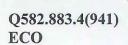


An Atlas of Tuart Woodlands

on the Swan Coastal Plain in Western Australia













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This *Tuart Atlas* has been developed by the Tuart Response Group with information gathered since July 2002. It represents the most accurate assessment of the extent of tuart woodlands and the condition of its associated understorey on the Swan Coastal Plain. The 'atlas' has also identified new areas not previously mapped.

The occurrence of tuart woodlands has significantly reduced since European settlement of Western Australia due to the impacts of urban development and agriculture. The status of tuart woodlands is now further threatened by a chronic decline in the health of tuart trees at Yalgorup between Mandurah and Bunbury.

In November 2001 I established the Tuart Response Group to coordinate the development of the Government's *Tuart conservation* and management strategy, to investigate the cause(s) of tuart decline, and to provide information to land owners on the protection of tuarts on private land.

This *Tuart Atlas* is a key step in the development of the 'tuart strategy'. It provides improved knowledge about the extent, density and condition of tuart woodlands, data for a review of tuart's conservation status, and a basis for developing Government and community based tuart management partnerships.



(Dr) Judy Edwards MLA Minister for the Environment



2. Acknowledgments

The *Tuart Atlas* is a collaborative project prepared for the Government's Tuart Response Group by Ecoscape (Australia) Pty Ltd. The following contributions are acknowledged:

- Alan Walker, Director Regional Services, Department of Conservation and Land Management; Chairman, Tuart Response Group;
- Drew Haswell, Project Manager, Department of Conservation and Land Management; Executive Officer, Tuart Response Group;
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- Maria Duthie, Supervising Senior Designer, Department of Conservation and Land Management;
- David Keasehagen, Director, Ecoscape (Australia) Pty Ltd;
- Louise Cullen, Environmental Scientist, Ecoscape (Australia) Pty Ltd; and
- Adrian Forest, Spatial Scientist, Ecoscape (Australia) Pty Ltd.

The Government of Western Australia acknowledges funding provided by the Department for Planning and Infrastructure, and soils and landscape data provided by the Department of Agriculture.

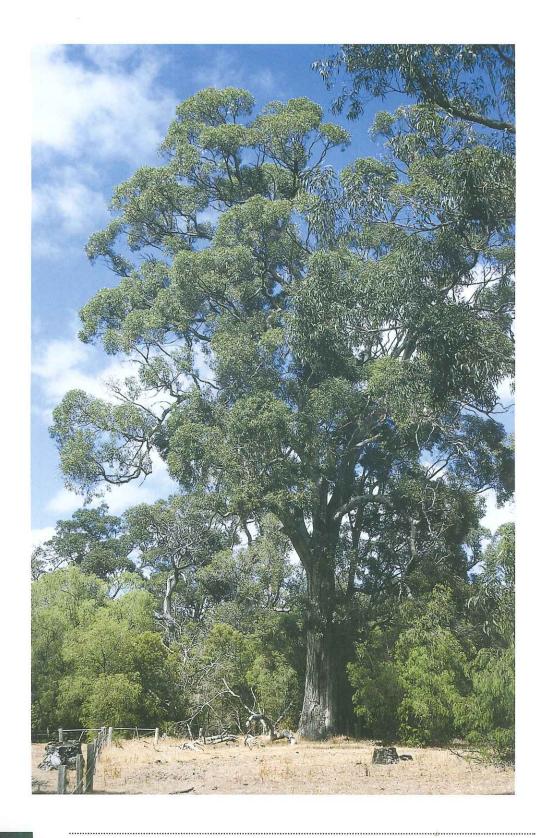
CALM recreation site set in tuart and peppermint woodland. Photo – Department of Conservation and Land Management



3. Executive summary

Tuart occurs in a coastal strip from near Jurien Bay to near Busselton in Western Australia. Before European arrival there were estimated to be more than 111,600 hectares of tuart woodlands. Most have been cleared for agriculture and urban development. Since the mid-1990s there has also been a marked decline in the health and vitality of tuart trees at Yalgorup. A *Tuart conservation and management strategy* is now being developed to address tuart's remnant status, its decline in health, and to establish protection and management partnerships with community groups. The *Tuart Atlas* is an essential first stage in this 'strategy' development.

