Clearing Desktop Report – Short Form

1. PROPOSAL DETAILS

Proposal Name:	[REDACTED]		
Region/Directorate:	MWG Region		
Local Government:	Shire of Chapman Valley		
Road/Bridge Name & Number:	North West Coastal Highway (NWCH) – H007		
Proposal Location (SLK):	SLK [REDACTED]		
CDR Short Form TRIM Number:	D24#334452		
Spatial Data TRIM Number:	D24#334454		
EOS Number:	2965		
Expected Proposal Start Date:	01 April 2024		
Oracle Project No:	30002029	**Task Code:**	35001
LISC TRIM Number:	D23#1360536	**HRA TRIM Number:**	D23#1059462

2. PURPOSE OF CLEARING

The [REDACTED] is a [REDACTED] externally driven Project to establish an [REDACTED] at [REDACTED]. Main Roads Western Australia (MRWA) has been engaged on behalf of [REDACTED] to deliver the essential road access components of the Project which will allow the estate to be accessed safely by commercial and industrial vehicles.

[REDACTED] was granted a Subdivision Approval which envelopes the existing North West Coastal Highway (NWCH) from approximately SLK [REDACTED]. To enable safe access into the industrial estate, this section of road will include upgrades to culverts, acceleration and deceleration lanes. A new access road will be constructed perpendicular from NWCH into the industrial estate to access the approved subdivision area. Clearing is required to enable the construction and development of the access road into the [REDACTED] and the necessary upgrades on NWCH to allow the safe turning of vehicles onto the access road.

During the 85% design process, it became apparent that several very small areas of the construction footprint extend outside of [REDACTED]'s separately approved Subdivision boundary. These areas are the subject of this Clearing Desktop Report – Short Form. The location of these areas is presented in Figures 1, 2A, 2B and 2C. The total proposed clearing area assessed under this Clearing Desktop Report – Short Form equates to 0.13 ha, rounded to two decimal places.

3. ALTERNATIVES TO CLEARING

The following alternatives to clearing were considered during the development of the proposal:

- Not undertaking upgrades to the existing NWCH. Upgrades to the NWCH, to allow the safe turning of vehicles into the [REDACTED] could not be avoided due to motorist safety. By creating a new access road running perpendicular to NWCH, commercial and industrial vehicles would be required to slow their speed in order to safely make the turn into the access road. The current NWCH is of insufficient design and width to allow vehicles to safely turn onto this new access road. This resulted in the requirement to upgrade NWCH to allow for acceleration and deceleration lanes to prevent road accidents at the newly proposed intersection with the access road.
- Reducing the speed limit to minimise clearing requirements, while still balancing safety (driver fatigue) and freight efficiency. Speed Limits are an essential mechanism to ensure the safe and

efficient operation of road networks. The application of appropriate speed limits and other traffic management measures is a key mechanism in managing vehicle speeds to achieve desired safety, mobility, traffic management, local amenity, and road user expectations. There are several factors involved in road safety, including road conditions, driver behaviour and overall road design. Except in special situations, reducing speed limits below national standards on state and national roads is not typically supported as it has the potential to contribute to driver frustration, impatience, tiredness and recklessness. The environmental values protected by reducing the speed limit, do not justify the impacts on freight efficiencies nor road user safety. Accordingly, the reduction of the speed limits to avoid clearing of native vegetation for this proposal is not proposed. Being a new intersection, with the bulk of traffic movements turning right (south) using the upgraded, vehicles will slow to make this turn.

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

The following measures have been taken to avoid, minimise, mitigate and manage proposal clearing impacts:

- The use of the existing NWCH and the use of the existing alignment prevented the need to construct a new road or a new alignment, in order to access the Industrial estate. This minimised the extent of native vegetation clearing required.
- Safety barriers and steeper batters were considered during the design phase of the project.
- Wherever possible, areas not requiring vegetation clearing will be utilised for laydown, site offices and access to minimise the extent of clearing required.

5. APPROVED POLICES AND PLANNING INSTRUMENTS

The clearing of native vegetation in Western Australia is regulated under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (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 (DER, December 2014)
- Procedure: Native vegetation clearing permits (DWER, October 2021)
- 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):	0.13 ha	**No. Trees Cleared:**	

Species Name(s):

The proposed clearing areas have been mapped by [REDACTED] as containing vegetation type "Near Coastal: *Acacia rostellifera* shrubland" ('nc/Ar'). A smaller area (0.001ha) is also mapped as containing paddock grasses.

According to Department of Planning (DOP) (2010), the study of which the [REDACTED] reconnaissance survey was derived from, the most common species within vegetation type Near Coastal: *Acacia rostellifera* shrubland are:

- *Acacia rostellifera*
- *Acacia xanthina*
- *Alyxia buxifolia*
- *Anthocercis littorea*
- *Cassytha flava*
- *Clematis linearifolia*
- *Commicarpus australis*
- *Chamelaucium uncinatum*
- **Lycium ferocissimum*
- *Muehlenbeckia adpressa*
- *Pimelea microcephala* subsp. m*icrocephala*
- *Pittosporum ligustrifolium*
- *Rhagodia preissii* subp. *obovata*
- *Scaevola crassifolia*
- *Stylobasium spathulatum*
- *Tetragonia implexicoma*
- *Threlkeldia diffusa*

Latitude and Longitude:

The 0.13ha of proposed clearing consists of four smaller grouped areas (See Figure 1) Longitude and Latitude of each area's centroid is shown in the table below:

Area	Size (ha)	Long	Lat
1	0.0618	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
2	0.0249	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
3 (3 smaller parts)	0.0093	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
4	0.0304	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

7. EXISTING ENVIRONMENT AND SITE INFORMATION

Site Vegetation Description/Association:

All areas were mapped by [REDACTED] as containing the vegetation type: Near coastal: *Acacia rostellifera* shrubland (Nc/Ar), except for a small area of paddock. Refer to Figures 3A, 3B, 3C.

