

**Guidelines for  
Determining and Assigning  
Responsibility for Roads  
in Western Australia**

**PART 1**

**POLICY FOR  
CLASSIFICATION, PROCLAMATION AND  
TRANSFER OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ROADS**

Updated August 2011



Road Asset  
Planning Branch

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## 1. PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THE GUIDELINES

The 'Guidelines for Determining and Assigning Responsibility for Roads in Western Australia' (the Guidelines) assist Main Roads Western Australia (MRWA) to determine, in conjunction with Local Government, which roads are the responsibility of the State Government, and to proclaim those roads as either a [highway](#)\* or [main road](#)\* in accordance with the provisions of the Main Roads Act 1930. These roads are often collectively known as [State Roads](#)\*. Roads assessed as no longer meeting the criteria are proclaimed to "cease to be a 'highway' or a 'main road'" and are generally referred to as being "deproclaimed".

Road responsibility is determined through an [administrative classification](#)\* process that classifies public roads according to the function they perform, and assigns responsibility for the various classes to either the State or Local Government.

The Guidelines contain the policies and procedures associated with this process, and are applicable when classifying new roads, or reclassifying existing roads. The Guidelines also provide guidance on the administrative processes associated with the [proclamation](#)\* of roads that are determined to be the responsibility of the State Government.

The Guidelines are structured as follows:

Part 1 Policy for Classification, Proclamation and Transfer of Western Australian Roads;  
Part 2 Administrative Classification Assessment Criteria; and  
Part 3 MRWA Assessment, Approval, Proclamation and Transfer Processes and Responsibilities (Internal MRWA use only).

**Part 1** of the Guidelines (this document) describes MRWA's policy for determining and assigning road responsibility. It summarises the current arrangements for road responsibility, together with background information on how the current arrangements were developed. In addition, it provides an overview of the process used to transfer responsibility for roads between local and State government and the obligations of each party in relation to the condition and configuration of roads being transferred.

The overall Guidelines are not intended to deal in detail with the specifics of road funding mechanisms, however, Part 1 does provide an overview of the funding responsibilities of each of the three spheres of Government that provide road funding in WA.

**Part 2** of the Guidelines deals with the administrative classification stage of the overall process. It outlines underlying road classification principles and documents the supporting assessment criteria and assessment process. It also provides information on how a classification review is initiated.

**Part 3** of the Guidelines deals with Main Roads' assessment, approval, proclamation/[deproclamation](#)\* and transfer processes for roads. It is an internal Main Roads document which outlines the process to be followed by Main Roads in formally assessing and declaring that a road is to be, or cease to be, a 'highway' or 'main road', and to proclaim this by publication in the Government Gazette.

Part 3 also lists the information and operational systems within Main Roads that need to be altered or updated as a result of a change in responsibility for a road, and provides the mechanism by which those responsible for managing these areas will be advised when responsibility does change.

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\* Refer 'Glossary' for definition of terms.

## 2. CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR ROAD RESPONSIBILITY IN WA

### 2.1 Management Responsibility

Responsibility for public roads in WA rests with either State or local government, with the exception of about 2 000 kilometres of the public roads used to access remote (predominately Aboriginal) communities, which are not deemed the responsibility of any sphere of government. The Commonwealth Government has a role in providing funding for both State and local roads. The responsibilities of each sphere of government are shown below:

#### 2.1.1 State Government

With the exception of the Commonwealth Government's funding contribution towards the National Land Transport road network, the State Government is responsible for funding and management of all roads that are declared 'highways' or 'main roads'. All 'highways' and 'main roads' are provided and managed by the Commissioner of Main Roads under the provisions of the *Main Roads Act 1930, as amended*. These roads have a regional function and are identified through the administrative classification process specifically developed for this purpose (refer Section 3).

Some other roads in WA such as those in State forests, National Parks and Regional Parks such as Kings Park and the roads on Rottnest Island, are also the responsibility of the State Government. However, these roads are managed by government agencies other than MRWA and are not proclaimed as 'highways' or 'main roads'. These roads are not covered by these guidelines.

Bridges on State roads are also the responsibility of the State Government. MRWA is generally responsible for bridges on 'highways' and 'main roads', the exception being the substructure in the few cases where an agreement is in place with another Government agency (e.g. WAGR, Water Corporation). Bridges on roads that are the responsibility of a Government agency other than MRWA are the responsibility of the agency responsible for the road.

#### 2.1.2 Local Government

All other public roads in WA (with the exception of the previously mentioned access roads to remote communities and roads in National Parks etc.) are the responsibility of local government, and are managed by incorporated municipal councils across the State. However, the Commissioner of Main Roads has legal responsibility for regulatory traffic signs and devices on local government roads in accordance with the provisions of the *Road Traffic Act, 1974*. This responsibility includes 'load limit' signs on bridges. The State Government (through MRWA) therefore also has a close involvement, both technically and in regard to funding, with bridges on local government roads. Notwithstanding this State involvement, local governments remain accountable for all bridge structures on their roads, except:

- bridges over the Swan River (MRWA responsibility) (except Barkers Bridge in Guildford and Whiteman Bridge in Caversham, for which local government is responsible);
- bridges over freeways (MRWA responsibility); and
- most bridges associated with rural irrigation and drainage schemes (either privately owned, or the responsibility of a Government agency other than MRWA).

## **2.2 Funding Arrangements**

Current funding arrangements for road construction and maintenance in Western Australia are briefly described below.

## **2.3 The National Land Transport Road Network**

The National Land Transport Road Network (NLTN) superseded the Commonwealth Government's AusLink National Land Transport Network, which in turn had superseded the National Highway system. The NLTN incorporated the AusLink network and added other roads of national significance.

The NLTN initiative was implemented to provide an integrated land transport freight network covering road and rail transport and their intermodal connections. The Commonwealth Government believes that, as well as national benefits, many infrastructure investments provide substantial benefits to States. On that basis, States are expected to contribute funding to projects on the NLTN.

