

Our Ref: YWAMIL03
Date: 28 May 2026

Attention: [REDACTED]
Manager
Native Vegetation Regulation

Department of Water and Environmental Regulation
8 Davidson Terrace
Joondalup WA 6027

Via email: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Application for Clearing Referral: Millstream North Groundwater Investigations

Please find below the supporting information required to assist the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's (DWER's) assessment of Yindjibarndi Water's application to clear 0.21 hectares (ha) of native vegetation, located across four discrete areas in Millstream, Western Australia (Figure 1).

1. Background

Yindjibarndi Water on behalf of Water Corporation is proposing to expand the disturbance footprints of four groundwater targets at Millstream North, to facilitate their conversion into production bores for drinking water.

Initial exploratory drilling was conducted across eight targets, with each target involving the clearing of a 15 meter (m) by 15 m area (225 m²) at each location. Authorisation for this disturbance was granted through clearing referral 11288/1 dated 22 October 2025. Having identified a viable groundwater resource at four of the eight targets (targets 3, 4, 5a and 8), Yindjibarndi Water is now seeking to establish production bores at these locations. Each production bore will necessitate disturbance to a 30 m x 25 m (750 m²) area. Each 750 m² area includes 225 m² that was subject to previous disturbance, associated with the initial exploration program.

The expanded disturbance is necessary to accommodate:

- The installation of high-capacity, permanent pumping infrastructure
- The integration of essential water management systems
- Safe access for long-term maintenance vehicles and equipment.

2. Existing Environment

Land Use

The four target areas are located within Reserve 30071 Lot 50 on DP 221427 which forms part of the Millstream Chichester National Park managed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) (Figure 1). A Regulation 4 authorisation under the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*, and an application via the department's Disturbance Approval System (DAS) is currently under consideration by DBCA. In advance of these authorisations, a letter of support has been provided by the department to facilitate validation of this clearing referral.

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Topography and Land Systems

Topographic mapping available via Landgate (2026) indicates a general elevation across the proposed clearing areas of between 250 and 290 m Australian Height Datum (mAHD).

At a landscape scale, land systems of the Pilbara were classified and mapped by Van Vreeswyk *et al.* (2004) according to similarities in landform, soil, vegetation, geology and geomorphology. The proposed clearing areas are located on three such land systems, being:

- Rocklea system – Basalt hills, plateaux, lower slopes and minor stony plains supporting hard spinifex and occasionally soft spinifex grasslands with scattered shrubs (Target 8)
- Capricorn System – Rugged sandstone hills, ridges, stony footslopes and interfluves supporting low acacia shrublands or hard spinifex grasslands with scattered shrubs (Targets 3, 4 and 5a)

Flora, Vegetation and Fauna

Pre-European vegetation within Western Australia has been mapped at a broad level by Beard (1975) as vegetation system associations. Across the proposed clearing areas, three vegetation system associations have been mapped. This vegetation, their descriptions, and their extents remaining within Western Australia are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Vegetation System Associations intersecting the proposed clearing areas

Vegetation System Association	Description	Extent remaining within Western Australia*
Chichester Plateau_173	Hummock grassland with scattered shrubs or mallee <i>Triodia</i> spp. <i>Acacia</i> spp., <i>Grevillea</i> spp. <i>Eucalyptus</i> spp.	99.9%
Chichester Plateau_587	Sparse low tree-steppe / Sparse shrub-steppe	100%
Chichester Plateau_607	Hummock grassland with scattered bloodwoods & snappy gum <i>Triodia</i> spp., <i>Corymbia dichromophloia</i> , <i>Eucalyptus leucophloia</i>	99.84%

* Government of Western Australia (2019).

To determine the potential presence of any conservation significant matter within any of the proposed clearing areas, searches were conducted of the DBCA flora, fauna, and ecological communities databases. Based on a review of this data (Figure 2), no such flora, fauna, or ecological communities have been historically recorded within or in proximity to any of the clearing areas.