[REDACTED] noted that the Nc/Ar - *Acacia rostellifera* shrubland/tall shrubland was present along most of the NWCH survey route in the sandplain substrate, matching the Geraldton Regional Flora and Vegetation Survey (GRFVS) vegetation type (10) Near coastal: *Acacia rostellifera* shrubland (nc/Ar). The shrubland extended on to the rocky rises as the limestone appeared amongst sandplain.

All areas are located within the Geraldton Sandplains IBRA Region and the Geraldton Hills IBRA Subregion.

The northern most area aligns with Pre-European Beard Vegetation association 35, described as: Shrublands; jam scrub with scattered York gum.

	The other three areas fall within the Pre-European Vegetation association 413, described as Shrublands; *Acacia neurophylla & Acacia species* thicket.
Site Vegetation Condition:	All areas were mapped by [REDACTED] as containing vegetation in 'Degraded to Completely Degraded' condition,using the Keighery (1994) vegetation condition scale, with the ground cover composed largely of introduced grasses of **Cenchrus setaceus*, **C. echinatus*, **Ehrharta longiflora*, **E. calycina*, **Avena barbata*, and **Melinis repens* with **Echium plantagineum* (Paterson's Curse) and **Brassica tournefortii* (Wild Radish) common. Refer to Figures 4A, 4B, 4C.
Pre-European Extent Remaining (%):	Beard vegetation association 35 has approximately 16.31% of its pre-European extent remaining in the State. Beard vegetation association 413 has approximately 50.89% of its pre-European extent remaining in the State.

Pre-European Vegetation Association	Scale	Pre–European Extent (ha)	Current Extent (ha)	% Remaining	% Current Extent in DBCA Managed Land (proportion of pre-European Extent)
Veg Assoc No. 35	**Statewide**	184,502	30,088	16.31	0.41
	IBRA Bioregion Geraldton Sandplains	184,502	30,088	16.31	0.41
	IBRA Sub-region Geraldton Hills	184,502	30,088	16.31	0.41
Veg Assoc No. 413	**Statewide**	3,474	1,768	50.89	0.76
	IBRA Bio region Geraldton Sandplains	1,748	334	19.11	0.13
	IBRA Sub-region Geraldton Hills	1,748	334	19.11	0.13

8. ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL AGAINST CLEARING PRINCIPLES

Is vegetation to be cleared at variance with:	Justification or Evidence:
Principle (a) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biological diversity.	The 0.13ha of vegetation proposed to be cleared is unlikely to comprise a high level of biological diversity for the following reasons: • [REDACTED] concluded surveyed vegetation was of "Degraded to Completely Degraded" condition. • All areas are highly infested with weeds [REDACTED]. • No Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) or Priority Ecological Communities (PECs) were identified in the proposed clearing areas (GIS Datasets; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]) and none are considered likely to occur based on the habitat descriptions of the nearest communities. • No Threatened flora species were identified in in the proposed clearing areas (GIS datasets; [REDACTED]; and [REDACTED]). • No Threatened flora species are considered likely to occur in the proposed clearing areas, based on habitat preferences of the nearest known Threatened flora species and the small and degraded condition of the proposed clearing areas. • Several Priority flora species have been identified in close proximity to the proposed clearing areas [REDACTED]

	and [REDACTED]). *Grevillea triloba* (P3) was confirmed by *[REDACTED]* (2010a) and [REDACTED] to have individuals adjacent to the proposed clearing areas. This species is considered a disturbance specialist and is abundant locally, with [REDACTED] estimating the number of *Grevillea triloba* plants in the region was approximately 15,734 individuals from over 200 locations. This species is unlikely to be significantly impacted by the proposal to clear 0.13 ha of vegetation in Degraded to Completely Degraded condition. The proposed clearing areas are unlikely to provide significant habitat for any other Priority flora species given their small size, degraded condition and noting the Nc/Ar - *Acacia rostellifera* shrubland vegetation type occurring in the proposed clearing areas is relatively common throughout the Geraldton region. • No watercourses or wetlands are located in the proposed clearing areas. • The small size of the proposed clearing areas (0.13 ha across four separate areas) is unlikely to be conducive for high levels of floristic or faunal diversity. Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.
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.	The proposed clearing consists of four small areas (the largest area is 0.030 ha) with Degraded to Completely Degraded vegetation. The areas are characterised by high weed infestations and occur along an existing major highway adjacent to cleared agricultural land. Whilst a number of fauna species may be occasional visitors to the proposed clearing areas ([REDACTED]), no species is likely to be dependent on these areas given their small size, level of degradation, lack of permanent or ephemeral watercourses, proximity to the existing road and cleared farmland and availability of better quality habitat locally. Larger tracts of better quality fauna habitat are located within 2-3 kilometres to the east and north of the proposed clearing areas, including the [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], which combined cover approximately 850 hectares. In this context, the proposed clearing areas are, not anticipated to comprise the whole or a part of, or be necessary for the maintenance of, a significant habitat for fauna. The proposed clearing areas are not located within the modelled breeding range for the Commonwealth and State-listed Endangered Carnaby's Cockatoo; *Zanda latirostris* (DAWE, 2022). Of the plant species identified within the ncAr Near Coastal: *Acacia rostellifera* vegetation type, none of the species recorded represent known or documented primary foraging plant species utilised by Carnaby's Cockatoo (Groom, 2011). Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.