In WA, the NLTN road network comprises the Perth – Adelaide, Perth – Darwin and Perth - Bunbury corridors, the route between Port Hedland and Burrup Peninsula and several roads within the metropolitan area, collectively called the Urban Corridor.

Although the Commonwealth Government provides funding, ownership of the asset that forms the NLTN, and all associated day to day management issues, rest with the State Government and are managed by the State Road Authority (i.e. MRWA).

The Commonwealth Government also provides funds for the roads on Christmas Island and on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, which are the responsibility of local government, and for works on other roads on a project specific basis. In the case of Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, MRWA and other WA agencies provide service delivery on the Commonwealth's behalf.

## **2.4 State Roads**

Funding for the construction, maintenance and management of declared 'highways' and 'main roads', is provided by the State Government, with the Commonwealth providing contributory funding for projects on the National Land Transport Network. These funds are derived principally from State vehicle licence fee collections under the *Road Traffic Act* and a consolidated fund special allocation. The Commonwealth also provides contributory funding assistance for identified National Black Spots.

## **2.5 Local Roads**

Funding for local government roads is derived from Commonwealth and State Governments, together with funds from local government sources (i.e. rates and charges).

### **2.5.1 Commonwealth Funding**

The Commonwealth Government funds are distributed on a formula basis via WALGGC<sup>1</sup> as untied grants, which Councils may choose to spend on their roads. These monies are distributed in accordance with an Asset Preservation Model which takes into account the relative road expenditure needs of each local government. In assessing needs, consideration is given to the length, type and usage of roads in each local authority. This data is provided to Main Roads by local government and is then processed and passed on to WALGGC in May each year to calculate the following financial year's grants.

The Commonwealth also provides funds under the “Roads to Recovery” Program, which allocates funds directly to local governments for specific road projects.

In addition, the Commonwealth Government provides Road Grants to local government to assist them with maintenance and improvement works on the local roads.

## 2.5.2 State Funding

The State Government provides funds to assist local government to manage its roads via programs administered by the ‘State Road Funds to Local Government Advisory Committee’, which is chaired by the Managing Director of Main Roads.

Under the terms of the ‘State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement 2011/2012 to 2015/2016’, on an annual basis, the share of State road funds to Local Government will be 27% of estimated vehicle licence fees for that year. The agreement contains a mechanism to adjust the level of funding if anticipated vehicle licence fee collections change. The revenue is referred to as Local Government State Road Funds and is to be distributed to local government roads on the basis of:

### **60% of allocation (Category 1)**

- Direct Grants
- Road Project Grants
- Strategic & Technical Support

### **25% of allocation (Category 2)**

- Traffic Management and Road Safety - State Black Spot Program
- Bridge Works/Inspections
- Remote Access Roads to Aboriginal Communities

### **15 % of allocation (Category 3)**

- State Initiatives on Local Roads

### 3. BACKGROUND TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CURRENT CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The primary function of a road is to allow the transportation of people and goods from one place to another. At one end of the scale, regional roads provide a high degree of mobility, by safely and efficiently moving high volumes of traffic, often at high speeds, over relatively long distances. The function of these roads is consistent with the function of 'highways' and 'main roads' as described in the *Main Roads Act*, and this type of road is accepted as the responsibility of the State Government.

At the other end of the scale, the function of local streets is primarily to provide access to abutting properties and land uses. They are characterised by a lower speed environment and closely spaced driveway access. This type of road is accepted as the responsibility of local government.

However, in other cases the function of a road is not as apparent, and as a result it is not obvious which sphere of Government should be responsible for the road.

A need for clearer and consistent delineation of road responsibilities across the three spheres of government was acknowledged at a Premiers' Special Conference in July 1991. The conference agreed that the Commonwealth, State and Local governments would clearly identify separate responsibilities for roads, given that clearer accountability between the three spheres of government would aid in:

- Planning and implementing appropriate road management strategies at all levels;
- Integration and servicing of industrial, commercial, rural, recreational and other transportation needs;
- Development of higher standard national, intra-state and urban through-route links;
- Improved coordination of planning and construction activities; and
- Cost effective allocation of funds and resources.

As a result, an 'Administrative Classification' process for use in determining responsibility for roads in WA was developed through a 'Road Classification Review'<sup>2</sup> of public roads undertaken in 1993. The 'Road Classification Review' project considered various classification systems in use in Australia and developed the administrative classification process that forms the basis of these guidelines from the NAASRA<sup>3</sup> Functional Classification System (1970).

The NAASRA system was adapted for use in WA by developing a set of principles relating to the predominant role, or function of roads, based on the NAASRA definitions and the requirements of the *Main Roads Act*. These principles were supplemented by a supporting set of assessment criteria that are used to quantitatively determine the function a road performs (see Part 2 of these Guidelines). This assessment allows roads to be grouped into one of nine classes according to their function, and administrative responsibility is assigned according to these classes.