The original eight targets were initially identified by Yindjibarndi Water based on their highly degraded condition as a result of historical disturbances, primarily associated with the construction and operation of the existing Water Corporation pipeline and associated access road. To confirm the degraded condition of each site, and ensure that the proposal would result in negligible environmental impacts, a site inspection was undertaken by Yindjibarndi Water in May 2025. Drone photography of the Target sites being progressed to production bores taken during this site inspection is provided in Plate 1 to Plate 4.

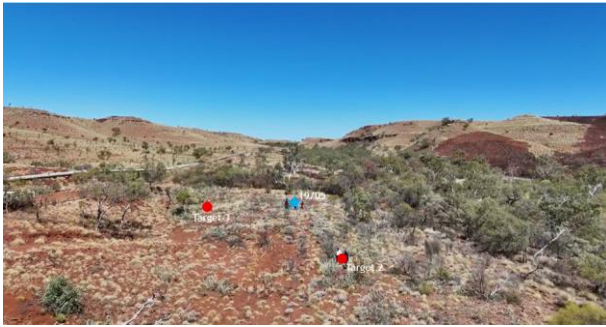


Plate 1: Drill target no. 3 (left dot)



Plate 2: Drill target no. 4



Plate 3: Drill target no. 5



Plate 4: Drill target no. 8

Cultural Heritage

Each production bore is located within the Ngarluma / Yindjibarndi Native Title Determination Area.

To ensure the proposed works do not impact any sites of cultural significance, a dedicated Aboriginal Archaeological Site Avoidance survey was undertaken of each target prior to the initial exploratory works, in collaboration with Yindjibarndi Ngurra Aboriginal Corporation (YNAC). One Aboriginal Archaeological site (YW_2025_001) was identified, which intersected the originally proposed location for target 5. To avoid this area, target 5a was proposed. The expanded area of disturbance herein proposed at target 5a has also been sited to avoid impacts on this Archaeological site. All other recommendations from YNAC will continue to be implemented by Yindjibarndi Water as part of the production bore installation works, including having Yindjibarndi representatives present as monitors during the clearing and ground disturbance phases.

The Aboriginal Archaeological Site Avoidance survey report has been provided with this application.

It is noted that Yindjibarndi Water (the proponent) is majority owned by Yindjibarndi Wealth Pty Ltd on behalf of the Yindjibarndi people.

3. Assessment Criteria

An assessment of the proposed clearing against the criteria described in the DWER's *Guideline: Native Vegetation Clearing Referrals* (DWER 2021) is provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Native Vegetation Clearing Referral Assessment Criteria

DWER Considerations	Assessment of Proposed Clearing
Criterion 1: The area proposed to be cleared is small relative to the total remaining vegetation	
If more than 10 ha is proposed to be cleared, a permit is required.	No more than 0.21 ha of native vegetation in a highly degraded condition is proposed to be cleared. This comprises 4 x 750m ² sites (0.3 ha), less 4 x 225m ² (0.09 ha) which was cleared to facilitate the initial exploration program.
If less than 30% of that native vegetation association or complex is remaining within the relevant IBRA bioregion, a permit is required.	All vegetation system associations which intersect the proposed clearing areas have more than 99% of their pre-European extents remaining (GoWA 2019).
If less than 30% native vegetation is remaining within a 10 km buffer of the proposed clearing, a permit is required.	Regional mapping indicates that existing Water Corporation infrastructure (including pipeline and access road), which is associated with the proposal, is the only location in proximity where native vegetation has previously been cleared.
Criterion 2: There are no known or likely significant environmental values within the area	
The quality of the existing remnant vegetation within and nearby the area to be cleared, based on the Keighery (1994) and/or Trudgen (1988) vegetation condition scales	All four sites have been strategically located adjacent to the existing Water Corporation pipeline and associated access road, the construction and operation of which has resulted in extensive disturbance and degradation of the native vegetation. The poor condition of native vegetation was confirmed as part of a site inspection undertaken by Yindjibarndi Water. Representative photography from this inspection is provided at Plate 1 to Plate 4.
Whether the proposed clearing area provides habitat for any threatened, priority, or specially protected fauna	There are no records maintained by DBCA of any threatened, priority, or specially protected fauna within or in proximity to any of the proposed clearing areas (Figure 2). The highly degraded nature of each clearing area suggests that there is minimal utilisation of each site by native fauna.
Whether the proposed clearing area provides critical habitat for fauna	
Whether the proposed clearing area is part of a significant ecological linkage	
The proximity of the proposed clearing to any threatened ecological communities (TEC) or priority ecological communities (PEC)	No TECs or PECs have been recorded in proximity to the proposed clearing areas (Figure 2).
The proximity of the proposed clearing to any records of threatened or priority flora	No threatened or priority flora have been recorded within or in proximity to any of the proposed clearing areas (Figure 2).
The proximity of the proposed clearing to any wetlands listed under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar convention) or in the Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia, or	There are no wetlands mapped in proximity to any of the proposed clearing areas.