Principle (c) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, threatened flora.	No Threatened flora species are known to occur in the proposed clearing areas (GIS datasets; [REDACTED]). Eight Threatened flora species have previously been recorded within 20km of the proposed clearing areas: • *Caladenia elegans* • *Caladenia hoffmanii* • *Drummondita ericoides* • *Eucalyptus cuprea* • *Grevillea bracteosa* subsp. *howatharra* • *Philotheca wonganensis* • *Schoenia filifolia* subsp. *subulifolia* • *Styphelia marginata* Of the above-listed species, the nearest Threatened flora record (*Philotheca wonganensis*) is located approximately 820m from the proposed Clearing Area 1. [REDACTED] undertook a reconnaissance survey of the proposed areas included in this assessment. This included targeted searches for *Philotheca wonganensis*, a Commonwealth and State-listed Threatened flora species, which had previously been recorded (in 1983 and 2008) at the corner of North West Coastal Highway and [REDACTED] (approximately 820m south-east of 'area 1' and ~1.1km north of 'area 2'). This species was recently searched for by [REDACTED] (June 2022) and by Main Roads (October 2023) at the recorded location and not found. The 2008 record information suggests the species to be 'extinct' at this location with no live specimens found ([REDACTED]). , The approved conservation advice for the species supports the extinct conclusion of [REDACTED], noting *Philotheca wonganensis* is known from four extant populations and five locations in the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu (Avon Wheatbelt bioregion, over two hundred kilometres south of the [REDACTED]) and one presumed extinct population in the Shire of Chapman Valley (Department of the Environment, 2014). None of the other Threatened flora species recorded within a 20km radius of the proposed clearing areas are considered likely to occur, based on a lack of preferred habitat and the small size and degraded condition of the proposed clearing areas. Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.
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.	No Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) are known to occur within a 20km radius of the proposed clearing areas (GIS Database). No TEC's have been identified in the proposed clearing areas (GIS Datasets; [REDACTED]). The Nc/Ar - *Acacia rostellifera* shrubland mapped as occurring in the proposed clearing areas by [REDACTED] was the most widespread of the GRFVS plant communities, occupying over 2,200 hectares (over 36% of the GRFVS survey area).

	Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.
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.	The vegetation type proposed for clearing is described as Vegetation type 10 Near Coastal: *Acacia rostellifera* shrubland in the Geraldton Regional Flora and Vegetation Survey (GRFVS). This falls over two different Beard vegetation associations, which is a higher level mapping: • Beard vegetation association 35 has approximately 16.31% of its pre-European extent remaining in the State. • Beard vegetation association 413 has approximately 50.89% of its pre-European extent remaining in the State. The vegetation types described in Department of Planning (DOP) (2010) are more detailed than the higher level Beard vegetation types and more accurately captures different vegetation communities within the Geraldton region. In the GRFVS (DOP 2010), Vegetation Type 10 'ncAr' occupies 2,258.86 ha or 36.63% of the native vegetation of the GRFVS area and is the most widespread of the GRFVS plant communities. The proposed clearing area represents 0.005% of the extent of the 'ncAr' vegetation type mapped by DOP (2010). Although Beard Vegetation association 35 has less than the target 30% of its pre-European extent remaining, the highly degraded and weed infested condition of the vegetation, and given it is documented as the most widespread of all the plant communities documented in the GRFVS, it is unlikely the proposed clearing areas would not be considered significant as a remnant in an area that has been extensively cleared. Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.
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.	There are no mapped watercourses or wetlands in the proposed clearing areas (GIS Database). The nearest watercourses are located: • 290m north of Clearing Area 1 • 190m east of Clearing Area 3 • 140m east of Clearing Area 4. The Nc/Ar - *Acacia rostellifera* shrubland mapped as occurring in the proposed clearing areas by [REDACTED] is not riparian. The proposed clearing areas are not associated with a watercourse or wetland. Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.

Principle (g) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation.	The proposed clearing of small discreet areas of Degraded to Completely Degraded vegetation no greater than 0.030ha each, adjacent to the NWCH and cleared agricultural land, is not anticipated to cause appreciable land degradation. Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.
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.	The proposed clearing areas are not located within, or immediately adjacent to, any conservation areas (GIS Database). The nearest conservation reserve is located approximately2km east. Aerial imagery analysis indicates none of the proposed clearing areas form part of a direct ecological linkage to a nearby conservation area. Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.
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.	There are no mapped watercourses or wetlands in the proposed clearing areas (GIS Database). The nearest watercourses are located: • 290m north of Clearing Area 1 • 190m east of Clearing Area 3 • 140m east of Clearing Area 4. The proposed clearing areas are not within a proclaimed Surface Water Area under the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914* (GIS Database). Given the minor scale of clearing and the absence of surface water features in the proposed clearing areas or immediate vicinity, it is unlikely that clearing will cause a deterioration in surface water quality. The proposed clearing areas are located within the proclaimed Gascoyne Groundwater Area under the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914* (GIS Database). However, the clearing of 0.13 ha of Degraded to Completely Degraded vegetation across four small separate areas is considered unlikely to cause deterioration in the quality of underground water. Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.
Principle (j) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if clearing the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.	There are no mapped watercourses or wetlands in the proposed clearing areas (GIS Database). The nearest watercourses are located: • 290m north of Clearing Area 1 • 190m east of Clearing Area 3 • 140m east of Clearing Area 4. The proposed clearing of four discreet areas, each up to a maximum of 0.03ha in size, are unlikely to cause or exacerbate the incidence or intensity of flooding.

	Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.
Methodology Used and References:	• GIS Data layers – various. • References: Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment [DAWE] 2022. *Referral guideline for 3 WA threatened black cockatoo species: Carnaby's Cockatoo, Baudin's Cockatoo and the Forest Red-tailed Black cockatoo*. Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, Canberra, February. Department of Planning [DOP] 2010. *Geraldton Regional Flora and Vegetation Survey*. Prepared by Department of Planning and supported by Ecoscape (Australia) Pty Ltd. Western Australian Planning Commission, Perth, March 2010. Department of the Environment (2014). *Approved Conservation Advice for Philotheca wonganensis (Wongan Philotheca*). Canberra: Department of the Environment. Available from: http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/species/pubs/64945-conservation-advice.pdf. In effect under the EPBC Act from 29-Apr-2014. *[REDACTED]* Environment [*[REDACTED]*] 2010a. *[REDACTED] Port and Rail – [REDACTED] Terrestrial Port Development – Flora and Vegetation Assessment*. West Perth. May 2010. *[REDACTED]* Environment [*[REDACTED]*] 2010b. *[REDACTED] Port and Rail – [REDACTED] Terrestrial Port Development – Terrestrial Vertebrate Fauna Assessment*. West Perth. May 2010. Groom C. 2011. *Plants used by Carnaby's Black Cockatoo*. Plants for Carnaby's search tool, DEC, Kensington. [REDACTED] 2022. [REDACTED] *Project – North West Coastal Highway, [REDACTED] Access Road and Associated Works, Flora and Vegetation Survey*, prepared for [REDACTED], August 2022.