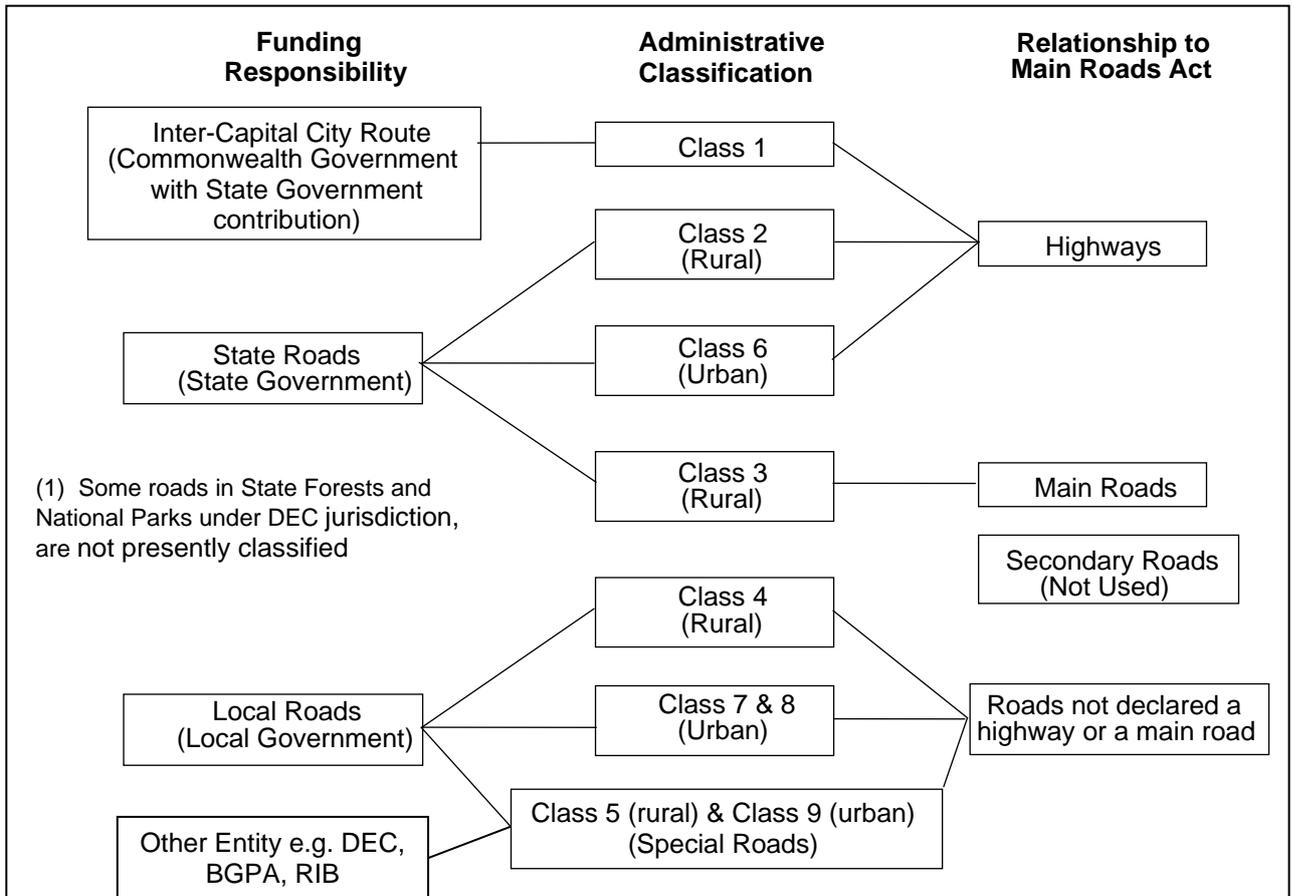
The relationship between the various road classes and Government funding responsibility for each class is shown in Figure 3.1. This figure also shows how the various classes relate to the road categories described in the *Main Roads Act*. Detailed information on the classification principles for urban and rural areas, the supporting assessment criteria and their application is provided in Part 2 of these Guidelines.

The primary purpose of the administrative classification process is to determine those roads that are the responsibility of the State Government. As a result, it acts only as a 'coarse sieve' with regard to local government roads (i.e. Classes 4, 7 and 8). Local governments therefore further subdivide roads in these classes to provide a more detailed road hierarchy for their own management purposes.

In this regard, a secondary hierarchy reflecting the intended role of local government roads was developed based on Built Up Area criteria provided by the WALGGC. It defines a hierarchy of Primary Distributor, District Distributors (A & B), Regional Distributor, Local Distributor and Access Roads. Primary Distributors correspond to roads that are the responsibility of Main Roads (i.e. Classes 1, 2, 3 and 6), and the other classes refine the classification of roads for which local governments are responsible (i.e. Class 4, 7 & 8).

There are a number of other road classification processes currently used in WA for purposes other than to determine administrative responsibility and to assist management of local government roads. A summary of current road classification processes, their purpose and application is provided in Appendix B, with explanatory notes at Appendix B1.

**Figure 3.1: Administrative classifications  
(showing assigned responsibility and relationship to Main Roads Act)**



## **4. MRWA POLICY FOR DETERMINING AND ASSIGNING ROAD RESPONSIBILITY**

MRWA will work with local government to agree the roads that should be declared as 'highways' or as 'main roads' in keeping with the provisions of the *Main Roads Act 1930*. This will be done in accordance with the Administrative Classification system shown in Figure 3.1. The administrative classification of roads will be determined through application of the process detailed in Part 2 of these Guidelines.

### **4.1 Administrative Classification of Roads**

A request for an administrative classification assessment may be initiated by the Minister for Transport, MRWA, another Government Agency (e.g. DEC), or local government. Requests to review the classification of a road should be forwarded to Main Roads' Manager Road Asset Planning at Don Aitken Centre, East Perth.

If the request is initiated by local government, and the road in question is located across two or more municipalities, the request must be a joint submission from all local governments involved.

#### **4.1.1 Existing roads**

Existing roads that are determined to warrant assessment will be assessed individually, and where practicable this will be done in time to allow those that require proclamation/deproclamation as 'highways' or 'main roads' to be included in the next round of budget submission deliberations if the proposed change is of financial consequence. Reclassifications of an inconsequential nature will be processed as they arise. NOTE: All transactions require prior approval from the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF).

Comprehensive classification reviews of the existing road network will also be undertaken from time to time as determined by the Managing Director of Main Roads, in consultation with local government through the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA). The assessment criteria used to determine road classifications may also be reviewed at these times.

#### **4.1.2 New roads**

New roads constructed by MRWA, or on MRWA's behalf, will be assessed and classified, and written agreement reached with the Councils concerned on which sphere of government will be responsible for the road following its completion, as early as practicable with the intent of having proclamation completed as soon as possible after the road is opened to traffic<sup>4</sup>. If it is likely that the road will be determined to be the responsibility of local government, its classification should preferably be determined (and agreement obtained in writing from the Council(s) concerned prior to the start of detailed design.

The classification of new roads will be based on the indicative road function and the estimated traffic volume five years after the opening of the road.

