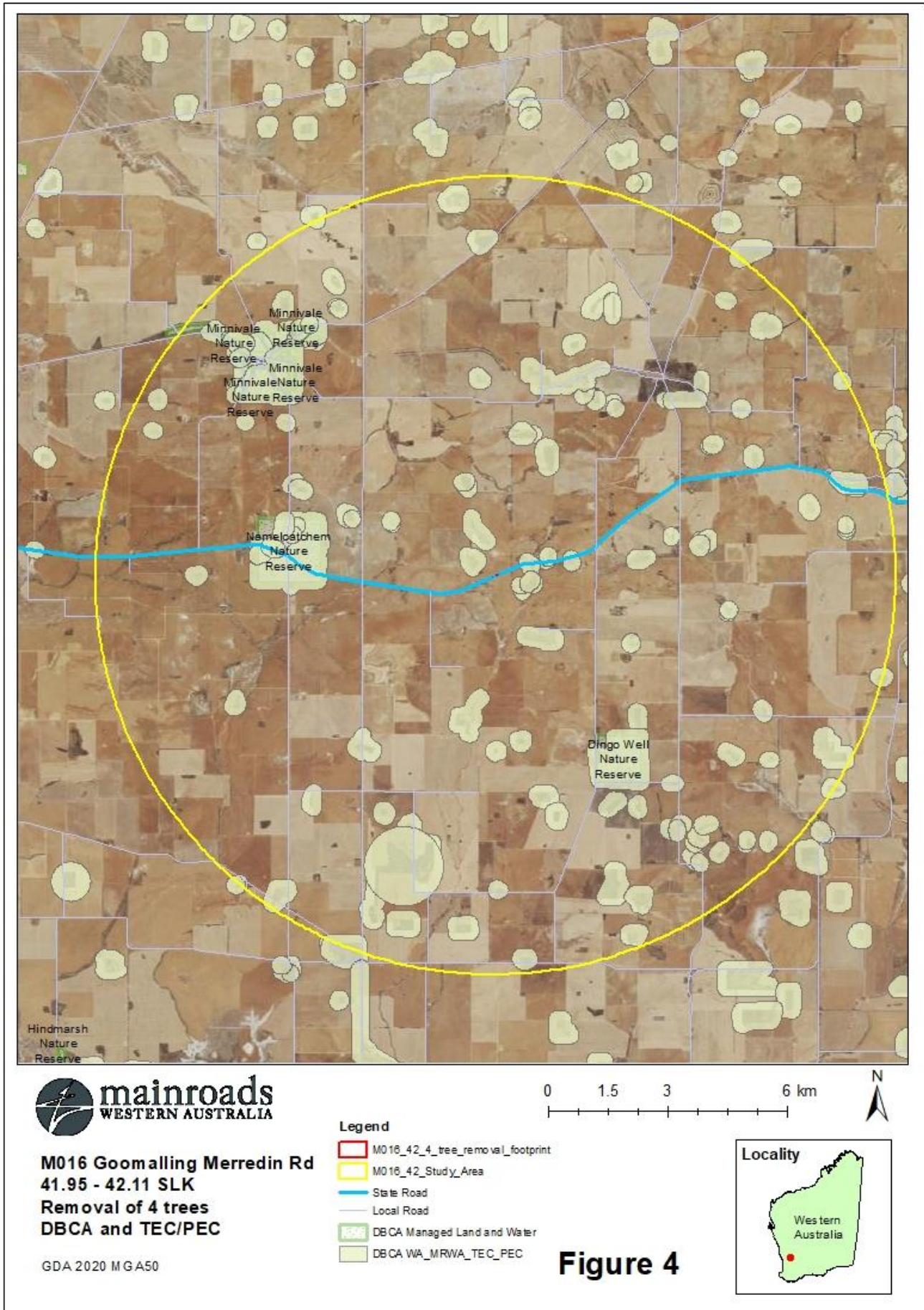
Tree 4 – looking north (taken 2015)

