

Clearing Desktop Report – Short Form

1. PROPOSAL DETAILS

Proposal Name:	Great Eastern Highway Improvements Walgoolan to Southern Cross (Package 3) – Construction of Western Offshoot Drainage Works and Batter Infill		
Region/Directorate:	Wheatbelt		
Local Government:	Shire of Westonia		
Road/Bridge Name & Number:	Great Eastern Highway (H005)		
Proposal Location (SLK):	Western Offshoot Drainage (304.4 SLK), Batter Infill (305.5 SLK) Appendix 1, Figure 1		
CDR Short Form TRIM Number:	D25#282312		
Spatial Data TRIM Number:	Western Offshoot Drainage (D25#500349) Batter Fill (D25#282392)		
EOS Number:	1772		
Expected Proposal Start Date:	June 2025		
Oracle Project No:	21115080	Task Code:	19301
LISC TRIM Number:	D25#276107	HRA TRIM Number:	D19#760449

2. PURPOSE OF CLEARING

A review of the road design adjacent to the rail over road bridge at 304.5 SLK has identified that to ensure improved access for oversize/over-width loads under the bridge, an existing culvert at 304.431 SLK needs to be duplicated further (20 m) west at 304.411 SLK. Outflows from both culverts would be directed southwards to join the existing drain servicing the culvert located underneath the bridge.

During the construction of the sidetrack for Package 3, it was identified that there is a significant drop-off (about 3 m) from the edge of the sidetrack to the current ground level at 305.51 SLK LHS. The difference in level appears to be as a result of the adjacent area having been excavated in the past (most likely as a result of gravel extraction). This is currently posing a safety risk to motorists on the sidetrack. It is proposed to infill the batter in this area to improve safety.

3. ALTERNATIVES TO CLEARING

The Proposal involves clearing of vegetation to allow for the construction of an offshoot drain to allow drainage to function effectively and to improve safety along Great Eastern Highway.

Clearing is limited to that necessary to achieve functional drainage and road safety. Accordingly, there is limited scope to alter the clearing.

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

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

- The width and length of the offshoot drain is just enough to allow for the effective discharge of collected stormwater away from the road, through a soil ridge into a lower lying area.
- The vegetation to be removed for the batter infill is the minimum required to make the road safe.
- Main Roads retains frangible vegetation where a clear zone is to be established for road projects. For this project, however, clearing will only be required to accommodate drainage works and access improvements, with no additional clear zone being established. Accordingly, the retention of frangible vegetation does not apply to this proposal.
- 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. Given this proposal relates to drainage and access, the reduction of the speed limits to avoid clearing of native vegetation for this proposal is not proposed.

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, 2014)
- Procedure: Native vegetation clearing permits (DWER, 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

Biological surveys have occurred over the Proposal areas. These include:

- GHD (2016) - Great Eastern Highway - Merredin to Southern Cross SLK, 258.5 - 365.5 Biological Assessment (D16#112460)
- Astron (2020) – Great Eastern Hwy Upgrade SLK 302.2 – 306.5 Threatened and Priority Ecological Community Assessment (D20#880305)
- Ecologia (2020) – Great Eastern Hwy Walgoolan to Southern Cross Package 3: SLK 302.2 to 306.5 Targeted Flora Survey (D20#177071)

6. CLEARING AREA

Clearing Area (ha):	0.02 ha	No. Trees Cleared:	N/A
Species Name(s):	Western Offshoot Drainage Proposal area - Shrublands; Medium woodland; wandoo & gimlet / York gum & <i>Eucalyptus sheathiana</i> mallee scrub. Batter Infill Proposal area - Shrublands; thicket, acacia-casuarina alliance.		
Easting and Northing:	118.731924 , -31.380652		