New roads constructed by local government are assumed to be the responsibility of local government. If a Local Government wishes to have a new road classified, it must submit a request justifying why the road should be assessed. If the road in question is located across two or more municipalities, the request must be a joint submission from all local governments involved.

When assessing the classification of a new road, MRWA will also consider the effect that the new road has on adjacent roads within the network and assess the classification of any roads whose function may change significantly due to the construction of the new road.

#### 4.1.3 Roads that cross urban and rural area boundaries

In situations where a road crosses an urban and rural area boundary, the section of the road in the predominant area (either urban or rural) should be assessed and used to determine the road's classification. An urban area is defined as the area covered by the Perth Metropolitan Region Scheme, or a country city or town with a population in excess of 5 000 people.

## 4.2 Proclamation

When the Managing Director of Main Roads determines that a road should be declared to be, or to cease to be, a 'highway' or 'main road' in accordance with the provisions of Section 13 of the *Main Roads Act*, MRWA will initiate formal proclamation of such change and negotiate arrangements with local government.

Advice from the then State Solicitor's Office dated 16 June 2003 (MRWA file 90-2296) stated that roads can not be proclaimed until they exist. Once opened to traffic, proclamation of new roads should be gazetted with other road changes as part of a batch, preferably once or twice per year.

Changes to declared routes brought about through realignment of an existing road will be considered on a case by case basis, taking into account the extent to which the route has changed. If the change is indiscernible at the scale of plan initially used to proclaim the route, it will generally not be proclaimed. However, if proclamation is required to alter the status of the replaced section of road, the new alignment will be proclaimed simultaneously.

In instances where a section of an existing 'highway' or 'main road' is declared by proclamation to cease to be a 'highway' or a 'main road', and a permanent replacement route has not been identified, an interim route will be identified and declared as a 'highway' or 'main road' until such time as a permanent replacement route is provided. The replacement route will be declared as a 'highway' or 'main road' in the same gazettal as that which declares that the existing route is to cease to be a 'highway' or a 'main road'. Alternatively, agreement may be reached between MRWA and the affected local government(s) whereby MRWA will contribute to the maintenance costs of the temporary route until such time as the final route is constructed.

When a road is proclaimed as a 'highway' or 'main road', the paths used for cycling and/or walking along such roads will be excluded from the proclamation, except in situations where MRWA is responsible for the maintenance of the paths under the provisions of its 'Policy for Cycling Infrastructure'. The asset owner (Regional Manager) is to confirm in writing which sphere of government will be responsible for 'footpaths' and the local government is to be advised of the decision at the time its consent is sought to the proclamation. Paths that are excluded from the proclamation are the responsibility of local government.

## 5. TRANSFERRING ROAD RESPONSIBILITY

As indicated in Section 3, the administrative classification process is used to determine which sphere of government is responsible for a road (based on the function of the road), and to determine which State Government roads should be 'highways' and which should be 'main roads'.

Transfer of roads between jurisdictions will not proceed unless they are in an acceptable condition. Guidelines have been developed to assist officers involved with transfers to understand the obligations of each party. They were jointly endorsed by MRWA and WALGA in August 2011 and are attached at Appendix C. (Appendix C is a separate document [TRIM D11#119285] to preserve its Table of Contents, section heading numbers and page numbers).

Once agreement has been reached between parties that a road is to be transferred, transfers are usually completed by means of an exchange of letters. Formal proclamation/deproclamation then occurs in due course to publicly formalise the arrangement.

Those roads that are classified as 'highways' or 'main roads' are then declared as such through formal proclamation in the Government Gazette. Where such proclamation involves the transfer of the responsibility for a road from one sphere of Government to another, arrangements must be made to reflect this in all relevant information and operational systems.

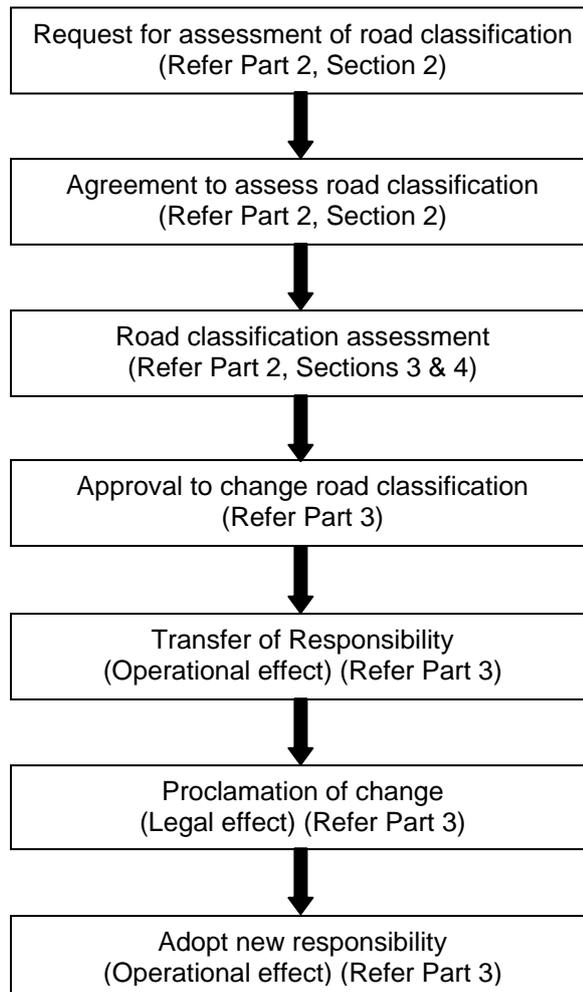
NOTE: A major consequence of revoking the declaration of a main road or highway is that the road in question falls under the care, control and management of the local government under Sub-section 55 (2) of the *Land Administration Act 1997* and Section 3.53 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

Figure 5.1 shows the key stages of the overall process.

Following proclamation, MRWA will assume responsibility for the care, control and management of any road declared to be a 'highway' or 'main road', and advise all affected local governments of any roads that have become, or ceased to be, the local government's responsibility.