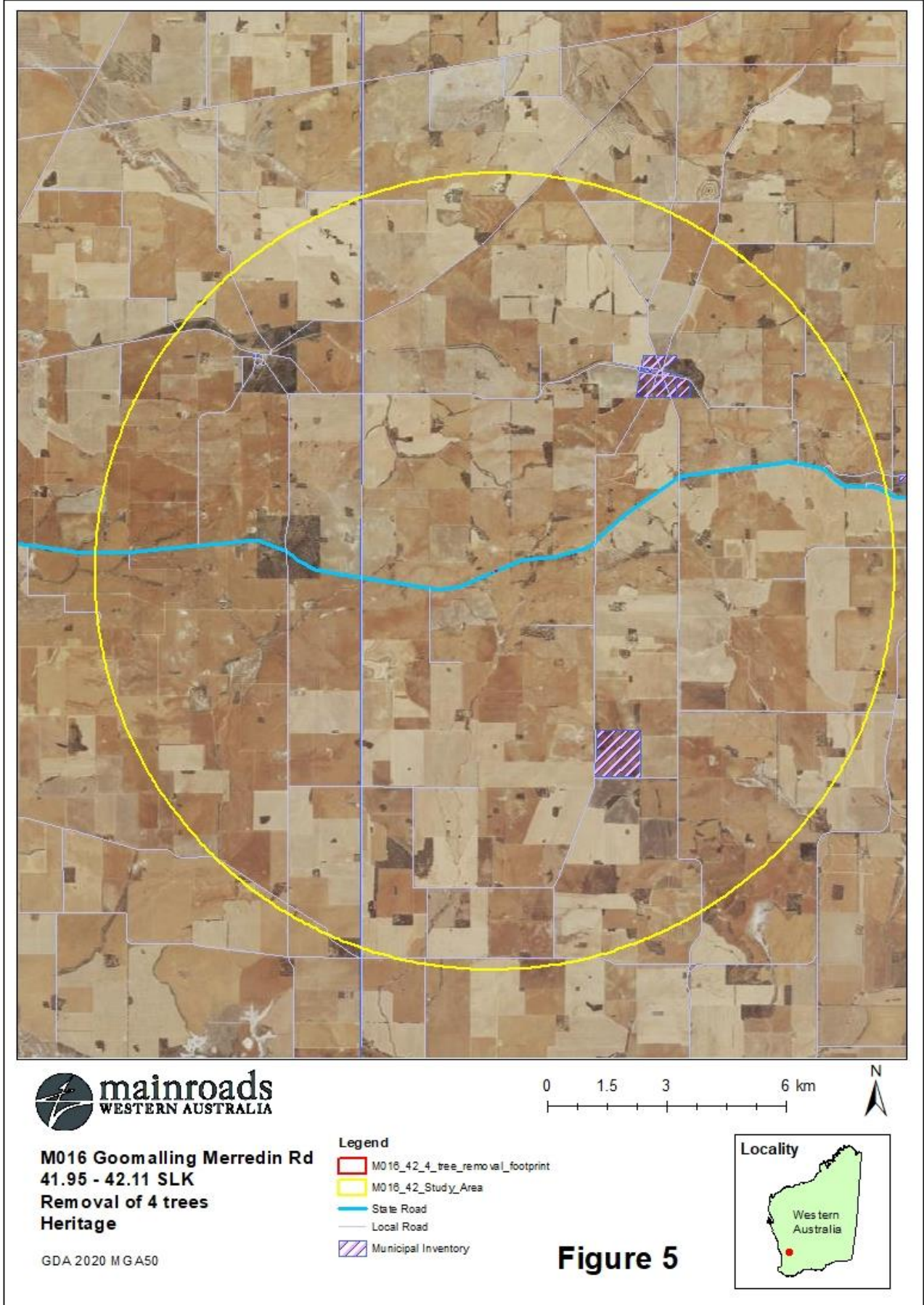
Appendix 2: Figures

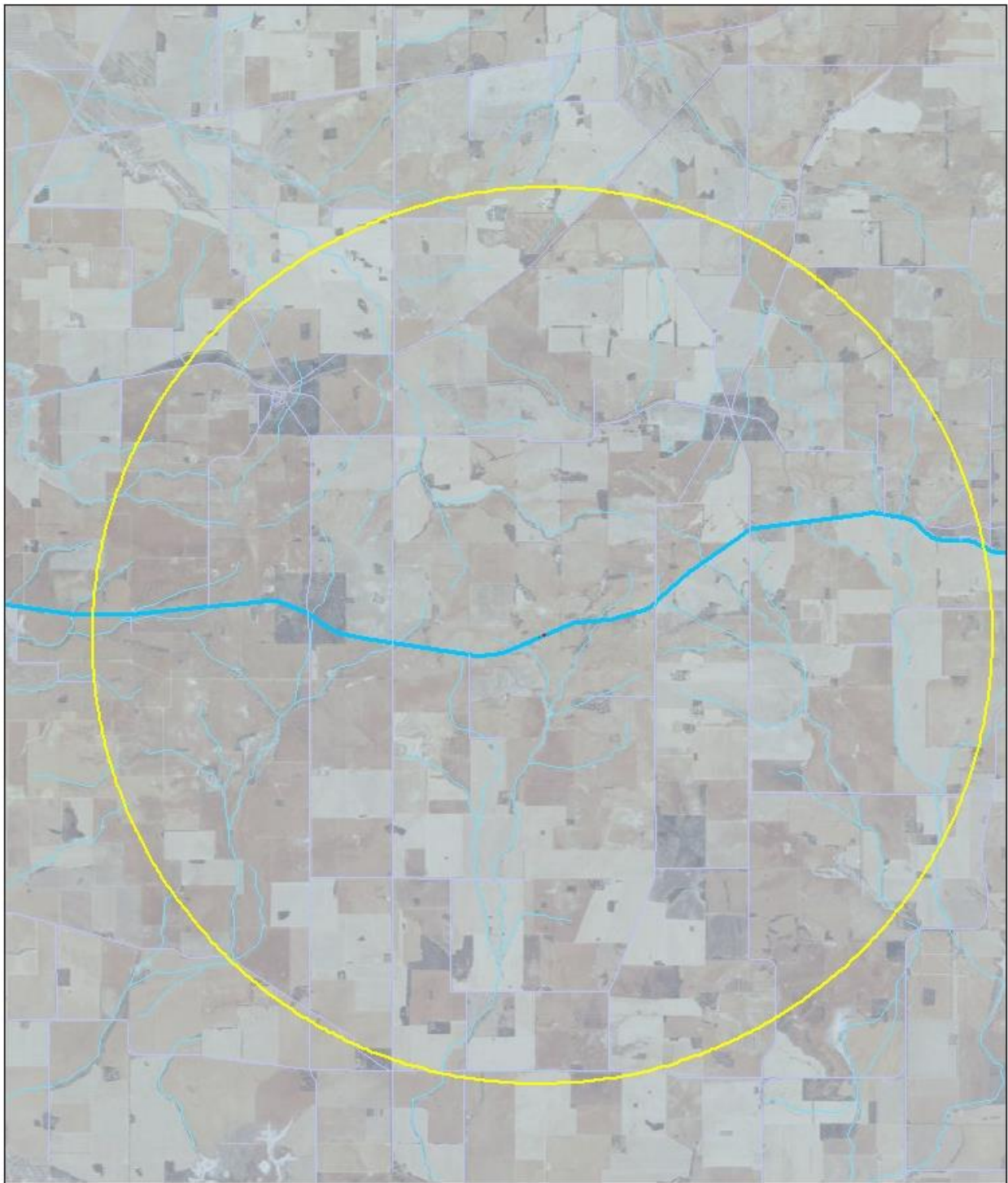












M016 Goomalling Merredin Rd
41.95 - 42.11 SLK
Removal of 4 trees
Water

GDA 2020 MGA50

Legend

- M016_42_4_tree_removal_footprint
- M016_42_Study_Area
- State Road
- Local Road
- SurfaceWater_Proclaimed_Areas

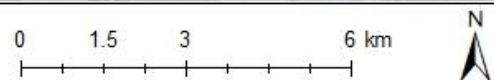


Figure 6

Maps - Identify



ASRIS Database (21-Mar-2022)