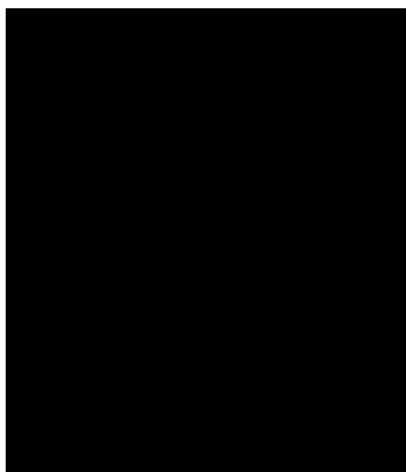
DWER Considerations	Assessment of Proposed Clearing
wetlands classified as 'Conservation category' or 'Resource Enhancement'	
Whether the proposed clearing may impact on a watercourse (e.g., the structural stability of a watercourse or deterioration of water quality)	The proposed clearing areas have been strategically located to be adjacent to the existing Water Corporation pipeline and associated access road, which is in turn located in proximity to the upper reaches of the Harding River. The minimal extent of clearing proposed, and the extent of existing disturbance at each site, suggests that impacts on the watercourse associated with the proposed works are unlikely.
Whether the clearing is in an area with high risk of decreasing water quality, rising groundwater levels or increasing salinity.	The proposal is being undertaken for the purpose of securing a viable source of drinking water, and is subject to license no. CAW212992(1). It is noted that other production bores operate successfully in the vicinity of the area, such as the Millstream West Pilbara Contingency bore (ref: 70912076), which has been operational since 2005.
Whether the proposed clearing is within a 'conservation reserve' (e.g., Bush Forever, Environmental Protection Policy areas, land managed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions; Regional Open Spaces; crown reserves vested for conservation purposes.	Authorisation is being sought from DBCA through a Regulation 4 authorisation, and Disturbance Assessment System approval. In advance of these applications being approved, the DBCA has provided a letter of support for the project, which is included with this referral.
Whether the clearing is in an area with high risk of land and/or soil degradation. Factors to determine this may include (among other matters) contaminated sites records, risk of dieback disease or acid sulfate soils (ASS), and susceptibility to erosion.	The proposed clearing areas do not intersect any contaminated sites, or areas at risk of acid sulfate soils or erosion (Landgate 2025).
Proximity to heritage-related values, including sites of Aboriginal significance, and native title matters.	A dedicated Aboriginal Archaeological Site Avoidance survey was undertaken of each proposed clearing area. All recommendations of this survey will be implemented to ensure no impacts to any heritage values.
Criterion 3: The state of scientific knowledge of native vegetation within the region is adequate	
<p>DWER will use the information included in the referral along with scientific data from various databases, spatial datasets, and other relevant and readily available information to determine the adequacy of the level of scientific knowledge about native vegetation within the region in which the area is situated. If the available information is not adequate, and additional information is required, a permit is highly likely to be required.</p> <p>Referrals will be assessed using the information available at the time. However, this information does change over time; for example, as the conservation status of certain species are revised, or new cumulative impacts become evident. Accordingly, if the proposed clearing cannot be completed within two years, a permit will be required for that clearing. If the clearing authorised under the referral is not</p>	<p>The proposed clearing areas are located within the Eremaean botanical province of Western Australia (Beard 1975).</p> <p>Flora and vegetation information is available at a local and regional scale through several databases, which has been provided with this application (Figure 2).</p>

