Clearing Desktop Report – Short Form

1. PROPOSAL DETAILS

Proposal Name:	Toodyay Rd SLK 32.68 Telstra Network Relocation		
Region/Directorate:	Wheatbelt / Regional Management & Operations		
Local Government Authority:	Shire of Toodyay Rd		
Road/Bridge Name and No:	Toodyay Rd (M026)		
Proposal Location (SLK):	SLK 32.68		
TRIM Link to Spatial Data:	D23#35961		
EOS No:	2929		
Expected Proposal Start Date:	January 2023		
Project No:	30001966	**Task Code:**	20106
LISC TRIM No:	D23#35978	**HRA TRIM No:**	TBC

2. PURPOSE OF CLEARING

Telstra is planning to relocate a section of the Telstra network along Toodyay Rd. This will involve installing a new section of underground cable and a new pit at the connection point with the existing network. Main Roads will be clearing a minor area of vegetation in the road reserve to provide access for trenching and cabling equipment.

3. ALTERNATIVES TO CLEARING

The new section of the Telstra network is required to be installed at this location so that it connects to the existing network. Therefore, alternative locations to avoid clearing are not feasible. However, clearing has been minimised, as discussed below.

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

Main Roads has implemented the following to avoid, minimise and mitigate the proposed clearing:

- The clearing area is the minimum area required to allow access for trenching equipment and the cable truck.
- Clearing will avoid large trees.
- The clearing will be conducted in accordance with a Principal Environmental Management Requirements (PEMR) document. The PEMR will include management requirements to avoid or minimise impacts on surrounding vegetation from weeds, dieback, dust and soil erosion.
- Vegetation and topsoil will be respread following completion of the works.

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)

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):	0.004 ha	**No. Trees Cleared:**	
Species Name:	Various		
Easting and Northing:	448007.40mE, 6503098.67mN		

7. EXISTING ENVIRONMENT AND SITE INFORMATION

Site Vegetation Description/Association:	AECOM (2016) mapped one vegetation type in the clearing area: • Native Trees/Trees Mix - native trees in paddocks or on roadsides where understory has been cleared/grazed. Main Roads IRIS imagery shows the clearing area also comprises *Allocasuarina* over mixed shrubs.
Site Vegetation Condition:	Mapped as 'Degraded' by AECOM (2016). Main Roads IRIS imagery shows this patch of vegetation is in slightly better condition.
Pre-European Extent Remaining (%):	Pre-European vegetation association 4: Medium woodland; marri & wandoo.

State	27%
IBRA Region (Jarrah Forest)	18%
IBRA Subregion (Northern Jarrah Forest)	32%
Local Government Area (Shire of Toodyay)	54%

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.	A total of 0.004 ha of native vegetation will be cleared for purpose of service relocations. One vegetation type has been mapped in the clearing area, described as trees mix in degraded condition. Ground level imagery shows the clearing area also comprises *Allocasuarina* sp. over mixed shrubs. The desktop assessment did not identify any known Threatened Ecological Communities (TEC) or Priority Ecological Communities (PEC) within or near the clearing area. The Eucalypt Woodlands of the Western Australian Wheatbelt PEC and EPBC-Act listed TEC occurs within the local 20 km study area. According to a Wheatbelt Woodlands TEC assessment that covers Toodyay Rd, the vegetation is not representative of Wheatbelt Woodlands TEC or PEC as the vegetation is situated outside the distribution of this community (Woodman, 2018). According to DBCA and WA Herbarium flora databases, no Threatened or Priority flora are known to occur in the clearing area. A targeted flora survey along Toodyay Rd that covers the clearing area did not record any significant flora species occurring in the clearing area (AECOM, 2016). Given the minimal extent of clearing proposed, the vegetation is not likely to contain any Threatened or Priority flora. According to the DBCA fauna database, no significant fauna species are known to occur in the clearing area. A level 1 fauna survey conducted along Toodyay Rd that covers the clearing area did not record any significant fauna in the clearing area at the time of the survey (AECOM, 2016). The clearing area is unlikely to contain a relatively higher level of fauna diversity than surrounding vegetation. The clearing area is located in a dieback risk area. The spread of dieback has the potential to impact biodiversity by reducing species diversity and habitat for fauna. According to a dieback survey undertaken along this section of Toodyay Rd, the vegetation is uninterpretable and unprotectable due to the degraded condition (Glevan, 2022). The risk of introducing or spreading dieback will be managed by Main Roads standard vehicle hygiene practices. 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 indigenous to Western Australia.	One fauna habitat type has been mapped in the clearing area, described as Isolated Eucalypts (AECOM, 2016). The desktop assessment identified 22 significant fauna species known to occur in the 20 km study area, comprising eight

