

Clearing Desktop Report – Short Form



1. PROPOSAL DETAILS

Proposal Name:	Bridge 4196 – Mortlock River (Tyndall Rd) Substructure Repairs – laydown area clearing		
Region/Directorate:	Wheatbelt		
Local Government Authority:	Shire of Goomalling		
Road/Bridge Name and No:	Tyndall Rd / 4080012 / Bridge 4196		
Proposal Location (SLK):	SLK 14.32		
TRIM Link to Spatial Data:	D22#461572		
EOS No:	2722		
Expected Proposal Start Date:	September 2022		
Project No:	21116738	Task Code:	11.02
LISC TRIM No:	D22#400206	HRA TRIM No:	D22#400195

2. PURPOSE OF CLEARING

The creation of a laydown area for Bridge 4196, to enable repair and maintenance works to ensure ongoing safe use of the bridge.

The total clearing area is estimated to be 0.0023 ha which encompasses the removal of one unidentified dead medium sized tree entering "Laydown Option 1" and three *Acacia* saplings, located within the "Laydown Option 2" footprint.

3. ALTERNATIVES TO CLEARING

The wider Bridge 4196 Proposal requires a laydown area for machinery and equipment. Two potential laydown areas are proposed. The first option is located on cleared farmland to the north of the access track (subject to Landowner approval). Access to this laydown area is through the closed road reserve. This option may require the trimming/clearing of one dead tree.

Laydown Option 2 is located on the road reserve, on either side of the access track adjacent to the Tyndall Road. This option is likely to require the clearing of three *Acacia* saplings.

The Proposal area being assessed under this Report is for the clearing of native vegetation required to establish the laydown areas.

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

Each laydown option requires a small amount of clearing (limited to individual trees). Each laydown area was chosen to minimise the amount of required clearing. Laydown Option 1 requires the removal of one dead tree partially blocking access to the paddock via an existing gate. Laydown Option 2 requires the removal of the three *Acacia* saplings located in a much wider cleared area, to create the laydown area.

The *Acacia* saplings are likely to be removed by cutting them at the base using hand tools, allowing them to resprout once equipment has been removed from the laydown area

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 (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):	0.0023 ha	No. Trees Cleared:	4 trees 1 mature – dead, 3 saplings
Species Name:	Mature – dead (unknown), Saplings (<i>Acacia microbotrya</i>)		
Easting and Northing:	50J 473251, 6521473		

7. EXISTING ENVIRONMENT AND SITE INFORMATION

Site Vegetation Description/Association:	Vegetation Association 1049 described as Medium woodland; wandoo, York gum, salmon gum, morrel & gimlet.
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<p>Site Vegetation Condition:</p>	<p>Degraded – Completely Degraded</p>
<p>Pre-European Extent Remaining (%):</p>	<p>56 618 ha (6.79 %) remaining at a statewide level with 3 584 ha (5.36%) remaining at a LGA level</p>
<p>8. ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL AGAINST CLEARING PRINCIPLES</p>	
<p>Is vegetation to be cleared at variance with:</p>	<p>Justification or Evidence:</p>
<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, consisting of one suspect dead mature tree (unknown species) and three juvenile saplings (<i>Acacia microbotrya</i>).</p> <p>The proposal area is located within the buffer of a mapped the Eucalypt Woodlands of the Western Australian Wheatbelt a Priority or Threatened Ecological Community (TEC), however due to the degraded nature of the surrounding vegetation it is not considered to be TEC (see Principle E).</p> <p>MRWA flora and herbarium GIS searches identified no known rare, threatened or priority flora species within 5km of the proposal area.</p> <p>The closest DBCA Managed Lands (Cartamulligan Well Nature Reserve) is located 7.0 km south of the Proposal area. The Proposal area is not located within an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA).</p> <p>According to the Main Roads GIS threatened fauna layer, two conservation significant fauna have been recorded in the Study area, the closest was <i>Oxyura australis</i> (Blue-billed duck), 5.5 km northwest of the Proposal area. No conservation significant fauna was observed during the Main Roads site inspection of the bridge, and the four individual trees do not represent critical fauna habitat.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>The Proposal area is limited to one dead mature tree (unknown species), and three juvenile saplings (<i>Acacia microbotrya</i>) adjacent to Tyndall road, and an area adjacent to an access track into a farmer’s paddock, both in a Degraded to Completely Degraded condition. The biodiversity values of the area will not be significantly impacted, noting the proximity and abundance of similar vegetation within the area.</p> <p>Given the above, this proposal is not at variance to this Clearing 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 the Main Roads GIS threatened fauna layer (Figure 3), two conservation significant fauna have been recorded in the Study area, the closest was <i>Oxyura australis</i> (Blue-billed duck), 5.5 km northwest of the Proposal area. A dead <i>Dasyurus geoffroii</i> (Chuditch) was recorded 10 km from the Proposal area in 1990.</p> <p>The Blue-billed duck prefers deep water in large permanent wetlands and swamps with dense aquatic vegetation and the Chuditch preferred habitat is Jarrah forests and woodlands, mallee shrublands and heathlands. Both species are deemed unlikely to occur within the proposal area due to the heavily degraded nature of the proposal area and the absence of suitable vegetation complexes and habitat.</p> <p>The removal of 4 trees is not deemed significant habitat for fauna indigenous to Western Australia. Accordingly, the proposed clearing is not variance to this Principle.</p>