The production of the *Tuart Atlas* involved the digital capture of data on tuart occurrence, overstorey density and understorey condition, from high-resolution digital aerial colour photography. The mapping presented in the 'atlas' represents the most up-to-date and accurate assessment of tuart woodlands over its natural range. It estimates the total area of tuart woodlands remaining to be 30,311 hectares. Earlier mapping of tuart's dominant structural ecosystems estimated the current extent of tuart to be 38,829 hectares. Both estimates of tuart extent are valid. The variation occurs due to differences in mapping purpose, the level of detail of vegetation mapping, and the interpretation of remnant vegetation.



Large, majestic tuart on private land near Tuart Forest National Park. Photo – Robert Powell

4. Introduction

Tuart is endemic to the Swan Coastal Plain, growing near the coast in a 400-kilometre band from Jurien Bay on the Plain's north to the Sabina River, east of Busselton (Keighery et al. 2002). Tuart is mostly confined to two coastal aeolian dune belts, the Quindalup Dunes and the Spearwood Dunes, although there is a series of outlying populations near the Murray, Serpentine, Swan and Canning Rivers (See 'Distribution of tuart woodlands' map).

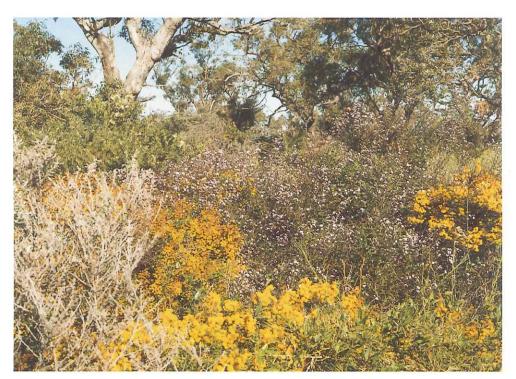
It is estimated that before Europeans arrived there were more than 111,600 hectares of tuart woodlands (Hopkins *et al.* 1996). Most have been cleared for agriculture and urban development and it is estimated that only 35 per cent remains (Hopkins *et al.* 1996). Since the mid-1990s there has also been a noticeable decline in the health and vitality of tuart trees at Yalgorup between Mandurah and Preston Beach (Government of Western Australia 2002).

Extensive tuart woodlands remain at Ludlow, Yanchep and Yalgorup National Parks (Department of Conservation and Land Management 1978, 1989, 1995). Tuart woodlands are conserved in Bold Park and Kings Park, Neerabup National Park, at the Trigg Dune bushlands, Leschenault Peninsular and the Maidens. Tuart also occurs fringing pine (*Pinus radiata*, *P. pinaster*) plantations in State forest at Myalup and McLarty, and in unallocated Crown land, regional parks and 'Bush Forever' sites at Yanchep, Woodman Point and Lakes Cooloongup and Walyungup. Smaller remnants of tuart are scattered across its natural range.

The Government of Western Australia has called for the development of a *Tuart conservation and management strategy* to address tuart's remnant status, its decline in health and to establish protection and management partnerships with community groups. The Minister for the Environment's Tuart Response Group was established in November 2001 to coordinate this work. The *Tuart Atlas* is an essential first stage in 'strategy' development. It provides a more accurate assessment of the extent of tuart woodlands and the condition of its associated understorey, and will be used to refine the present tuart reserve system and to identify conservation linkages between tuart in reserves and tuart on freehold lands.

The Tuart Atlas integrates and builds on four existing datasets:

- the earlier broad tuart overstorey structural units mapped by Speck (1952), that were further developed by Smith (1973, 1974) and Beard (1979a, 1979b, 1979c, 1981), and refined and consolidated by Hopkins *et al.* (1996);
- vegetation complex mapping done as part of the review of the conservation estate within the 'System 6' study area by the former Department of Conservation and Environment (Heddle et al. 1980);
- information derived from plots on tuart's regional floristic groupings (Gibson *et al.* 1994; Department of Environmental Protection 1996); and
- mapping of tuart occurrence on lands vested in the Conservation Commission of Western Australia that was derived from the Department of Conservation and Land Management's Forest Management Information System (FMIS).