DWER Considerations	Assessment of Proposed Clearing
undertaken within two years, a new referral may be submitted.	
Criterion 4: Conditions will not be required to manage environmental impacts	
Applicants and referrers should, as much as practicable, avoid and minimise environmental impacts to the area while planning their clearing activity. Clearing activities that are likely to require conditions to minimise, mitigate, offset, or otherwise manage effects on the environment are highly likely to need a permit.	The proposed clearing will be subject to a Regulation 4 authorisation, DAS approval, and approvals under the <i>Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914</i> . These approvals are anticipated to include conditions requiring Yindjibarndi Water to avoid and minimise potential environmental impacts to the satisfaction of DBCA and DWER. No further conditions of approval are anticipated to be required.

4. Conclusion

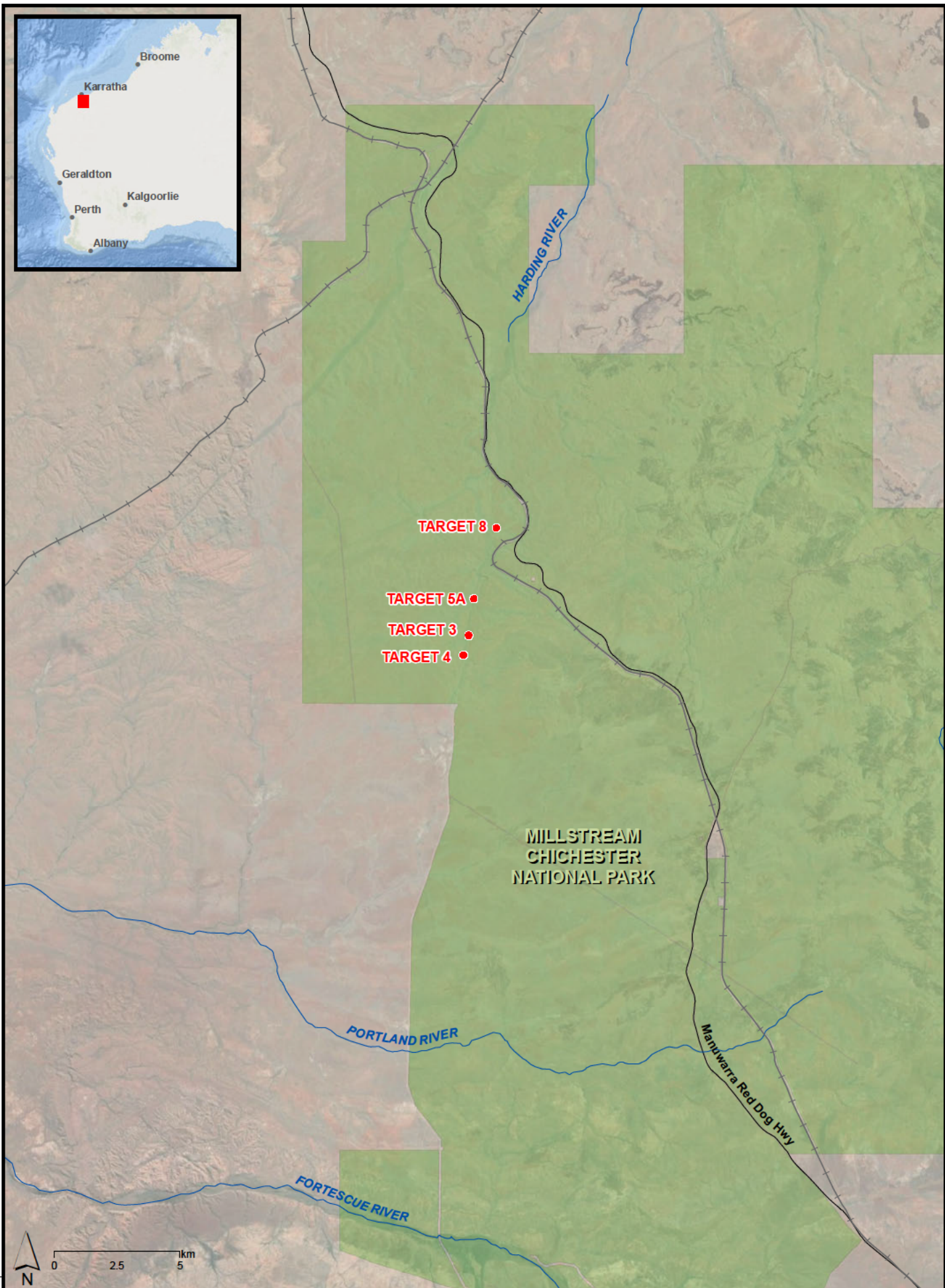
Yindjibarndi Water is proposing to undertake minor clearing of native vegetation to facilitate the establishment of four production bores for groundwater abstraction. The proposed clearing is anticipated to have a very low environmental impact, and is therefore considered appropriate for the Native Vegetation Clearing Referral process provided for under section 51DA of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*. An assessment of the proposed clearing against the four criteria described in the Vegetation Clearing Referrals Guideline (DWER 2021) determined that the proposed clearing satisfies all of these criteria.