9. REHABILITATION, REVEGETATION AND OFFSETS	
Offset Proposal:	No offset proposal is required as the proposed clearing will not result in significant residual impacts to native vegetation within the region.
Revegetation and Rehabilitation:	No temporary clearing will be undertaken as part of the Proposal activities, therefore no revegetation and rehabilitation will be undertaken pursuant to CPS 818.

10. COMPLIANCE WITH CPS818		
The clearing associated with the proposal is not at variance with the Clearing Principles. Additional management actions under CPS 818 are detailed below.		
Impact of Clearing	**Yes/No or NA**	**Further Action Required**

1. Proposal is within a Region that: • has rainfall greater than 400mm; and, • is South of the 26th parallel; and, • works are necessary in 'Other than dry conditions'; and, • works have potential for **uninfested** areas to be impacted.	**No.**	Standard Vehicle and Plant Management Actions from Annexure 204B (TABLE 204B.9.1), Hygiene Checklists *(D17#859669) and* Vehicle, Plant and Machinery Hygiene Vehicle Register Template *(D23#179551)* will be applied.
2. Do the proposed works require clearing within or adjacent to DBCA managed lands in non-dry conditions?	**No**	No further action required.
3. Main Roads has been notified by DWER or an environmental specialist that the area to be cleared is susceptible to a pathogen other than dieback.	**No**	No further action required.
4. Weeds are likely to spread to and result in environmental harm to adjacent areas of native vegetation that are in good or better condition.	**No** Works are within an existing road corridor adjacent to cleared agricultural land. No conservation significant vegetation is adjacent to the project area. Surrounding adjacent vegetation Condition is either 'Degraded to Completely Degraded' or 'Completely Degraded' ([REDACTED], 2022); Figures 4A, 4B, 4C. It is unlikely the clearing associated with the 0.13ha will exacerbate the spread of weeds and/or further the deterioration of the adjacent land. Works will all be undertaken using AS2124 Contract for Major Works and will be required to comply with Principal Environmental Management Requirements (PEMRs) which include weed and hygiene management measures.	No further action required.

Completed By:		
Name	[REDACTED]	
Signature	[redacted]	
Job Title	[REDACTED]	
	Date	19/02/2023

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

DECISION ON CLEARING ASSESSMENT	
Name	[REDACTED]
Signature	[redacted]
Job Title	[REDACTED]
Date	23/02/2024