7. EXISTING ENVIRONMENT AND SITE INFORMATION

Site Vegetation Description/Association:	Western Offshoot Drainage Proposal area - Vegetation Association 1065 - Shrublands; Medium woodland; wandoo & gimlet / York gum & <i>Eucalyptus sheathiana</i> mallee scrub. Batter Infill Proposal area - Vegetation Association 36 – Shrublands; thicket, acacia-casuarina alliance.																		
Site Vegetation Condition:	Completely Degraded to Degraded																		
Pre-European Extent Remaining (%):	The below table displays the current extent of Beard Vegetation Association 36 remaining on a Statewide and LGA level. <table><tr><th>Scale</th><th>Current Extent (ha)</th><th>% Remaining</th></tr><tr><td>Statewide</td><td>266,242</td><td>45.6</td></tr><tr><td>LGA (Westonia)</td><td>5,641</td><td>25.7</td></tr></table> The below table displays the current extent of Beard Vegetation Association 1065 remaining on a Statewide and LGA level. <table><tr><th>Scale</th><th>Current Extent (ha)</th><th>% Remaining</th></tr><tr><td>Statewide</td><td>434.5</td><td>50.4</td></tr><tr><td>LGA (Westonia)</td><td>428.8</td><td>51.2</td></tr></table>	Scale	Current Extent (ha)	% Remaining	Statewide	266,242	45.6	LGA (Westonia)	5,641	25.7	Scale	Current Extent (ha)	% Remaining	Statewide	434.5	50.4	LGA (Westonia)	428.8	51.2
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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.	According to GIS databases, two Beard Vegetation Associations are mapped to occur within the Clearing Area: - Vegetation Association (VA) 36: Shrublands; thicket, acacia-casuarina alliance. - Vegetation Association (VA) 1065: Shrublands; Medium woodland; wandoo & gimlet / York gum & <i>Eucalyptus sheathiana</i> mallee scrub Both Vegetation Associations 36 and 1065 retain more than the 30% threshold Statewide guideline value (Government of Western Australia, 2019) and the proposed minor clearing will not significantly impact vegetation remaining at a local or statewide level. Site inspection and analysis of imagery confirms the vegetation proposed to be cleared is in Completely Degraded to Degraded condition. Astron (2020) did not map the Clearing area as Threatened or Priority ecological communities (TEC/PEC). A desktop assessment was undertaken and according to the DBCA Threatened and Priority Flora and WA Herbarium databases, the closest Threatened and Priority flora records within one kilometre of the Clearing Area are: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Flora</th><th>Distance from Clearing area</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><i>Acacia ancistrophylla</i> var. <i>perarcuata</i> (P3)</td><td>0.28 km</td></tr> <tr> <td>Threatened species</td><td>> 1 km</td></tr> </tbody> </table> GHD (2016) recorded <i>Acacia ancistrophylla</i> var. <i>perarcuata</i> (P3) 0.18 km north west of the Offshoot Drain Proposal area. Ecologia (2020) recorded the same species 0.11 km north west of the Offshoot Drain Proposal area. The potential occurrence of conservation significant flora within the Clearing Area is considered unlikely due to the prior surveys in the area not detecting conservation significant flora at this location and the Degraded condition of vegetation resulting from prior and ongoing disturbance and edge effects. According to DBCA's Threatened and Priority fauna database, the closest records within one kilometre of the Clearing Area are:	Flora	Distance from Clearing area	<i>Acacia ancistrophylla</i> var. <i>perarcuata</i> (P3)	0.28 km	Threatened species	> 1 km
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<i>Acacia ancistrophylla</i> var. <i>perarcuata</i> (P3)	0.28 km						
Threatened species	> 1 km						