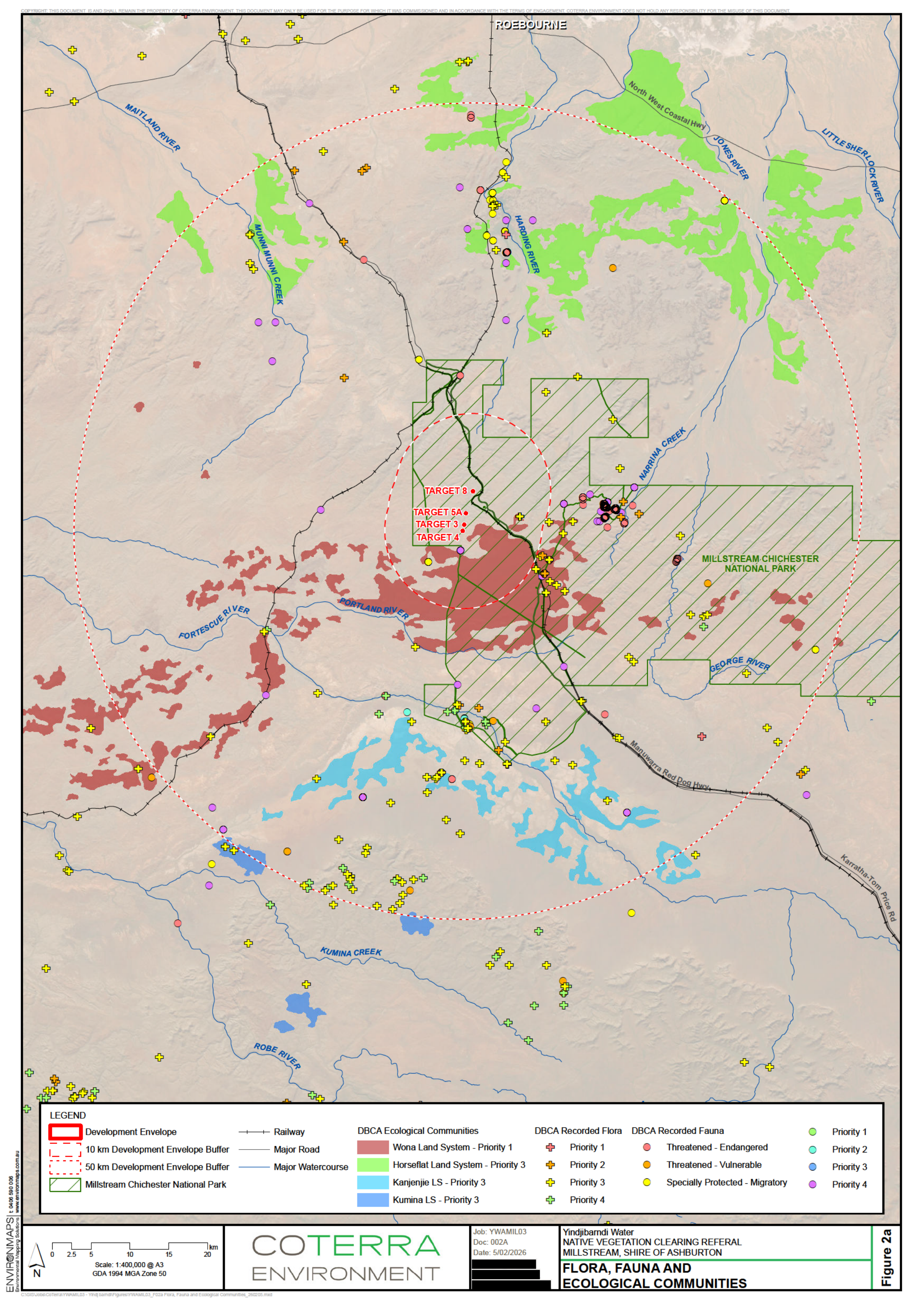
Recognising that water sourced from each proposed production bore is urgently needed as a source of drinking water, it is respectfully requested that this application be given prompt consideration by the department.