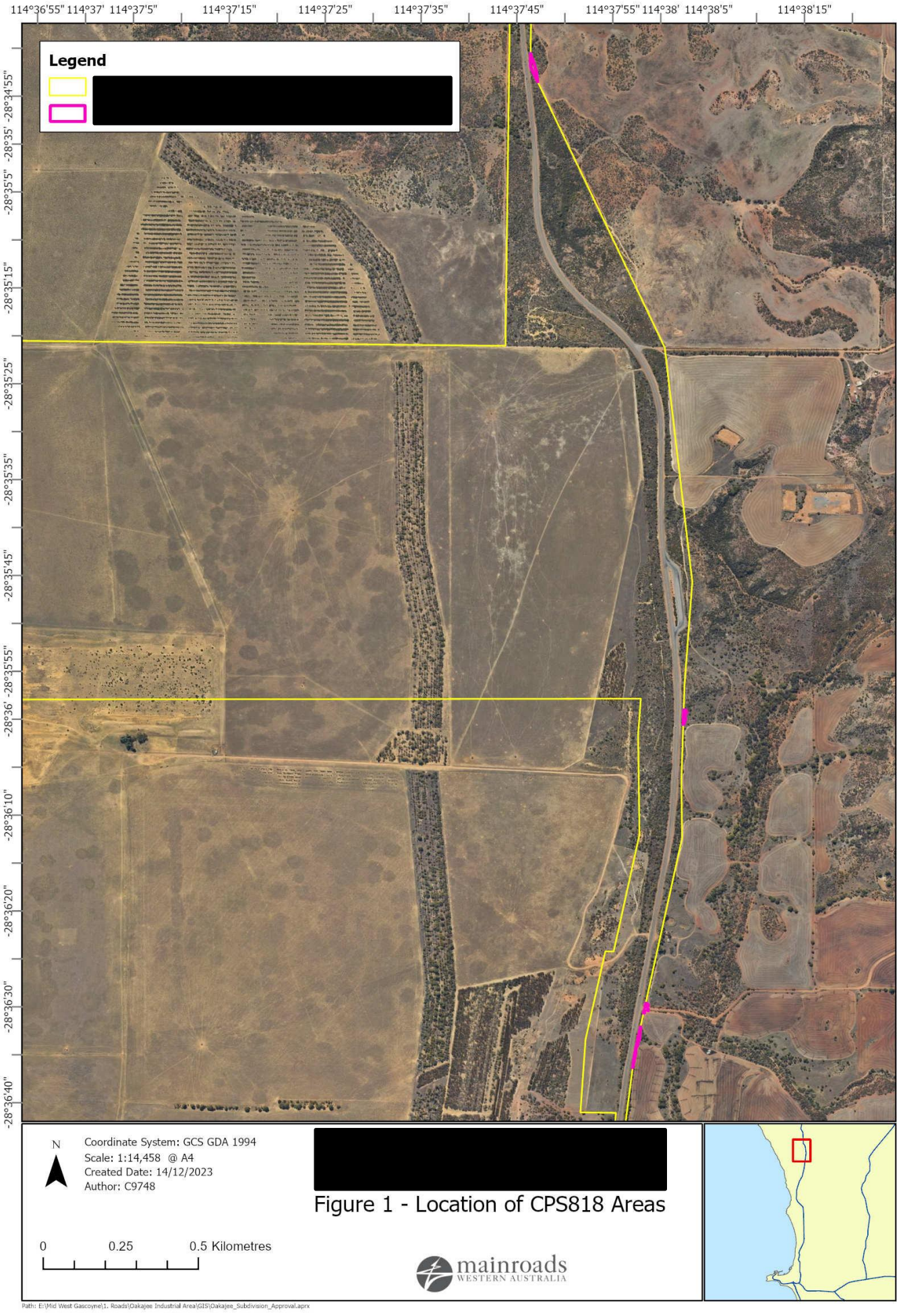

Figure 1 - Location of CPS818 Areas

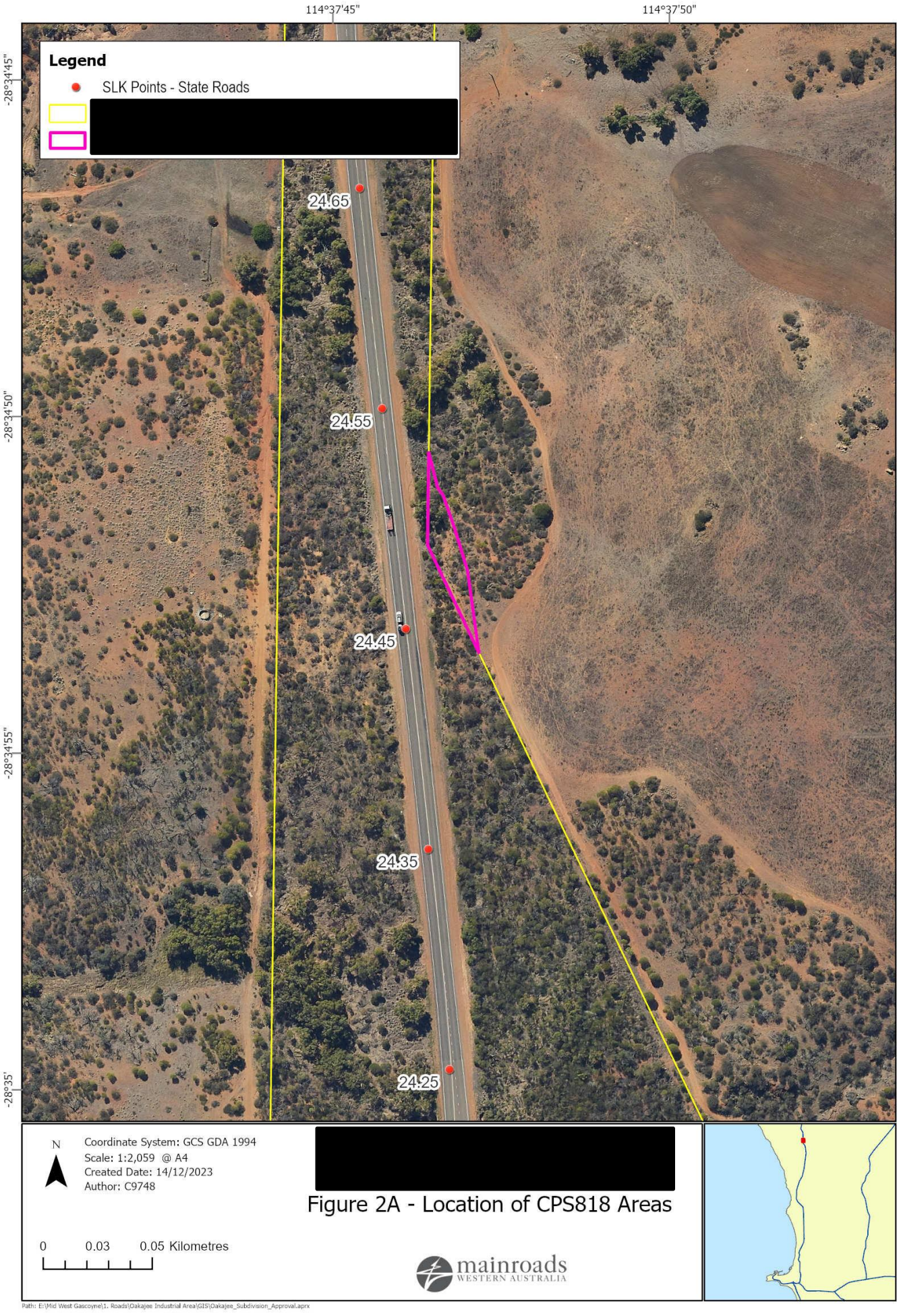

Figure 2A - Location of CPS818 Areas