When a road transfers from State Government to local government responsibility, MRWA will also advise the local government if any bridges on that road are to remain MRWA's responsibility. These bridges will be managed under agreement with the local government.

**Figure 5.1: Process for Transfer of Road Responsibility Between State and Local Government**



## Glossary

### **Administrative Classification**

The process by which roads are arranged into different classes based on the function the road performs, for the purpose of assigning responsibility for the road to State or local government.

### **Highway**

The term 'highway' is generally used in this document in the context of its meaning in the *Main Roads Act 1930*.

### **Main Road**

The term 'main road' is generally used in this document in the context of its meaning in the *Main Roads Act 1930*.

### **State Road**

A generic term used to collectively refer to proclaimed 'highways' and 'main roads'.

### **Proclamation**

The process of formally declaring a road to be, or cease to be, either as a 'highway' or 'main road' in accordance with the provisions of the *Main Roads Act 1930*. It involves the preparation of the required proclamation papers by MRWA for presentation to the Hon. Minister for Transport for endorsement. These papers are then formally approved by Executive Council (the supreme decision making body of the Executive arm of government, consisting of the Governor and the Ministers of the Crown) and a proclamation notice published in the Government Gazette.

### **Deproclamation**

The common use term for roads being proclaimed under Section 13 of the *Main Roads Act 1930* to "cease to be either a 'highway' or a 'main road'".

# APPENDIX B

## Road Classification Processes and Types used in Western Australia

Classification Process	Classification Type	Primary Purpose	Application	Classification Categories	Agency Responsible for process
Statutory Planning Schemes (See Note 1)	<u>Planning</u> - Based on existing or planned function of road.	To establish rational land use development for the area covered by the Plan. (See Note 2)	Applied to all public roads. (See Note 3)	Primary Roads (red roads) Regional Roads (blue roads)	WAPC (See Note 4)
Main Roads Act (See Note 5)	<u>Legal</u> - Based on existing function of road or intended function of new road.	To establish which roads MRWA is responsible for managing. (See Note 6)	Applied to public roads which meet the criteria for classification as State Roads. (See Note 7)	Highways, Main Roads, Secondary Roads (See Note 5)	Main Roads WA (See Note 8)
Administrative (See Note 9)	<u>Administrative</u> (Management) - Based on existing function of road or intended function of new road. (See Note 10)	To determine which roads are the management responsibility of the State Government (MRWA). (See Note 11)	Applied to all public roads. (See Note 12)	Class 1 – 8 roads (See Appendix B.1)	Main Roads WA (See Note 8)
Funding (See Note 13)	<u>Financial</u> - Based on funding agreements and legislation.	To distribute funds to roads which are the management responsibility of State and local government.	Applied to all public roads. (See Note 14)	NLTN (National) State Local	DIT, MRWA & WALGA)
Commonwealth (See Note 15)	<u>Financial</u> - Based on existing function of road. (See Note 16)	Enable comparison of arterial road lengths across Australia to facilitate equitable distribution of grants.	Applied to all public roads.	Urban Arterial Rural Arterial	Commonwealth Grants Commission
Asset Management Planning (See Note 17)	<u>Asset Management</u> - Based on (forecast) road use.	To establish a hierarchal Link structure for management of the MRWA network. (See Note 18)	Applied to the MRWA managed road network for investment planning purposes. (See Note 19)	Mr, Mu, AW+, AW, BW+, BW, CW, DW	Main Roads WA
Road Hierarchy (See Note 20)	<u>Functional</u> - Based on intended function.	To facilitate uniform traffic management for similar types of local government roads. (See Note 21)	Applied to local government roads. (See Note 22)	Primary District Regional Local Access (See Appendix B.2)	Main Roads WA (See Note 23)
Roads 2025 (See Note 24)	<u>Planning</u> - Based on existing function.	To identify local government roads which have a 'significant' function. (See Note 25)	Applied to local government roads. (See Note 26)	Significant Road	Main Roads WA (See Note 27)

## Explanatory Notes to Road Classification Processes and Types in Western Australia

### Statutory Planning Schemes

#### Note 1

Statutory Planning Schemes include the Metropolitan Region Scheme (MRS), Great Bunbury Region Scheme (GBRS) and Peel Region Scheme (PRS).

These schemes designate roads as “Primary Distributor Roads” (shown in red on the scheme map and generally known as “red roads”) or “Other Regional Roads” (shown in blue on the scheme map and generally known as “blue roads”). The remaining roads are shown with a thin black line.

#### Note 2

One of the schemes’ primary purposes is to assign responsibility for land use planning to ensure to development of properties is consistent with the long term aims of the scheme.

In so far as roads are concerned, planning responsibility is principally to do with ensuring proposed development of abutting property is compatible with the current or planned function of the road as either a Primary Regional Road (‘red’ roads) or Other Regional Road (‘blue’ roads), e.g. developments are set back sufficiently to accommodate planned future road widening, or property access and egress points are positioned appropriately for the anticipated (planned) level of road use. The aim of this type of planning control is to ensure current and/or future road safety and traffic flow is not compromised by inappropriate property development.

Ultimate planning control for ‘red’ and ‘blue roads’ lies with the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) through the Department of Planning (DoP). However, development applications abutting ‘red roads’ are referred to Main Roads WA for comment before DoP rules on the application. DoP is responsible for considering development applications along “blue Roads”, Main Roads is not consulted. Local governments are responsible for all other public roads within a planning scheme area.

**NB** The application of responsibility under the MRS relates to land use planning, not the day to day responsibility for managing the road itself.

#### Note 3

Although built “red roads” are generally managed by Main Roads, with local government generally being responsible for management of “blue roads” and all other roads, there is no relationship between planning responsibility under statutory planning schemes and current responsibility for day to day management of the road itself. Management responsibility is determined through the Administrative Classification process which considers the existing primary function of the road. Existing roads functioning as State Roads (‘highways’ or ‘main roads’) are proclaimed in accordance with the provisions of Section 13 of the Main Roads Act. Management responsibility for ‘unproclaimed’ roads rests with local government.