	Threatened species, four Specially Protected species, one extinct species and nine Priority species. None of these records occur in the clearing area. The clearing area may provide suitable habitat for some of these species, however noting the extent of the proposed clearing, the clearing area is not likely to comprise habitat for fauna species of conservation significance. Evidence of black cockatoo foraging has been recorded approximately 200m from the clearing area, and the Isolated Eucalypts habitat type is potentially suitable for Threatened black cockatoo species (AECOM, 2016). According to a black cockatoo habitat assessment for Toodyay Rd, the clearing area contains poor quality foraging habitat and no breeding or roosting habitat. Accordingly, the clearing area does not contain significant habitat for Threatened black cockatoo species. Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this principle.
Principle (c) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, rare flora.	The desktop assessment identified five Threatened flora species known to occur in the local area. None of these records occur in the clearing area. No Threatened flora species were recorded in the clearing area or in any nearby roadside vegetation along Toodyay Rd during the flora survey (AECOM, 2016). Given the minimal extent of clearing proposed, the vegetation is unlikely to contain Threatened flora species. 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.	As discussed under principle (a), the vegetation within the clearing area is not representative of a TEC. 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 mapped vegetation association retains approximately 27% of its pre-European extent in the state and 18% of its pre-European extent in the Jarrah Forest bioregion, which is less than the national target of 30% retention of pre-European extent for biodiversity conservation. However, the vegetation association retains over 30% in the Northern Jarrah Forest subregion and in the Shire of Toodyay (32% and 54% respectively). The local area retains approximately 35% of native vegetation extent (44, 625 ha). Noting the minimal extent of clearing, and the vegetation does not include significant habitat for flora, fauna or ecological communities, or form part of a significant ecological linkage, the vegetation is not considered a significant remnant in an extensively cleared landscape. Therefore, the proposed clearing is not 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 watercourses or wetlands mapped within the clearing area. Therefore, 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.	According to DPIRD land degradation risk mapping, the clearing area is highly susceptible to wind erosion. However, noting the minimal area of clearing and cleared vegetation and topsoil will be respread following completion of the works, the clearing is unlikely to cause appreciable land degradation. 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 clearing is located within the Toodyay Rd road reserve. The nearest conservation area approximately 1.2 km north of the clearing area. Noting the distance between the clearing area and this reserve, the proposed clearing is unlikely to affect the environmental values of any nearby conservation areas. The proposed clearing is not likely to be 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 watercourses or wetlands mapped in the clearing area. The clearing does not occur in a Public Drinking Water Source Area (PDWSA). The minimal area of clearing is unlikely to affect surface or ground water quality. The proposed clearing is not likely to be 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 watercourses or wetland mapped in the clearing area. The minimal extent of clearing is unlikely to cause, or exacerbate, the intensity of flooding.

Methodology Used and References:	AECOM (2016) Toodyay Road Widening Metro and Wheatbelt Regions Biological Surveys. Unpublished report prepared for Main Roads, by AECOM. Glevan (2022) Toodyay Road Upgrade Section 5 Phytophthora Dieback Survey Report. Unpublished report prepared for Main Roads, by Glevan Consulting. Woodman (2018) Toodyay Road Widening and Upgrade Works Wheatbelt Woodland Threatened Ecological Community Survey. Unpublished report prepared for Main Roads, by Woodman Environmental. GIS Database: - DBCA Legislated Lands and Waters - DBCA Threatened and Priority Fauna - DBCA Threatened and Priority Flora - Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia - DPIRD Risk datasets - Hydrology South - Native Vegetation Extent - Pre-European Vegetation - RAMSAR Wetlands - Threatened and Priority Ecological Communities