Tuarts and associated shrubby understorey at Yanchep National Park.

Photo – Department of Conservation and Land Management

5. Purpose

The purpose of the Tuart Atlas is to provide accurate and current information on (i) the extent of tuart woodlands on the Swan Coastal Plain (ii) the density of its overstorey component and (iii) the condition its associated understorey.

6.1 Datasets used

Development of the *Tuart Atlas* involved the digital capture of tuart data from high-resolution digital aerial colour photography captured in January 2002. Other digital datasets used to assist in locating tuart areas included:

- broad tuart dominant structural ecosystem units after Beard (1979a, 1979b, 1979c) and Hopkins *et al.* (1996);
- soil and landscape mapping provided by the Department of Agriculture, Western Australia; and
- FMIS data provided by the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

6.2 Aerial photographic interpretation mapping

Interpretation of high-resolution digital aerial photographs formed the primary basis for identifying the current extent and condition of tuart areas on the Swan Coastal Plain. The minimum polygon size for mapping was set at one hectare and greater, with polygons created at an average on-screen scale of 1:10,000.

Identification of tuart involved interpreting canopy colour and form. Mature tuart canopies tended to have more open, grey-green (glaucous) canopy compared to jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*) or marri (*Corymbia calophylla*).

Tuart appearance on the aerial imagery varied according to the following factors:

- quality of the aerial mosaic that differed from tile to tile due to (i)
 the time of day the aerials were captured, and (ii) processing
 effects such as colour balancing, and conversion of aerial
 photographs into digital imagery mosaics; and
- variation in tuart form characterised by increasing stature and canopy density from north to south.

Digital colour photographs were not available from Lancelin north. A trial using black and white digital photographs determined that it was not possible to distinguish tuart from other canopy species. Information of tuart occurrences from Lancelin north were drawn from Keighery *et al.* (2002) and other Department of Conservation and Land Management data sources.

6.2.1 Overstorey and understorey occurrence and condition

Overstorey occurrence

The extent of tuart was mapped using Department of Conservation and Land Management Aerial Photography Mapping (API) mapping standards. Overstorey canopy was mapped in 10 per cent density classes (ie. 0–9, 10–19 90–100 per cent). Density classes included the canopies of all species and did not distinguish between tuart and other trees (usually jarrah and marri). FMIS canopy densities already classified by the Department of Conservation and Land Management during the mid-1990s on some Crown lands in tuart's southern distribution were included in the 'atlas' and were not re-mapped.

Native understorey condition

Understorey condition was mapped using three classes, namely (i) no visible disturbance, (ii) uninterpretable (ie. could only be determined by field evaluation) and (iii) high visible disturbance. Uninterpretable areas occurred where canopy cover was too dense to be able to estimate understorey condition, or where the quality of the aerial mosaic was poor.

6.2.2 Quality assurance and validation

During the initial stages of the project, a trial mapping and field validation process was used to ensure accurate identification and assessment of tuart woodlands. This process involved selecting a number of 'training sites' spread across tuart's known distribution, electronically determining canopy density and understorey condition using the aerial photographs, and then visiting the sites to validate interpretation.

Field validation of estimated tuart canopy density found that all site estimations had 30 per cent or under deviation from the verified cover, and a total of 87.5 per cent of sites were within 20 per cent of the estimated cover. This indicates a high accuracy of estimated canopy cover. Table 1 shows the percentage of sites validated at 0, 10, 20 and 30 per cent deviation from the estimated cover. Figure 1 shows the estimated percentage of tuart canopy cover and the percentage occurrence validated in the field for each training site.

Field validation of estimated understorey condition is shown in Figure 2. A total of 56.3 per cent of the training sites had the same understorey condition as estimated and a total of 75 per cent of the validated sites were within one class of the estimated condition. This indicates a generally high accuracy of estimated understorey condition class. Three of the sites (1605, 1614, 1615) were estimated as uninterpretable from the API mapping, of which two were validated as having high disturbance. Of the sites which differed between estimated and validated values (1601, 1602, 1604, 1609), all underestimated the level of disturbance thus indicating an appropriate conservative bias in the overall understorey condition assessment.