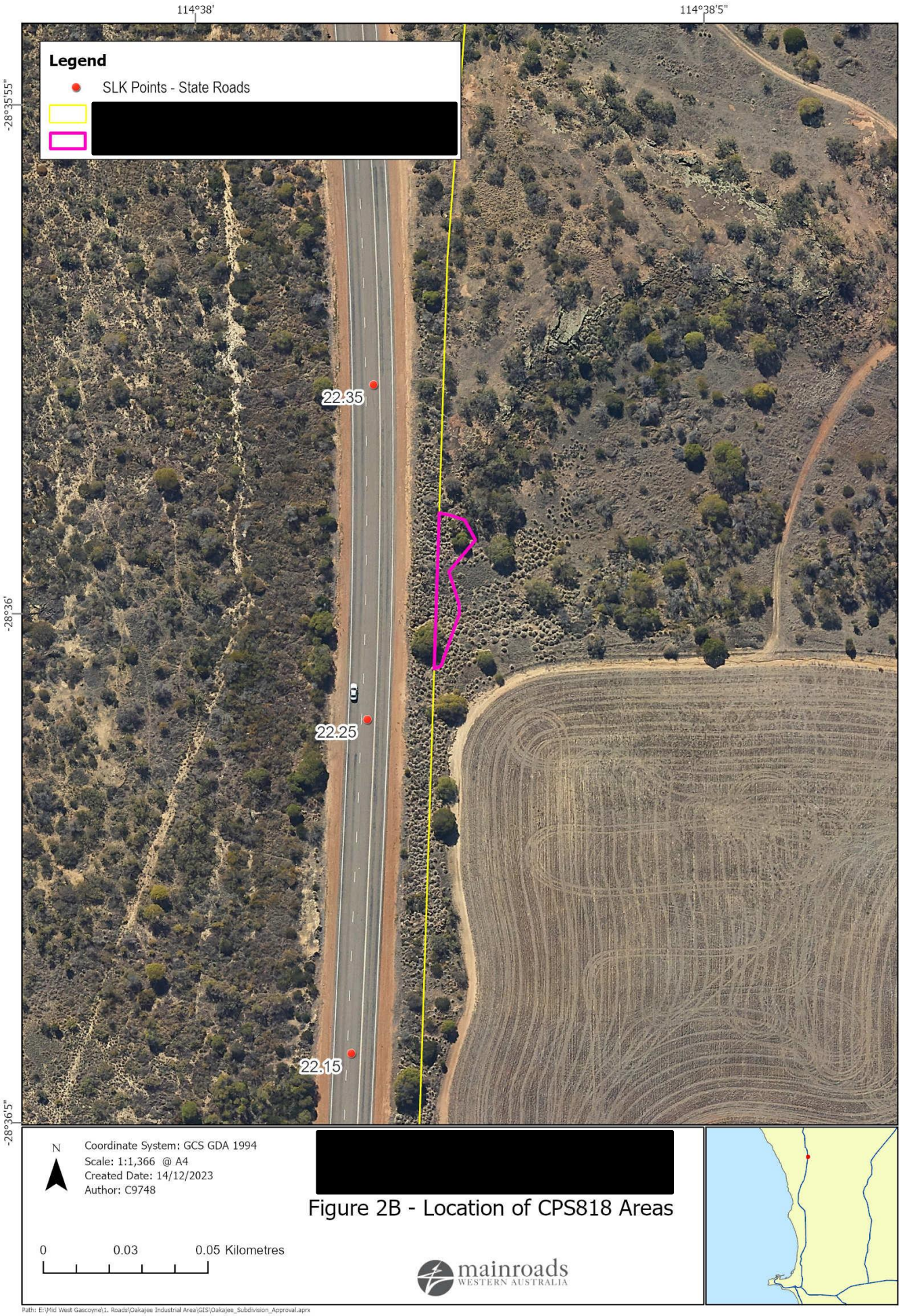

Figure 2B - Location of CPS818 Areas

Figure 2C - Location of CPS818 Areas

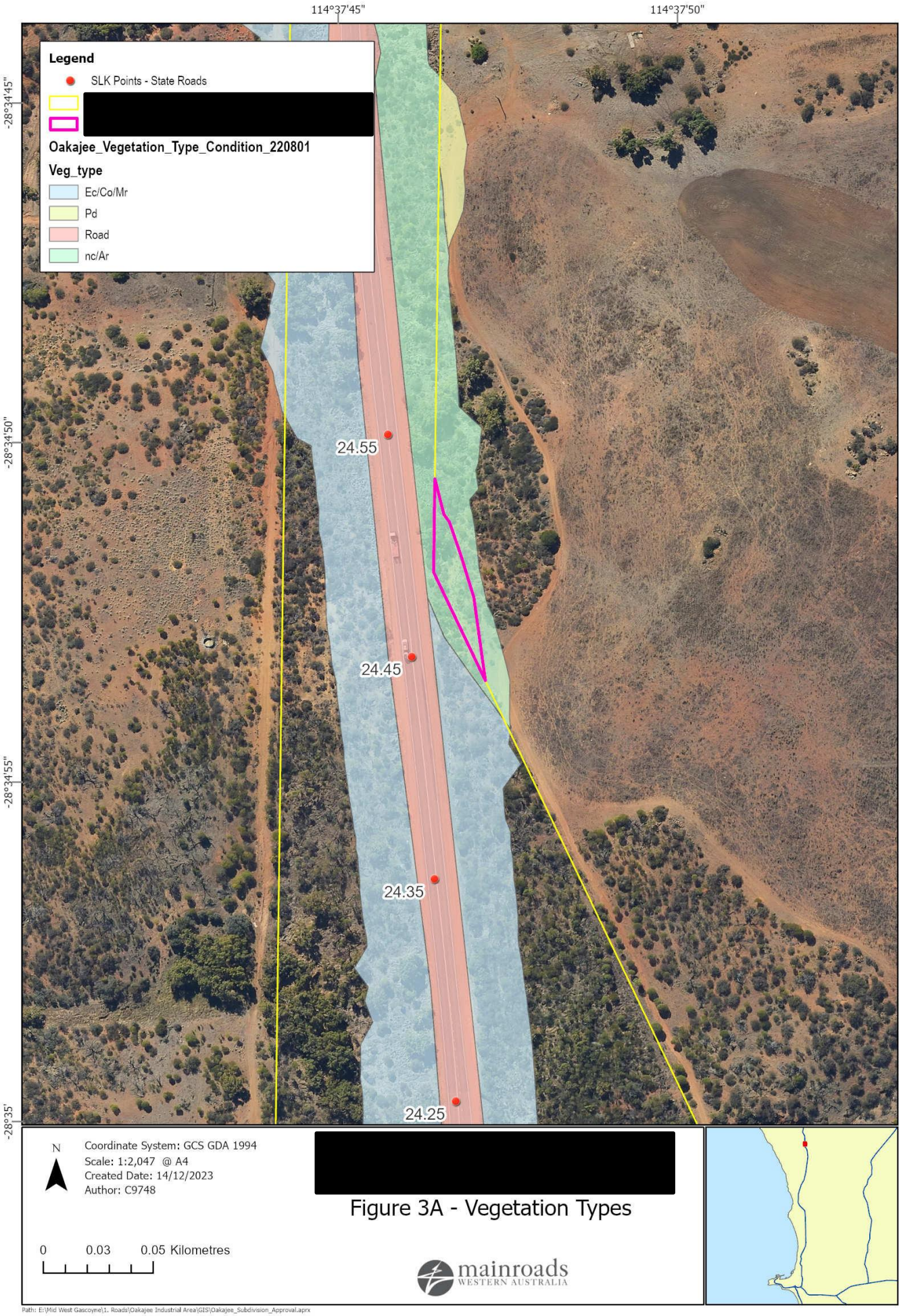