References

- Beard, J. S. (1975). Vegetation survey of Western Australia: Pilbara. 1:1 000000 Vegetation Series. The Vegetation of the Pilbara Area. University of Western Australia Press.
- Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) (2021). Guideline: Native Vegetation Clearing Referrals. Government of Western Australia.
- Government of Western Australia (GoWA) (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.
- Landgate (2026). Shared Land Information Platform (SLIP) – Locate V5. Government of Western Australia, Perth, Western Australia. [Online]. Available at: [Locate V5 \(slip.wa.gov.au\)](http://slip.wa.gov.au).
- Van Vreeswyk, A M, Leighton, K A, Payne, A L, and Hennig, P. (2004). An inventory and condition survey of the Pilbara region, Western Australia. Department of Agriculture, Western Australia, Perth. Technical Bulletin 92





ROEBOURNE

MAITLAND RIVER

North West Coastal Hwy

JOHNES RIVER

LITTLESHERLOCK RIVER

MUNJUNJUN CREEK

HARDING RIVER

NARRINA CREEK

TARGET 8
TARGET 5A
TARGET 3
TARGET 4

MILLSTREAM CHICHESTER NATIONAL PARK

FORTESCUE RIVER

PORTLAND RIVER

GEORGE RIVER

Manuwarra Red Dog Hwy

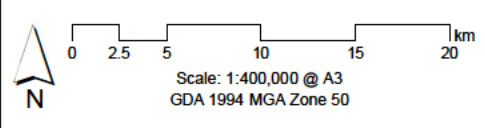
Karratha-Tom Price Rd

KUMINA CREEK

ROBE RIVER

LEGEND

Development Envelope	Railway	DBCAs Ecological Communities	DBCAs Recorded Flora	DBCAs Recorded Fauna	Priority 1
10 km Development Envelope Buffer	Major Road	Wona Land System - Priority 1	Priority 1	Threatened - Endangered	Priority 2
50 km Development Envelope Buffer	Major Watercourse	Horseflat Land System - Priority 3	Priority 2	Threatened - Vulnerable	Priority 3
Millstream Chichester National Park		Kanjenjie LS - Priority 3	Priority 3	Specially Protected - Migratory	Priority 4
		Kumina LS - Priority 3	Priority 4		