7.1 Total tuart extent, canopy density and native understorey condition

The mapping of tuart woodlands presented in the *Tuart Atlas* represents the most up-to-date and accurate mapping of its extent, overstorey density and understorey condition. The 'atlas' estimates the remaining area of tuart woodlands to be 30,311 hectares (Table 2). Tuart extent is summarised by land category and is (i) ordered by local government area (Table 3), and (ii) ranked in descending total area (Table 4).

The distribution of canopy density classes as a percentage of total tuart area is shown in Figure 3. A total of 92.9 per cent of mapped areas had a canopy density of 50 per cent or less (Table 2). Understorey condition as a percentage of each canopy density class is shown in Figure 4. The level of understorey disturbance increases with decreasing canopy cover.

Table 2 shows that 10,897 hectares of remnant tuart woodlands had intact native understorey and contributed 36.0 per cent to the total area of tuart mapped. This compares with 18,207 hectares of tuart woodlands with disturbed understoreys or 60.1 per cent of the total area of tuart mapped. Within the disturbed understorey category tuarts with canopy density classes of 0–9 and 10–19 per cent were in the main paddock trees where grazing and cropping had been undertaken. These categories accounted for 7,860 hectares or 25.9 per cent of the total area of tuart mapped. Table 2 shows that only 1,207 or 3.9 per cent of tuart woodlands mapped had uninterpretable understorey condition that required further field evaluation.

7.2 Differences in tuart woodland mapping

Earlier mapping by Beard (1979a, 1979b, 1979c) and Hopkins *et al.* (1996) estimated the extent of tuart to be 38,829 hectares. The difference between this mapping and the *Tuart Atlas* is explained as follows.

7.2.1 Difference in purpose, scale and level of detail of vegetation mapping

Earlier large-scale mapping has over-estimated the extent of tuart woodlands when compared to this recent fine scale mapping. The Beard (1979a, 1979b, 1979c) and Hopkins *et al.* (1996) maps were part of a project that mapped Western Australia's entire dominant structural ecosystems at a scale 1:250,000. At this scale the mapping regionalised tuart patches into larger areas that included areas not containing tuart (Plate 1 — see yellow) The *Tuart Atlas* has mapped the actual extent of tuart at a fine scale (1:10,000) thereby discriminating the isolated tuart patches (Plate 1 — see green) that were noted but aggregated by Beard in the original State mapping. These differences have been partly off-set by the capture of new tuart patches not originally mapped by 'Beard' (Plate 1 — see blue).

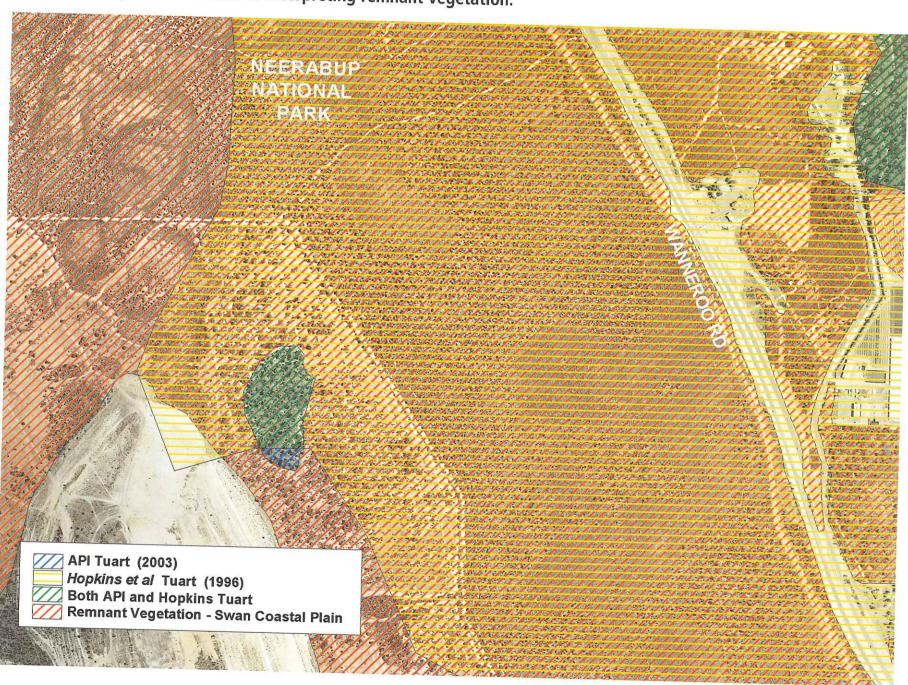
Plate 1: Example of difference in level of detail of vegetation mapping.