Notwithstanding there is no direct relationship between the designation of roads in Statutory Planning Schemes and their Administrative Classification, by the very nature of being planned as primary distributor roads, built “red roads’ are, or are likely to be, proclaimed as either a ‘highway’ or ‘main road’ under the Main Roads Act and thus become the management responsibility of Main Roads WA. As lower order roads, ‘blue’ roads are not likely to be, or become, proclaimed as State Roads under the Main Roads Act. Day to day management of ‘blue roads’ is therefore generally the responsibility of local government.

#### Note 4

The Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) has overall responsibility for land use planning in Western Australia, including determination of which roads will be ‘red roads’ and ‘blue roads’ for planning purposes. The WAPC is supported administratively by the Department of Planning.

## **Main Roads Act**

### **Note 5**

Section 15 of the Main Roads Act gives the Commissioner of Main Roads “*the care, control and management of the land over which a highway or main road is declared.*” Section 13 (1) of the Act establishes two classes of roads, ‘highways’ and ‘main roads’.

Section 24 relates to the proclamation of Secondary Roads, however, this category of road is no longer used and there are presently no proclaimed Secondary Roads. In accordance with Section 24 (5) of the Act, Secondary Roads are the responsibility of local government.

### **Note 6**

The Main Roads Act [Sections 13 (2) and 13 (3)] requires the Commissioner of Main Roads to consider several criteria when deciding whether a road should be proclaimed as a ‘highway’ or ‘main road’.

Main Roads is responsible for day to day management of ‘highways’ and ‘main roads’. There is no relationship between proclaimed roads and their designation in Planning Schemes. (See Note 3 above)

The Administrative Classification process (See Note 9 below) establishes the appropriate administrative Class for a road. Class 1, 2, 3 and 6 roads are the responsibility of Main Roads. Class 1, 2 and 6 roads are ‘highways’ and Class 3 roads are ‘main roads’.

### **Note 7**

Classes 1, 2 and 6 are proclaimed as ‘highways’ and Class 3 roads are proclaimed as ‘main roads’. “Responsibility” for these roads relates to day to day management of the asset as set out in Section 15 of the Main Roads Act. In essence, everything within the road reserve is the responsibility of the Commissioner once a road is proclaimed as a ‘highway’ or ‘main road’.

With a few minor exceptions, public roads not proclaimed as a ‘highway’ or ‘main road’ under the Main Roads Act are the responsibility of local government. The exceptions include public roads in National Parks and State Forests which are administered by DEC and Kings Park and Rottnest Island Roads which are administered by separate boards.

In some instances, the management task for State Road verges is subsequently delegated to local government by way of a written agreement between Main Roads and the respective local government.

Under Section 13 (1) of the Act, it is possible to exclude verges and/or other parts for a road from the proclamation, which would make the excluded parts the responsibility of local government. To date, the provisions of this section have only been applied to ‘footpaths’ and there are no known instances where other parts of a road, such as verges, have been excluded.

### **Note 8**

Legal support for the criteria determining administrative (management) classes of State Roads is provided by Sections 13, and 13A of the Main Roads Act. Section 24 of the Act supports the creation of Secondary Roads, but they remain the responsibility of local government.

## **Administrative Classification**

### **Note 9**

The ‘Administrative Classification’ process for use in determining responsibility for roads in WA was developed through a ‘Road Classification Review’ of public roads undertaken in 1993. The road classification review was based on guidelines developed under the auspices of a Steering Committee comprising officers from Main Roads, local government bodies, Department of Planning and Urban Development (now incorporated into Department of Planning) and Department of Transport.

The Guidelines and process are set out in the Classification Guidelines document, Parts 1-3 (File 05/3722-01, D06#28963, D06#37996 & D05#14283 respectively).

### Note 10

The 'Road Classification Review' project undertaken in the 1990s considered various classification systems in use in Australia. The NAASRA system was selected and subsequently adapted for use in WA by developing a set of principles relating to the predominant role, or function of roads, based on the NAASRA definitions and the requirements of the Main Roads Act. These principles were supplemented by a supporting set of assessment criteria that are used to quantitatively determine the function a road performs. This assessment process allows roads to be grouped into one of nine classes according to their function, and administrative responsibility is assigned according to those classes.

The NAASRA Classes and their definitions are at Appendix B.3.

Roads meeting the criteria for Classes 1, 2, and 6 are proclaimed as 'highways' and Class 3 roads are proclaimed as 'main roads'. This establishes legal management responsibility for them (See Note 5).

### Note 11

At the Premiers Special Conference in July 1991, it was agreed that the Commonwealth, State and local governments would clearly identify separate management responsibilities for roads. The classification process referred to in Note 10 provides a transparent process for determining this responsibility.

### Note 12

The administrative classification process classifies public roads according to the existing function they perform<sup>1</sup>, or where a new road is being constructed, the function it will perform when opened. This function can change over time, at which point a classification review should be undertaken to ascertain if its classification as a State or local road is still appropriate.

Refer to Sections 3 & 4 of Part 2 of Classification Guidelines for a detailed explanation of the various Classes and their primary purpose. (TRIM D06#37996). Refer to Appendix B.1 of this document for the assigned responsibility for each Class.

## **Funding categories**

### Note 13

At the Premiers' Special Conference in July 1991, it was agreed that the Commonwealth, State and local governments would clearly identify funding responsibilities for roads. The three funding classes presently in use and their corresponding legislative support are :

<b>Road Class</b>	<b>Related Act</b>
National Land Transport Network	AusLink (National Land Transport) Act 2005
State Roads	Main Roads Act 1930, as amended
Local Roads	Local Government Act 1995 – Part 3

### Note 14

Various intergovernmental agreements between the three levels of government (Federal, State and local) distribute funds to all public roads.

The AusLink Bilateral Agreement establishes the Commonwealth's level of funding to be provided to States and Territories to assist with maintenance and improvement of the National Land Transport (road) Network. The Department of Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) is the Commonwealth agency responsible for administering funding for the National Land Transport Network (NLTN).