Figure 3A - Vegetation Types

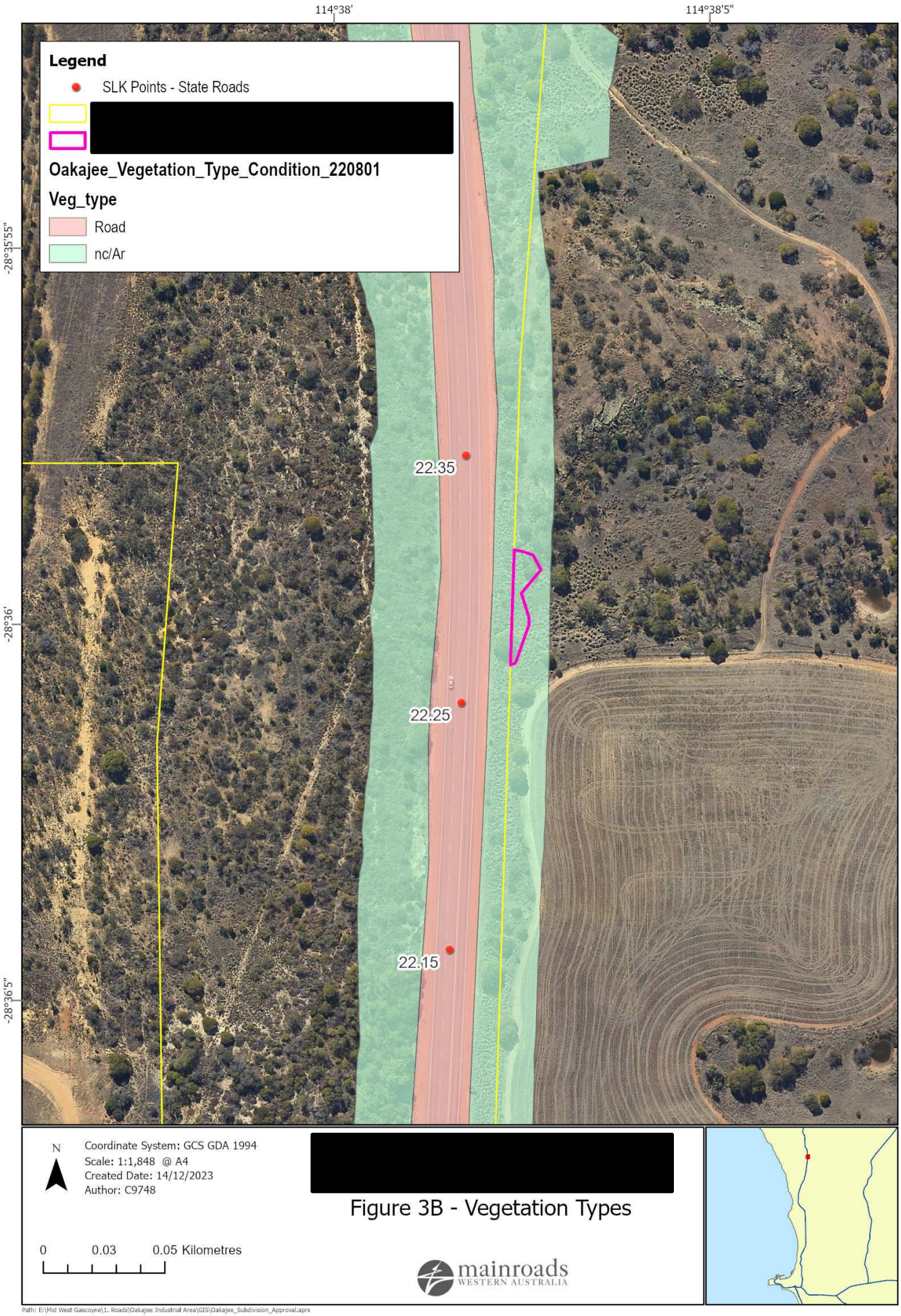

Figure 3B - Vegetation Types

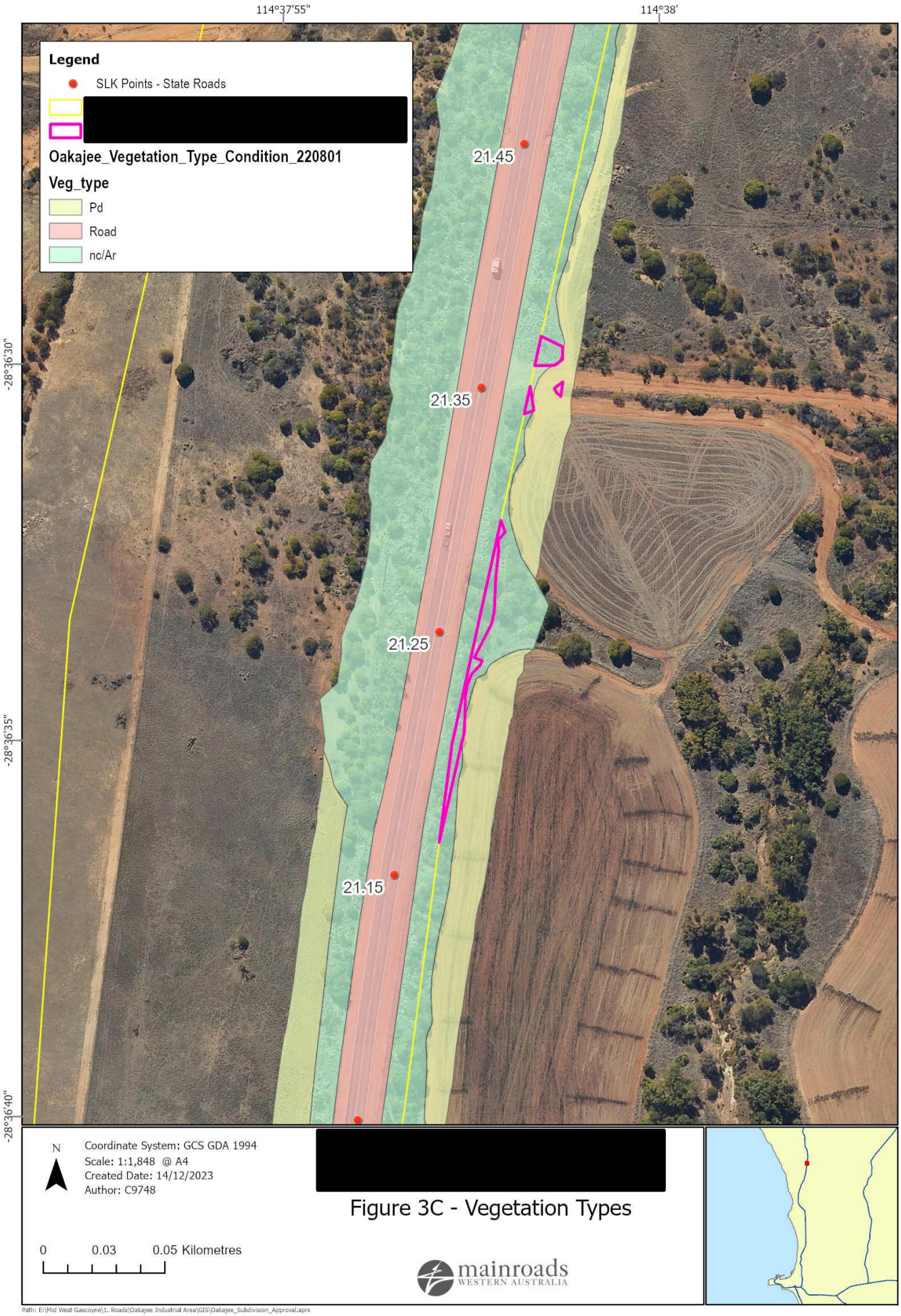