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<p>Principle (c) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, rare flora.</p>	<p>MRWA flora and herbarium GIS layers database searches identified no known threatened or priority flora species within 5km of the proposal area. In addition, the Main Roads site inspection did not record any threatened or priority flora species in the Proposal area.</p> <p>Based on the degraded condition of the vegetation proposed to be cleared, the absence of priority flora within 5km of the proposal area, and the project only requiring the removal of 4 individual trees, impacts to rare flora are highly unlikely.</p> <p>Accordingly, 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 the Main Roads GIS TEC/PEC layer, the Proposal area is located within the buffer of a mapped TEC/PEC, namely Eucalypt Woodlands of the Western Australian Wheatbelt (P3).</p> <p>Main Roads Factsheet (19#584174) titled <i>Technical Guidance on the Threatened Ecological Community Eucalypt Woodlands of the Western Australian Wheatbelt</i> advises that condition thresholds apply in determining whether the vegetation would meet minimum condition thresholds. As the vegetation in the Proposal area is considered to be in a Degraded to Completely Degraded condition (Category D), it would not meet the minimum condition threshold requirements. Accordingly, the vegetation in the Proposal area is not considered to be TEC.</p> <p>Furthermore, the removal of the three Acacia saplings and one dead medium sized tree is unlikely interfere or impede on the overall structure, biodiversity or functionality of the surrounding vegetation.</p> <p>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>The Proposal area is 0.0023 ha and is mapped as containing pre-European vegetation association 1049 (Table 2), described as a medium woodland; comprised of wandoo (<i>Eucalyptus wandoo</i>), York gum (<i>Eucalyptus loxophleba</i>), salmon gum (<i>E. salmonophloia</i>), morrel (<i>E. longicornis</i>) and gimlet (<i>E. salubris</i>) (Government of Western Australia, 2019). There is less than 10% of remnant vegetation remaining at a State level, and approximately 11% of the remnant vegetation remaining in the Shire of Goomalling.</p> <p>The Proposal area is in Degraded to Completely Degraded condition, comprised primarily of invasive weeds and grasses, three Acacia shrub saplings (suspect <i>A. microbotrya</i>) and one dead medium sized tree.</p> <p>The vegetation in the Proposal area does not provide any linkages on a local level, nor providing any major habitat with no logs, understory vegetation or tree hollows. Given the small-scale nature of clearing (removal of 4 isolated trees) the proposed clearing is not considered to have a significant impact on remnant vegetation</p> <p>The proposed clearing is unlikely to be 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>According to Main Roads GIS watercourse layer, there is a watercourse (Mortlock River) located approximately 75 m from the Proposal area however the 4 trees are not considered riparian vegetation. Furthermore, the removal of 4 isolated trees is unlikely to disturb or interrupt any natural drainage or surface run-off patterns and is unlikely to impact any bed or banks of a watercourse.</p> <p>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</p>	<p>DPIRD mapping indicates that the area has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-10% very high to extreme water erosion hazard • 10-30% high to extreme wind erosion hazard