The State Government fully funds maintenance and improvement works for proclaimed 'highways' and 'main roads' roads which are not part of the NLTN road network. It also contributes funding towards maintenance and improvement of roads in the NLTN.

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1 NB This may differ from the roads' designation in a statutory planning scheme, see Note 2

The SRFLGA<sup>2</sup> sets out the level of State funding to be provided to local government to assist with maintenance and improvement of the local road network. Local government also provides funds from its own sources for the maintenance and improvement of its roads. In addition, local government receives road funding from the Commonwealth Government through Federal Assistance Grants and the Roads to Recovery program.

## **Arterial Roads**

### Note 15

The Commonwealth Grants Commission (CGC) uses NAASRA road class definitions to establish the length of urban and rural arterial roads in each State and Territory. The NAASRA Classes are set out in Appendix B.3.

### Note 16

The NAASRA Road Classes are based on the function of the road in the overall network. Classes 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7 are deemed to perform an arterial function.

The length of Arterial Roads is used by the CGC as one of the inputs to the formula used to calculate the distribution of Commonwealth Grants to the States and Territories.

The CGC is reviewing<sup>3</sup> the criteria used to define arterial roads with the aim of achieving national uniformity of factors which affect the identification of roads as 'arterial'.

## **Asset Management Planning**

### Note 17

Refer to Asset Management Planning Guidelines available through Main Roads intranet under on-line documents for details of the various Investigatory Criteria levels which are used in road asset management in Main Roads WA.

### Note 18

Allocation of different configuration and condition Investigatory Criteria levels enables the State Road network to be managed to achieve fit-for-purpose outcomes.

### Note 19

Comparison of a Link's existing configuration and condition with its Investigatory Criteria level will generate 'gaps' in the network where there is a difference between the two. These 'gaps' need to be examined to determine if measures need to be taken to address the 'gap'.

## **Road Hierarchy**

### Note 20

A Road Hierarchy (RH) is a listing of the types of roads that perform designated functions required of the road network. It also provides criteria to describe each type of road and is used as the major criteria in the funding distribution formula used to allocate Commonwealth and State grant monies to local government.

### Note 21

Classifying roads according to a road hierarchy category facilitates implementing traffic management measures appropriate for the category, regardless of the location of the road. Refer to Appendix B.2 for a detailed explanation of the various categories, their primary purpose and the assigned responsibility for each category.

### Note 22

The highest order roads in the Road Hierarchy are "Primary" roads. They are the responsibility of Main Roads WA. The other categories are the responsibility of local government. A table provides local government with recommended traffic management treatments for the different road types it is responsible for.

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2 SRFLGA State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement

3 Commonwealth Grants Commission – Roads Data Project – Defining Arterial Roads – Staff Discussion Paper

Note 23

Main Roads WA was the lead agency in establishing the road hierarchy. Individual local governments are responsible for recording each road's Road Hierarchy in their ROMAN II database, or equivalent.

**Roads 2025**

Note 24

Roads 2025 documents are to be reviewed in 2012 to determine if roads in them are still appropriate. A revised set of documents with a horizon to 2030 will be developed.

Note 25

The Roads 2025 documents identify roads which have a wider role in the local area than just providing access to adjoining properties. Roads 2025 does not prioritise roads for improvement works.

Note 26

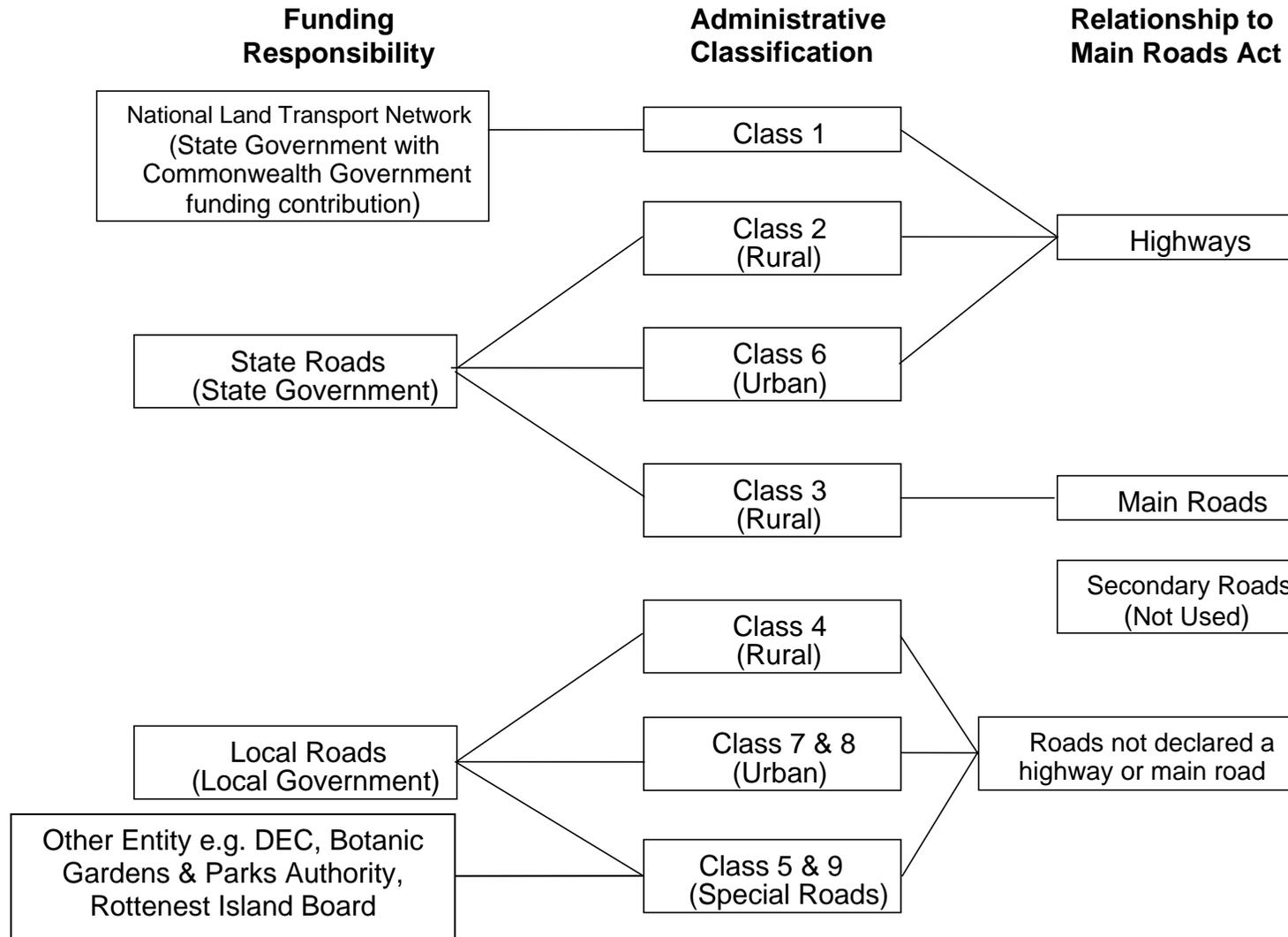
To be eligible to receive State funding distributed through Rural Regional Road Groups, a road must be included in the Roads 2025 Regional document.