	<table> <tr> <th>Fauna</th><th>Distance from Clearing area</th></tr> <tr> <td><i>Leipoa ocellata</i> (Malleefowl) (VU) in 2007</td><td>0.04 km</td></tr> <tr> <td><i>Leipoa ocellata</i> (Malleefowl) (VU) in 2006</td><td>0.3 km</td></tr> </table> Due to the location of the Clearing Area on the roadside, and the Completely Degraded to Degraded condition of the vegetation, it is unlikely Malleefowl or any other fauna species would rely on the Clearing Area to provide quality habitat. There was no evidence of Malleefowl mounds in the Clearing Areas during a March 2025 inspection by Main Roads Environmental Officers. There are no Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) trees within the Clearing Area. Expert advice received by Main Roads (Johnstone, 2020) advises that the Clearing Area no longer occurs within the distribution area for Carnaby's Cockatoo. Consequently, the proposed clearing will not impact on Carnaby's Cockatoo breeding, roosting or foraging habitat. Based on the above, the Clearing Area is not considered to comprise a high level of biological diversity. The proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.	Fauna	Distance from Clearing area	<i>Leipoa ocellata</i> (Malleefowl) (VU) in 2007	0.04 km	<i>Leipoa ocellata</i> (Malleefowl) (VU) in 2006	0.3 km
Fauna	Distance from Clearing area						
<i>Leipoa ocellata</i> (Malleefowl) (VU) in 2007	0.04 km						
<i>Leipoa ocellata</i> (Malleefowl) (VU) in 2006	0.3 km						
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.	According to DBCA Threatened and Priority fauna database, the closest fauna records within one kilometre of the Clearing Area are: <table> <tr> <th>Fauna</th><th>Distance from Clearing area</th></tr> <tr> <td><i>Leipoa ocellata</i> (Malleefowl) (VU) in 2007</td><td>0.04 km</td></tr> <tr> <td><i>Leipoa ocellata</i> (Malleefowl) (VU) in 2006</td><td>0.3 km</td></tr> </table> Due to the location of the Clearing Area on the roadside, and the Completely Degraded to Degraded condition of the vegetation, it is unlikely this species would rely on the Clearing Area to provide quality habitat. The Clearing Areas were inspected on 13 March 2025, by Main Roads Environment Officers and no Malleefowl mounds were recorded within or in close proximity of the Clearing Area. There are no Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) trees within the Clearing Area. Expert advice received by Main Roads (Johnstone, 2020) advises that the Clearing Area no longer occurs within the distribution area for Carnaby's Cockatoo. Consequently, the proposed clearing will not impact on Carnaby's Cockatoo breeding, roosting or foraging habitat. The small quantity (0.02 ha) of native vegetation proposed to be cleared from the roadside is unlikely to comprise significant habitat for any fauna species. Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.	Fauna	Distance from Clearing area	<i>Leipoa ocellata</i> (Malleefowl) (VU) in 2007	0.04 km	<i>Leipoa ocellata</i> (Malleefowl) (VU) in 2006	0.3 km
Fauna	Distance from Clearing area						
<i>Leipoa ocellata</i> (Malleefowl) (VU) in 2007	0.04 km						
<i>Leipoa ocellata</i> (Malleefowl) (VU) in 2006	0.3 km						
Principle (c) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, threatened flora.	According to DBCA Threatened and Priority Flora, and WA Herbarium GIS layers, there are no Threatened flora records within one kilometre of the Clearing area. GHD (2016) and Ecologia (2020) did not record any Threatened flora in the Clearing area during their surveys. 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.	Astron (2020) did not map the Clearing area as Threatened Ecological Community (TEC). 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	According to GIS databases, two Beard Vegetation Associations are mapped to occur within the Clearing Area: Vegetation Association (VA) 36: Shrublands; thicket, acacia-casuarina alliance.						

remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared.	Vegetation Association (VA) 1065: Shrublands; Medium woodland; wandoo & gimlet / York gum & <i>Eucalyptus sheathiana</i> mallee scrub. Both Vegetation Associations 36 and 1065 retain more than the 30% threshold Statewide guideline value (Government of Western Australia, 2019). The small amount of vegetation proposed to be cleared is in a Completely Degraded to Degraded condition and is not a significant remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared. Based on the above, 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.	According to the Surface_Hydrolines_Regional GIS layer, no mapped watercourses or wetlands intersect the Clearing Area, with the closest mapped watercourse being more than three kilometres away. The vegetation in the Clearing Area is not growing in or in association 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.	DPIRD mapping indicates that the Clearing Area has: 0% of map unit has a very high to extreme water erosion hazard, 40% of map unit has a high to extreme wind erosion hazard, 0% of map unit has very poor to poor site drainage potential, and 6% of map unit has a moderate salinity hazard. The CSIRO ASRIS Acid Sulphate Soils layer indicates that the area is classified as <i>‘Extremely Low Probability of Occurrence’</i>. The proposed small amount of clearing (0.02 ha) in a Completely Degraded to Degraded condition adjacent to the roadside, is unlikely to cause appreciable land degradation. Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not 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.	According to DBCA Lands and Waters layer, the western Clearing area extends approximately 0.3m into an unnamed C-Class Nature Reserve (R18583). As the vegetation in this area is Completely Degraded and regrowth vegetation, no significant impacts are expected to the environmental values of the Nature Reserve. For context, the Nature Reserve spans approximately 1,000 ha and approximately 0.006 ha (60 square metres) of clearing will occur to facilitate the offshoot drainage works within or immediately adjacent to the Nature Reserve. Approval from DBCA will be gained to undertake the proposed works. Based on the above, 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.	The Clearing area is not located within any Public Drinking Water Source Area, Surface Water Area proclaimed under the <i>Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914</i> (RIWI Act) or catchment proclaimed under the <i>Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947</i> (CAWS Act). It is located in a Groundwater Area proclaimed under the RIWI Act, however as the Proposal will not extract groundwater, or significantly alter natural drainage or surface runoff patterns, impacts on groundwater are unlikely. According to the Surface_Hydrolines_Regional GIS layer, no mapped watercourses intersect the Clearing Area, with the closest mapped watercourse more than three kilometres away. The proposed clearing is not likely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface or groundwater. 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,	DPIRD mapping indicates that the Clearing Area has: 0% of the map unit has a moderate to high flood hazard, and 0% of map unit has a moderate to very high waterlogging and inundation risk.

or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.	A review of ArcGIS shapefiles indicates that the proposed clearing will not disturb or interrupt any natural drainage or surface run-off patterns. Clearing of 0.02 ha of native vegetation in Completely Degraded to Degraded condition adjacent to the roadside, is 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:	Astron (2020) – Great Eastern Hwy Upgrade SLK 302.2 – 306.5 Threatened and Priority Ecological Community Assessment (D20#880305) DPIRD mapping (https://maps.agric.wa.gov.au/nrm-info/) Ecologia (2020) – Great Eastern Hwy Walgoolan to Southern Cross Package 3: SLK 302.2 to 306.5 Targeted Flora Survey (D20#177071) GHD (2016) - Great Eastern Highway - Merredin to Southern Cross SLK, 258.5 - 365.5 Biological Assessment (D16#112460) Government of Western Australia (2019) 2018 Statewide Vegetation Statistics incorporating the CAR Reserve Analysis (Full Report). Current as of March 2019. WA Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Perth. Johnstone, Ron (2020) – advice to Main Roads contained in email (D20#801347). Main Roads GIS Shapefiles Main Roads Site Observations (13 March 2025) Photographs of the vegetation: Appendix 1 (Plates 01 to 04)

9. REHABILITATION, REVEGETATION AND OFFSETS

Offset Proposal:	No offset proposal is required as the proposed clearing will not result in a significant residual impact on native vegetation within the region.
Revegetation and Rehabilitation:	No temporary clearing will be undertaken as part of the Proposal activities.

10. COMPLIANCE WITH CPS818

The clearing associated with the Proposal is not at, or not likely to be 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.	NA	No further action required.
Completed By:		
Name	Redacted	
Signature	Redacted	
Job Title	Senior Environmental Officer	
Date	21 March 2025 and 20 May 2025	

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

DECISION ON CLEARING ASSESSMENT	
Name	Redacted
Signature	Redacted
Job Title	Senior Environment Officer
Date	21 March 2025 and 21 May 2025