Completed By:	
Name	[REDACTED]
Signature	[REDACTED]
Job Title	A/Senior Environment Officer
Date	16/01/2023

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

DECISION ON CLEARING ASSESSMENT		
Clearing Assessment	**ENDORSED ☒**	**REFUSED ☐**
Comments	I note the following: • The proposed clearing comprises 0.004ha of vegetation in a degraded condition • No significant flora, fauna or communities were recorded in the biological survey	
Name	[REDACTED]	
Signature	[REDACTED]	
Job Title	Environment Contractor	
Date	17/01/2023	

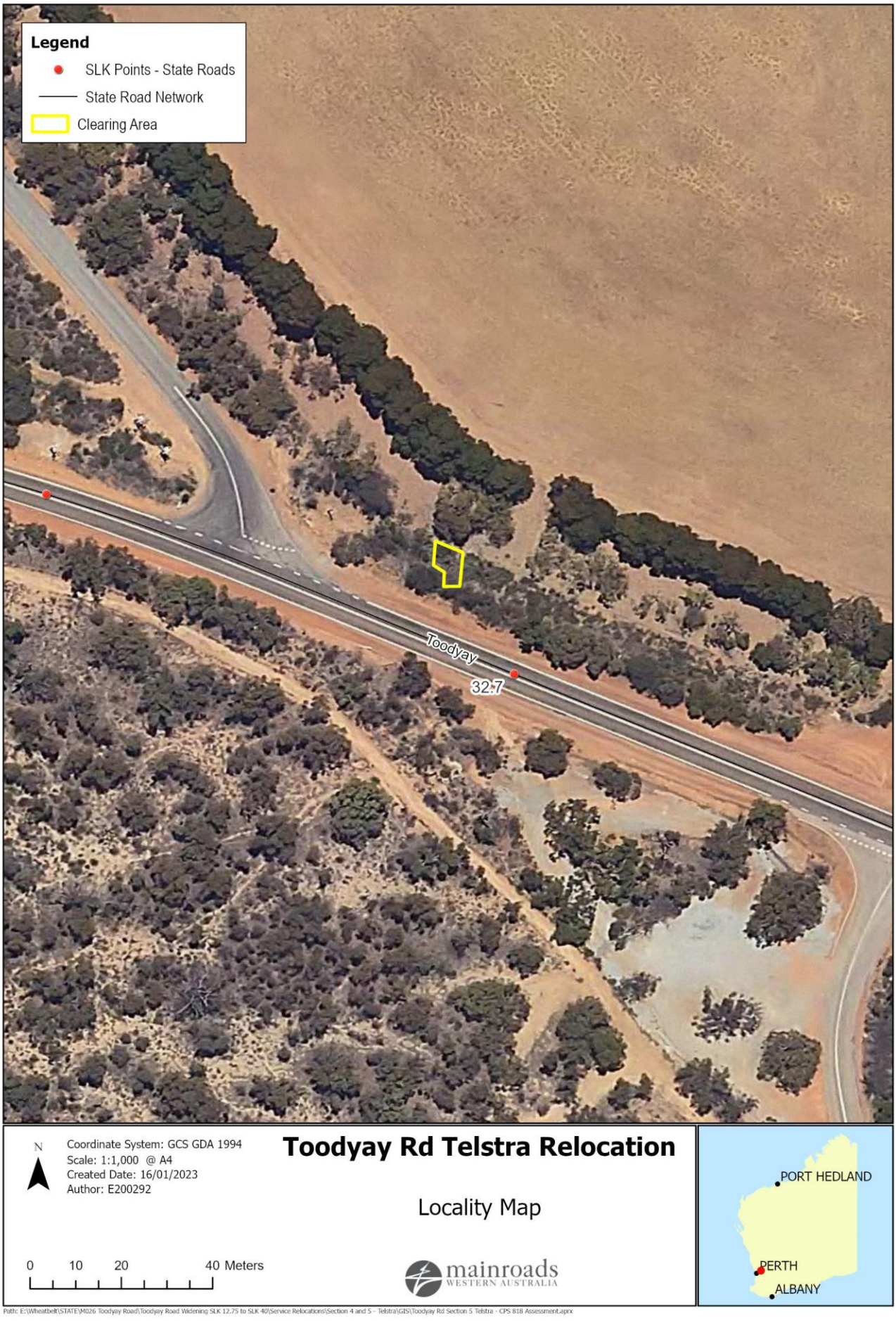

Figure 1 – Clearing Area Location

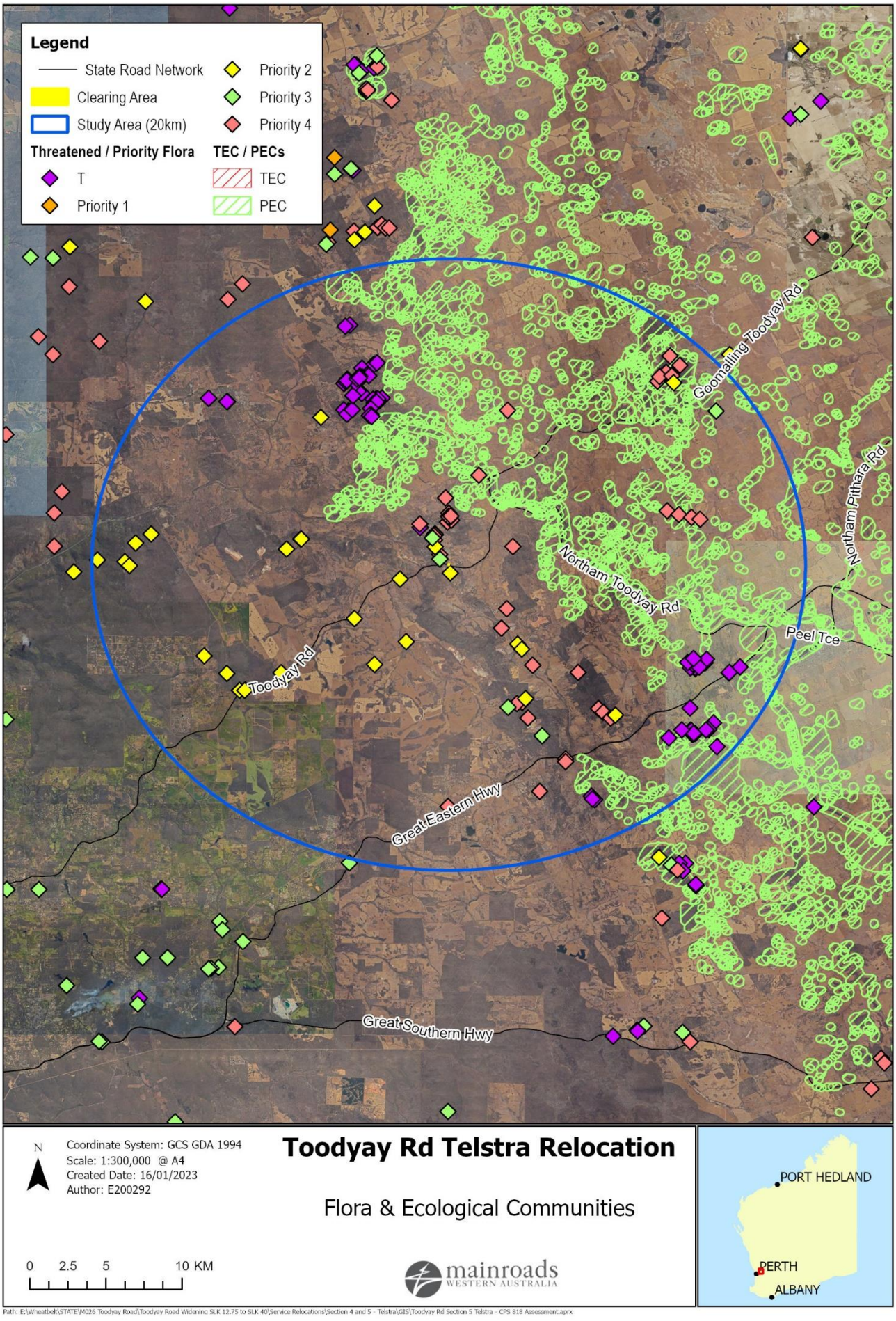

Figure 2 – Study Area Flora and Ecological Communities

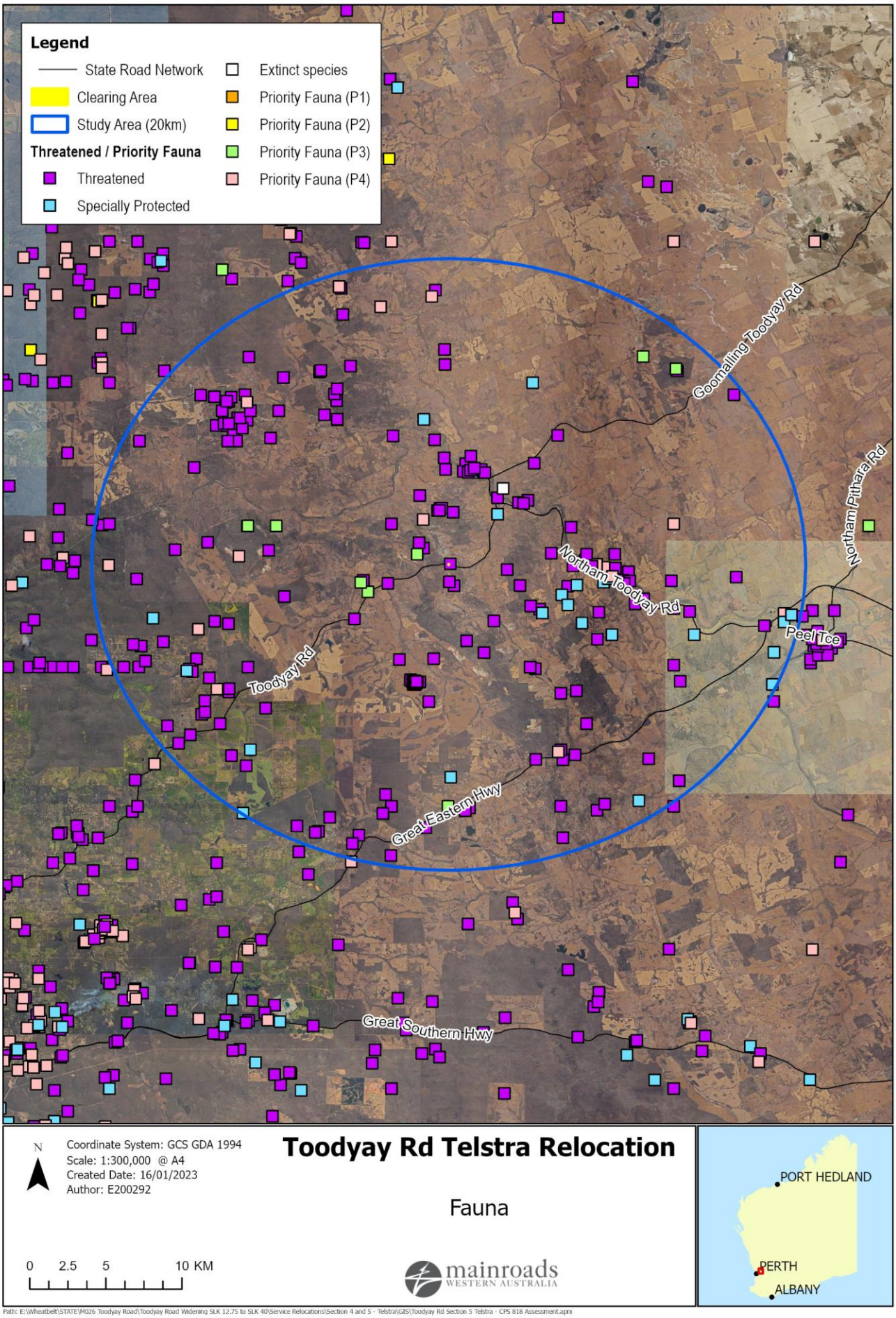

Figure 3 – Study Area Fauna