Note 27

Main Roads WA was the lead agency in developing the Roads 2025 documents.

# APPENDIX B.1<sup>4</sup>

## Administrative classifications (showing assigned responsibility and relationship to Main Roads Act)



<sup>4</sup> Extract from TRIM D06#28963

### Road Hierarchy Types and Criteria

#### **Primary Distributors :**

##### Managed by Main Roads

These provide for major regional and inter-regional traffic movement and carry large volumes of generally fast moving traffic. Some are strategic freight routes and all are State roads.

#### **District Distributor A :**

##### Managed by Local Government

##### Built Up Areas Only

These carry traffic between industrial, commercial and residential areas and generally connect to Primary Distributors. These are likely to be truck routes and provide only limited access to adjoining property.

#### **District Distributor B :**

##### Managed by Local Government

##### Built Up Areas Only

Perform a similar function to type A district distributors but with reduced capacity due to flow restrictions from access to and roadside parking alongside adjoining property. These are often older roads with a traffic demand in excess of that originally intended. District Distributor A and B roads run between land-use cells and generally not through them, forming a grid which would ideally space them around 1.5 kilometres apart.

#### **Regional Distributors**

##### Managed by Local Government

##### Non-Built Up Areas Only

These carry traffic between regional industrial, commercial and urban areas and generally connect to Primary Distributors. These are likely to carry larger volumes of generally fast moving traffic than Local Distributors and be heavy truck routes.

#### **Local Distributors :**

##### Managed by Local Government

##### Built Up & Non-Built Up Areas

Carry traffic within a cell and link District/Regional Distributors at the boundary to access roads. The route of the Local Distributor discourages through traffic so that the cell formed by the grid of Regional/District Distributors only carries traffic belonging to or serving the area. In Built Up Areas, these roads should accommodate buses, but discourage trucks.

#### **Access Roads :**

##### Managed by Local Government

##### Built Up & Non-Built Up Areas

Provide access to abutting properties with amenity, safety and aesthetic aspects having priority over the vehicle movement function. In Built Up Areas, these roads are bicycle and pedestrian friendly.

## APPENDIX B.3

### Austroads (NAASRA) and Commonwealth Grants Commission road classifications

#### Rural Areas

Functional class	Definition	CGC classification
Class 1	Those roads which form the principal avenue for communications between major regions of Australia including direct connections between Australian capital cities.	National network roads or Rural Arterial
Class 2	Those roads, not being Class 1, whose main function is to form the principal avenue of communications for movements: (i) between a capital city and adjoining States and their capital cities; (ii) between a capital city and key towns; and (iii) between key towns.	Rural Arterial
Class 3	Those roads, not being Class 1 or 2, whose main function is to form an avenue of communication for movements: (i) between important centres and the Class 1 and Class 2 roads or key towns; (ii) between important centres; and (iii) of an arterial nature within a town in a rural area.	Rural Arterial
Class 4	Those roads, not being Class 1, 2 or 3, whose main function is to provide access to abutting property (including property within a town in a rural area).	Rural Local
Class 5	Those roads which provide almost exclusively for one activity or function and which cannot be assigned to Classes 1, 2, 3 or 4.	Rural Local

#### Urban Areas

Functional class	Definition	CGC classification
Class 6	Those roads whose main function is to perform the principal avenue of communications for massive traffic movements. (Arterial roads)	Urban Arterial
Class 7	Those roads, not being Class 6, whose main function is to supplement the Class 6 roads in providing for traffic movements or which distribute traffic to local street systems. (Sub-arterial roads)	Urban Arterial
Class 8	Those roads not being class 6 or 7, whose main function is to provide access to abutting properties.	Urban Local
Class 9	Those roads which provide almost exclusively for one activity or function and which cannot be assigned to Classes 6,7 or 8.	Urban Local

**REFER TO SEPARATE DOCUMENT (D11#194403)**

***GUIDELINES FOR USE IN NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND  
MAIN ROADS ON THE CONDITION OF ROADS PROPOSED FOR RECLASSIFICATION***

**August 2011**

Endorsed by WALGA – 8 August 2011  
Endorsed by Managing Director of Main Roads –  
10 August 2011  
(refer TRIM D11#194417)

## REFERENCES

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<sup>1</sup> WALGGC – Western Australian Local Government Grants Commission

<sup>2</sup> Road Classification Review, Steering Committee Report.  
MRWA, Western Australian Municipal Association, Department of Planning and Urban  
Development,  
& Department of Transport  
December, 1993

<sup>3</sup> NAASRA, The National Association of State Road Authorities – Since renamed as  
AUSTROADS

<sup>4</sup> Crown Solicitor's Office advised on 16 June 2003 that a road can not be proclaimed "before the  
road is provided". MRWA file 90-2296, CSO file refer 03/967.