<p>to cause appreciable land degradation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10-30% very poor to poor site drainage potential • 10-30% moderate salinity hazard <p>According to the Atlas of Australian Soils, the Proposal area lies within the Avon Flats subsystem (256Af) (Northcote et al. 1960-1968). The broad soil landscape unit is mapped as, Oc30, and described as Alluvial flats, in the northern Zone of Rejuvenated Drainage, with brown loamy earth, grey non-cracking clay and brown deep sand in a York gum-salmon gum-flooded gum-sheoak woodland.</p> <p>The proposed clearing of 0.0023 ha consisting of three <i>Acacia</i> saplings, and one dead medium sized tree. As the Proposal area will be used (in part) as a laydown area or access track, no excavation is likely to occur within the Proposal area and the removal of this vegetation is unlikely to cause appreciable land degradation.</p> <p>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>The Proposal area is not located in a conservation area, environmentally sensitive area or mapped Ramsar or Nationally important wetlands. The nearest conservation area is the Cartamulligan Well Nature Reserve, located 6.5 km south of the Proposal area.</p> <p>Considering the distance between the Proposal area and the nearest conservation reserve, it is unlikely the clearing will impact or impede on the biodiversity, functionality or structure of any conservation area.</p> <p>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 is not located within 100m of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • groundwater or surface water catchments proclaimed under the <i>WA Rights in Water and Irrigation (RIWI) Act 1914</i>; • Public Drinking Water Source Areas (PDWSAs); • catchments proclaimed under the <i>Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947</i> (CAWS Act); or • wetlands or watercourses. <p>In addition, the removal of four isolated trees is unlikely to disturb or interrupt any natural drainage or surface run-off patterns and will not impact any bed or banks of a watercourse. Given the nature and scale of the proposal clearing (i.e. removal of isolated trees), the risk to surface water and groundwater is considered minimal/negligible.</p> <p>The proposed clearing is not likely to be 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>BoM data for Nunile (approximately 18km from the Proposal area) has an annual rainfall of 437 mm, predominantly occurring between April and September.</p> <p>According to the Atlas of Australian Soils, the Proposal area lies within the Avon Flats subsystem (256Af) (Northcote et al. 1960-1968). The broad soil landscape unit is mapped as, Oc30, and described as Alluvial flats, in the northern Zone of Rejuvenated Drainage, with brown loamy earth, grey non-cracking clay and brown deep sand in a York gum-salmon gum-flooded gum-sheoak woodland. The site inspection confirmed that the soil in the Proposal area is sandy, so is likely to allow for rainfall to easily infiltrate.</p> <p>There are no watercourses or other surface water features in the Proposal area. The closest watercourse (Mortlock River) is 75 m north of the Proposal area. The very small area of clearing and sandy nature of the soil is likely to have a negligible effect on the incidence or intensity of flooding.</p> <p>The proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this principle.</p>

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Methodology Used and References:	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/) Shapefile of clearing area/trees D22#595167
Completed By:	
Name	Redacted
Signature	Redacted
Job Title	Environmental Officer
Date	02/06/2022

DECISION ON CLEARING ASSESSMENT		
Clearing Assessment	ENDORSED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	REFUSED <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments	<p>The proposed clearing is limited to the removal of 4 trees in an area of degraded to completely degraded vegetation. Whilst the proposal is located within a buffer of a TEC, based on the degraded nature of the vegetation the proposal area does not mee the minimum condition of a TEC.</p> <p>Based on the nature (lack of environmental sensitivities) and scale (removal of 4 trees) I concur with the recommendation that the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to any of the clearing principles and therefore we will not be submitting to DWER</p>	
Name	Redacted	
Signature	Redacted	
Job Title	Senior Environment Officer	
Date	07/06/2022	