7.2.2 Differences in interpreting remnant vegetation.

During the 1990s a major mapping project was undertaken to accurately map all remnant vegetation remaining on the Swan Coastal Plain (Department of Agriculture, unpublished). When intersecting this dataset with Beard (1979a, 1979b, 1979c) and Hopkins *et al.* (1996) a remnant vegetation patch within a 'Beard' tuart ecosystem was assumed to contain tuart, regardless of the actual vegetation present. Therefore, in some areas remnant vegetation mapping has overestimated the amount of tuart remaining. In the Tuart Atlas only areas where tuart occurred were mapped (Plate 2).

Plate 2 : Example of difference in interpreting remnant vegetation.



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Number of validated sites for every 10% of deviation from the estimated cover

Deviation from estimated occurrence	% Sites in deviation category
0%	37.5%
0% – 10%	62.5%
0% – 20%	87.5%
0% - 30%	100%

TABLE 2

Tuart canopy density and understorey condition classes

Canopy	44144		Understorey C	ondition Class			Tota	als
Density Class				2		3		
(%)	(ha)	(%)	(ha)	(%)	(ha)	(%)	(ha)	(%)
0–9	207.3	4.9	0.0	0.0	4043.6	95.1	4250.9	14.0
10–19	1307.1	25.1	93.7	1.8	3816.3	73.1	5217.1	17.2
20–29	3262.2	41.3	313.9	4.0	4318.6	54.7	7894.7	26.0
30–39	2889.5	42.7	379.2	5.6	3492.1	51.7	6760.8	22.3
40–49	2456.3	60.6	380.2	9.4	1217.6	30.0	4054.1	13.4
50-59	481.2	26.5	40.2	2.3	1291.4	71.2	1812.8	6.0
60–69	61.9	69.7	0.0	0.0	26.9	30.3	88.8	0.3
70–79	207.9	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	207.9	0.7
80–89	23.8	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.8	0.1
90–100	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	10897.2	36.0	1207.2	3.9	18206.5	60.1	30310.9	100.0

¹ The difference in total tuart extent in Table 3 and Table 4 is due to "rounding-off" calculations

Tuart extent summarised by land category and ordered by local government area

Local Government				La	and Catago	ries		2 . 1 . 1	AND THE	
	NP ²	NR³	CP⁴	SF ⁵	s.5(g) s.5(h) ^s	UCL ⁶	UMR ⁷	Other Reserves ⁹	Freehold	Total
			CALI	/I managed	lands (ha)			(ha)	(ha)	(ha)
Bunbury	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	57.8	5.1	33.8	170.6	267.3
Busselton	594.5	2.1	0.0	213.2	0.0	2.8	5.6	0.1	118.7	937.0
Cambridge	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	80.6	123.5	204.1
Capel	1331.6	0.0	0.0	311.2	0.0	0.6	27.8	37.7	2165.9	3874.8
Claremont	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cockburn	0.0	63.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	54.2	0.0	55.7	198.1	371.3
Dandaragan	0.0	10.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	25.4	38.4
Dardanup	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	50.0	50.7
Fremantle	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	45.5	6.1	51.9
Gingin	0.0	0.0	0.0	301.9	8.6	149.7	66.7	28.9	2640.7	3196.5
Harvey	225.0	23.2	84.3	1063.5	0.0	0.1	35.1	41.1	3148.1	4620.4
Joondalup	0.0	0.1	3.4	25.1	0.0	21.9	4.2	84.8	144.1	283.6
Kwinana	0.0	250.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	94.4	26.8	54.7	454.5	881.3
Mandurah	995.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	72.9	18.7	179.6	2526.5	3794.8
Melville	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Murray	0.0	190.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	2.0	0.0	1116.6	1309.8
Nedlands	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	28.3	28.5
Perth	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.8	0.0	0.0	23.8
Rockingham	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	4.0	64.7	60.1	2191.3	2320.3
South Perth	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0
Stirling	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	24.1	19.4	43.5
Subiaco	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
/incent	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Vanneroo	706.5	44.7	0.0	312.7	60.7	26.0	61.7	55.3	2091.0	3358.6
Varoona	1555.4	0.0	0.0	1094.3	7.6	74.8	1.9	66.9	1858.0	
otal	5408.1	585.8	87.7	3322.1	78.9	559.7	344.4	852.0	19077.8	4658.9 30316.5