Figure 3C - Vegetation Types

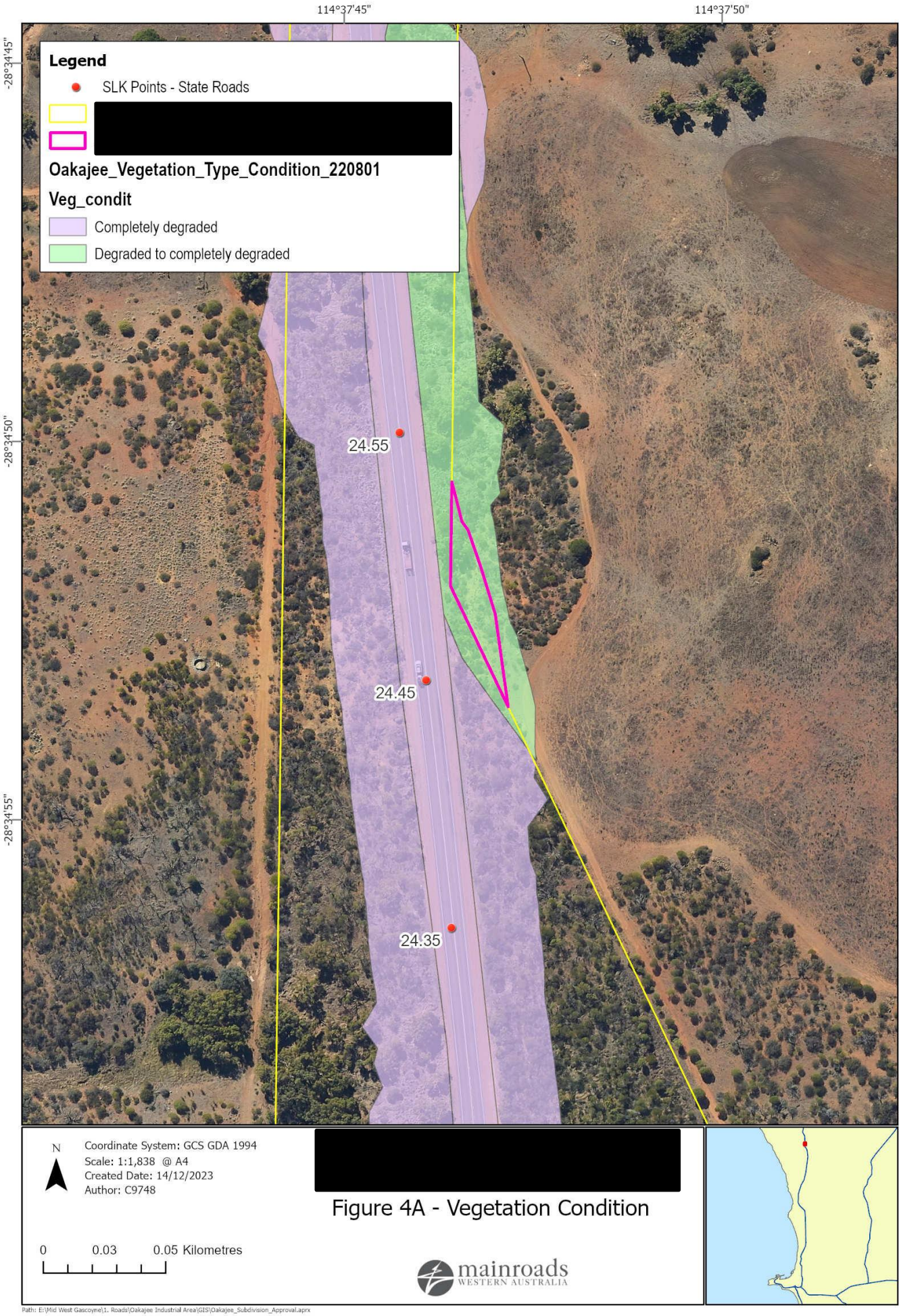

Figure 4A - Vegetation Condition

Figure 4B - Vegetation Condition

Figure 4C - Vegetation Condition