Appendix 1: Photographs



Access to Laydown area 1



Laydown area 2 (three saplings in this area)

Appendix 2: Figures

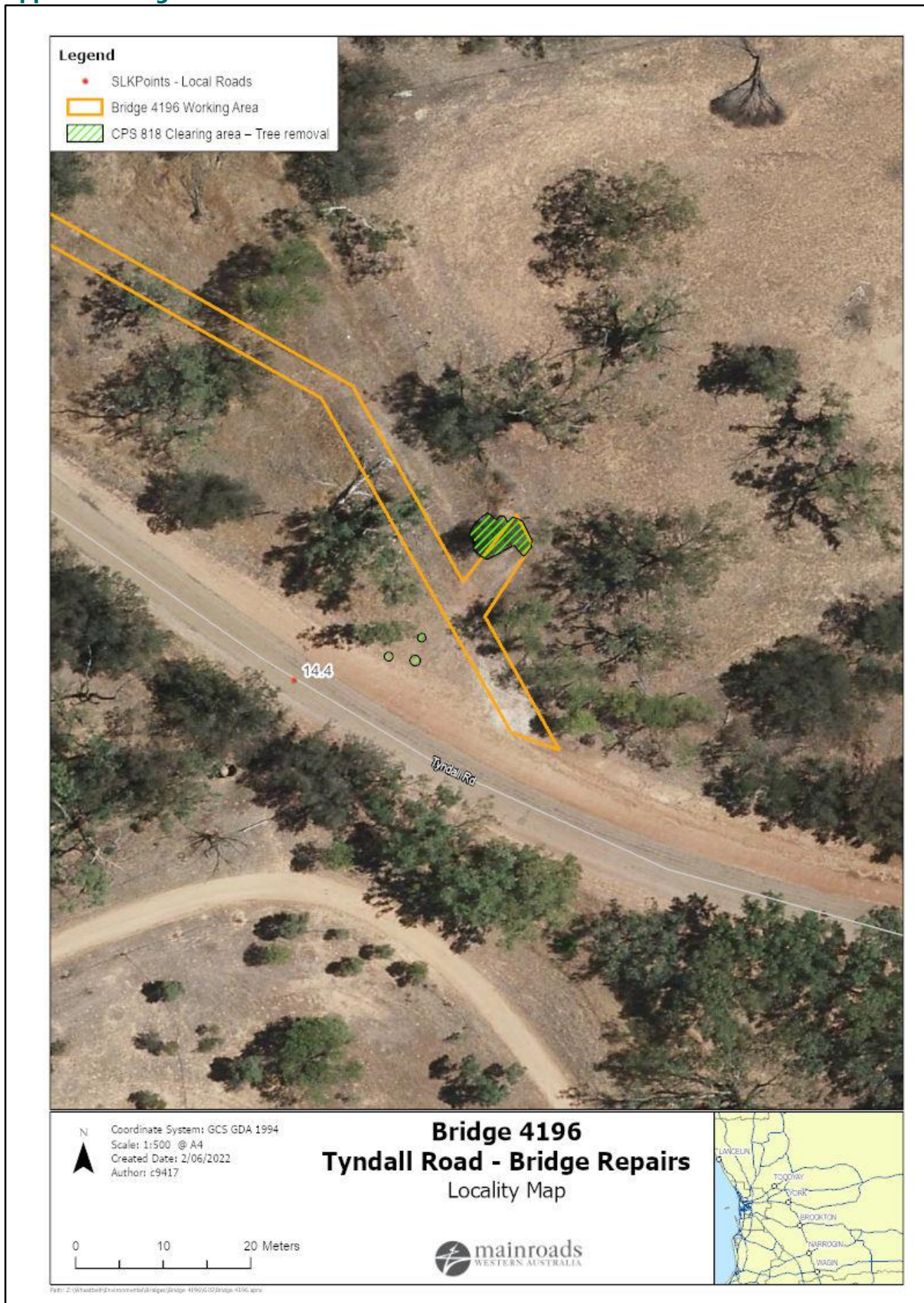


Figure 1: Locality Map

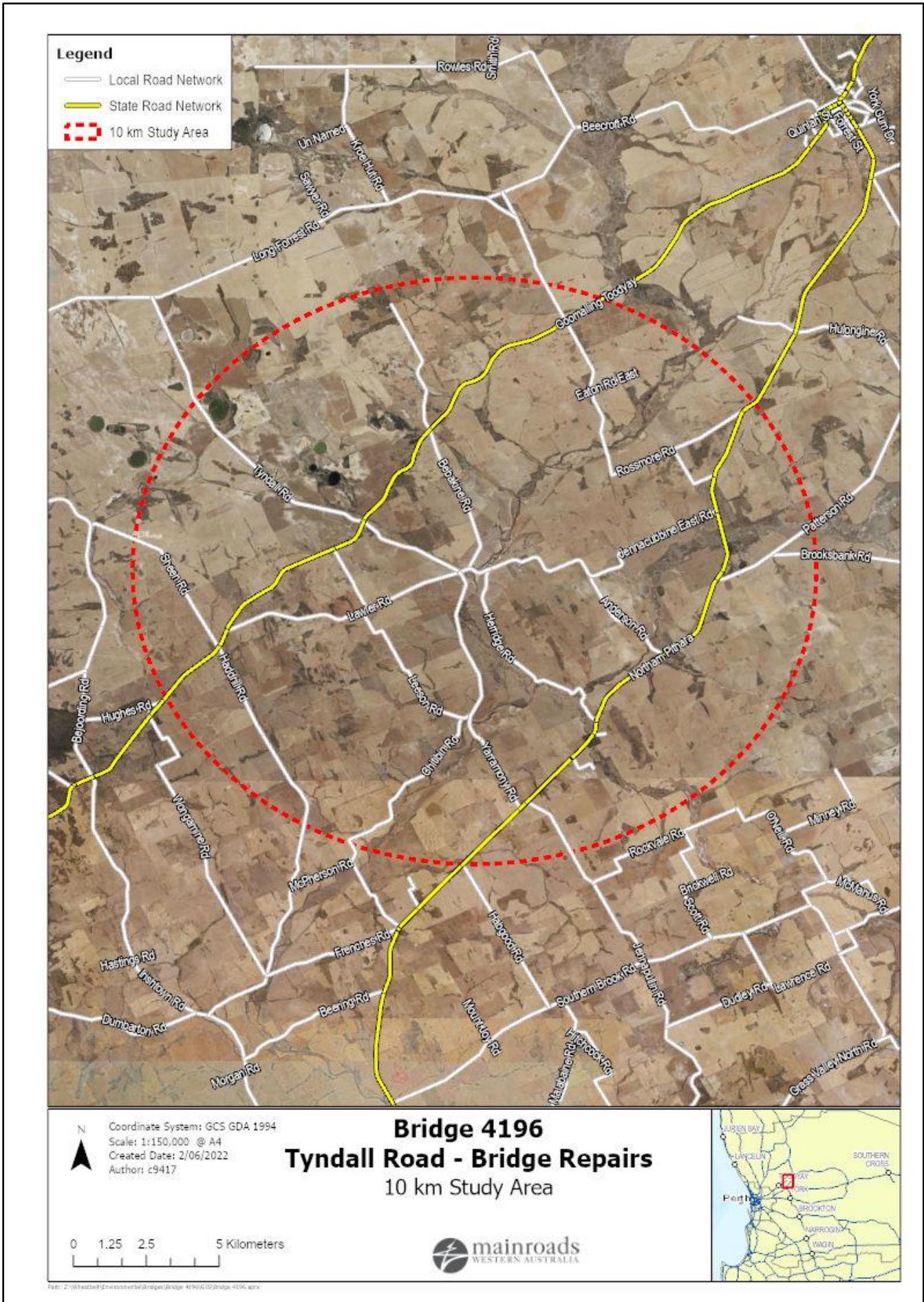


Figure 2: 10 km Study Area