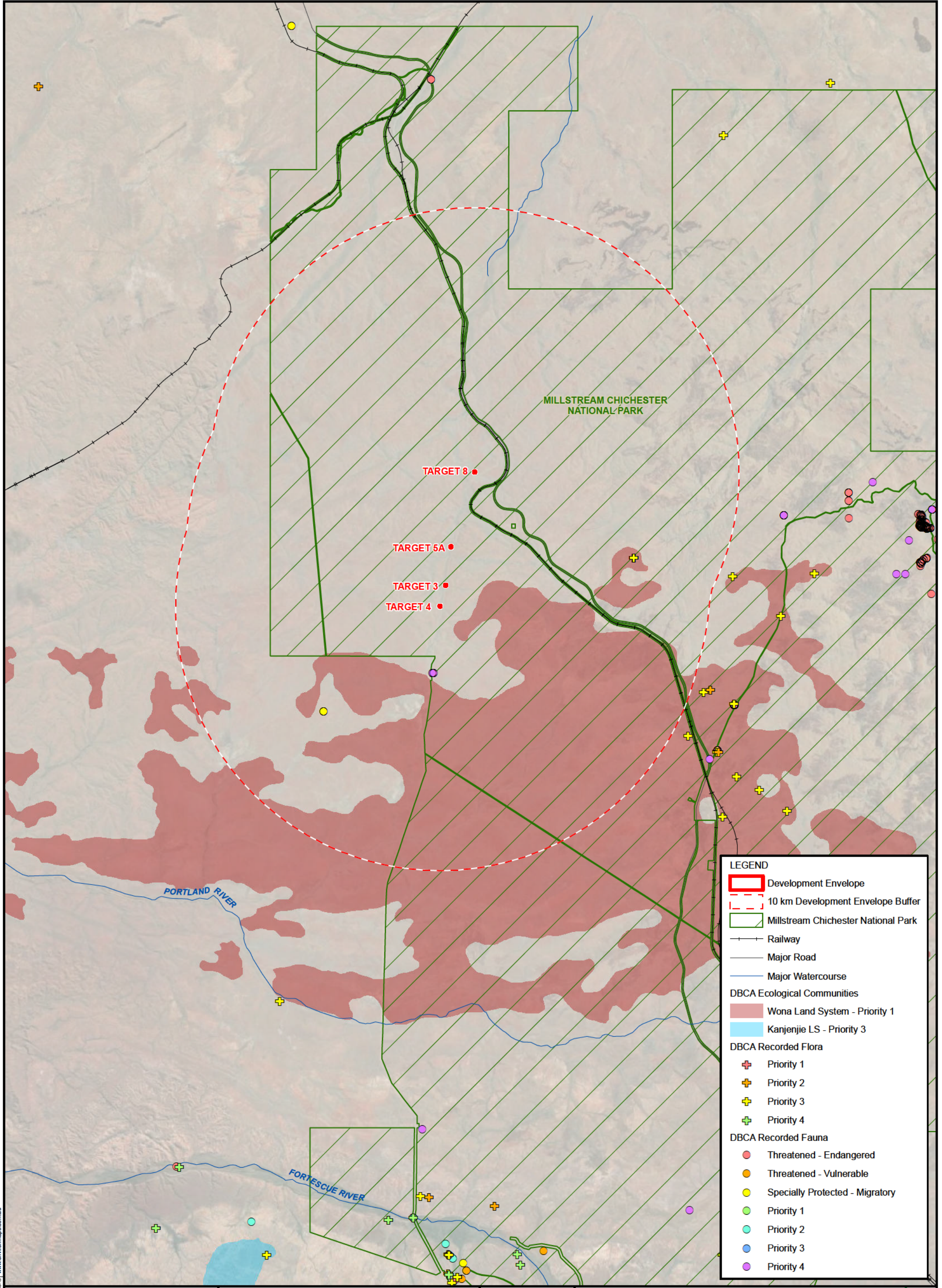


COTERRA
ENVIRONMENT

Job: YWAMIL03
Doc: 002A
Date: 5/02/2026

Yindjibarndi Water
NATIVE VEGETATION CLEARING REFERRAL
MILLSTREAM, SHIRE OF ASHBURTON
**FLORA, FAUNA AND
ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES**

Figure 2a



LEGEND

- Development Envelope
- 10 km Development Envelope Buffer
- Millstream Chichester National Park
- Railway
- Major Road
- Major Watercourse

DBCA Ecological Communities

- Wona Land System - Priority 1
- Kanjenjie LS - Priority 3

DBCA Recorded Flora

- + Priority 1
- + Priority 2
- + Priority 3
- + Priority 4

DBCA Recorded Fauna

- Threatened - Endangered
- Threatened - Vulnerable
- Specially Protected - Migratory
- Priority 1
- Priority 2
- Priority 3
- Priority 4

Scale: 1:125,000 @ A3
GDA 1994 MGA Zone 50

0 0.75 1.5 3 4.5 6 km

COTERRA
ENVIRONMENT

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Yindjibarndi Water
NATIVE VEGETATION CLEARING REFERRAL
MILLSTREAM, SHIRE OF ASHBURTON

**FLORA, FAUNA AND
ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES**

Figure 2b