Appendix 1

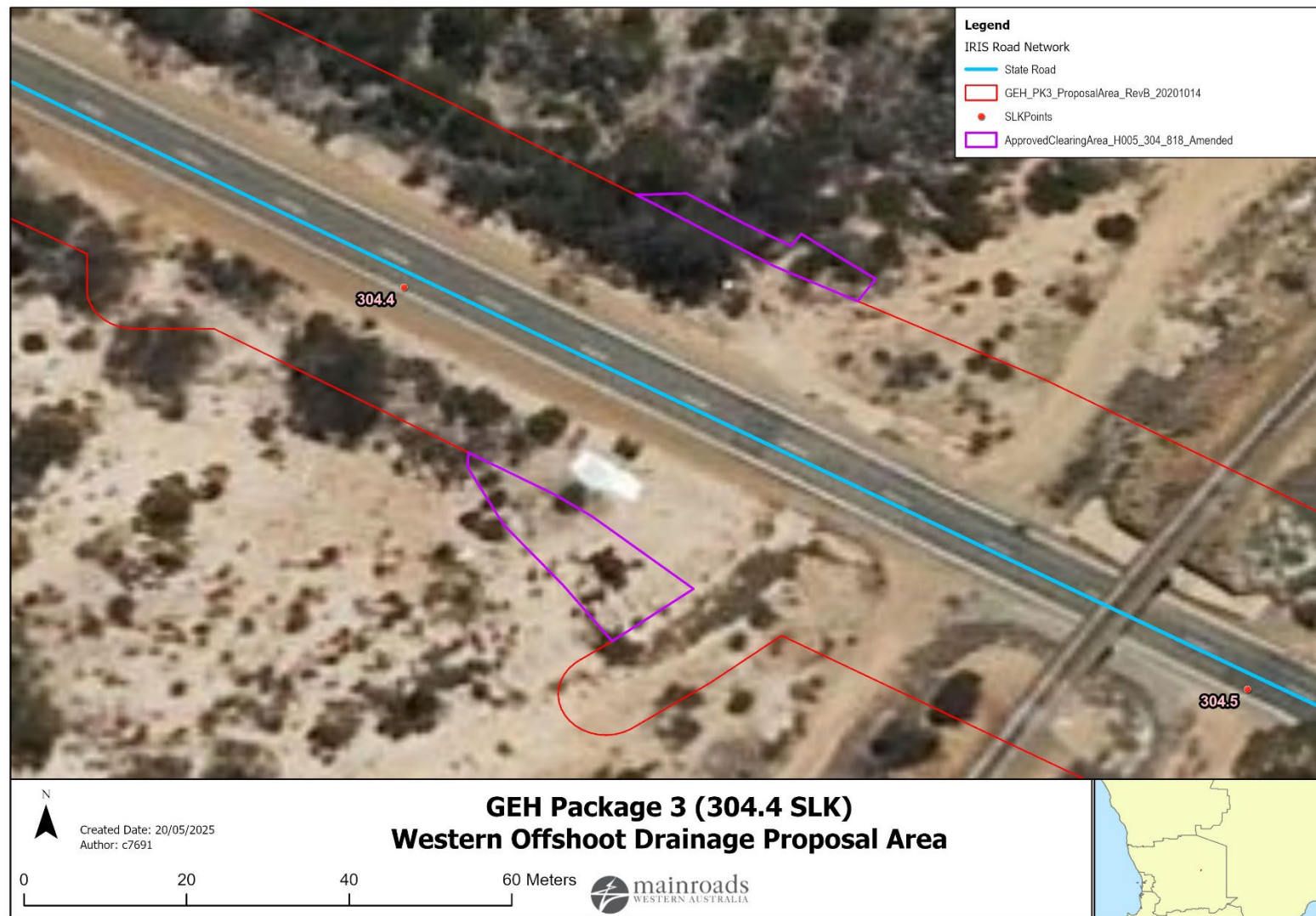


Figure 1a: Western Clearing Area



Figure 1b: Batter Infill Clearing Area



Plate 01: Western Clearing Area looking south (Streetview). Soil appears to have been mounded up compared to background topography



Plate 02: Proposed additional drainage modifications area looking north (Streetview). Soil heavily eroded and improvements required to formalise drainage.



Plates 03 & 04: Eastern Clearing Area - view from edge of existing sidetrack earthworks