² NP: National park

³ NR: Nature reserve

⁴ CP: Conservation park

⁵ SF: State forest, CALM Executive Director freehold lands, miscellaneous CALM managed reserves

⁶ UCL: Unallocated Crown land

⁷ UMR: Unmanaged reserve

⁸ s.5(g);s5(h): CALM Act (1984) Sections 5(g) and Section 5(h) reserves

⁹ Other reserves: Other Crown reserves not vested in the Conservation Commission, including reserves vested with local governments and other agencies such as roads and water authorities.

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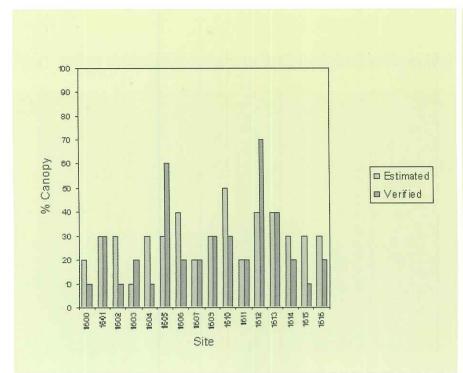
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Tuart extent summary by land category and by local government area and ranked in descending total area

Local Government				La	nd Catagori	ies				
	NP	NR	СР	SF	s.5(g) s.5(h)	UCL	UMR	Other Reserves	Freehold	Total
	3 1		CALM	managed l	lands (ha)			(ha)	(ha)	(ha)
Waroona	1555.4	0.0	0.0	1094.3	7.6	74.8	1.9	66.9	1858.0	4658.9
Harvey	225.0	23.2	84.3	1063.5	0.0	0.1	35.1	41.1	3148.1	4620.4
Capel	1331.6	0.0	0.0	311.2	0.0	0.6	27.8	37.7	2165.9	3874.8
Mandurah	995.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	72.9	18.7	179.6	2526.5	3794.8
Wanneroo	706.5	44.7	0.0	312.7	60.7	26.0	61.7	55.3	2091.0	3358.6
Gingin	0.0	0.0	0.0	301.9	8.6	149.7	66.7	28.9	2640.7	3196.5
Rockingham	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	4.0	64.7	60.1	2191.3	2320.3
Murray	0.0	190.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	2.0	0.0	1116.6	1309.8
Busselton	594.5	2.1	0.0	213.2	0.0	2.8	5.6	0.1	118.7	937.0
Kwinana	0.0	250.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	94.4	26.8	54.7	454.5	881.3
Cockburn	0.0	63.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	54.2	0.0	55.7	198.1	371.3
Joondalup	0.0	0.1	3.4	25.1	0.0	21.9	4.2	84.8	144.1	283.6
Bunbury	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	57.8	5.1	33.8	170.6	267.3
Cambridge	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	80.6	123.5	204.1
Fremantle	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	45.5	6.1	51.9
Dardanup	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	50.0	50.7
Stirling	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	24.1	19.4	43.5
Dandaragan	0.0	10.6	0.0-	0.0	0.0	0.0	- 0.0	2.4	25.4	38.4
Nedlands	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	28.3	28.5
Perth	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.8	0.0	0.0	23.8
South Perth	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0
Claremont	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Melville	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Subiaco	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Vincent	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	5408.1	585.8	87.7	3322.1	78.9	559.7	344.4	852.0	19077.8	30316.5

Field validation of estimated tuart canopy cover



Field validation of estimated native understorey condition

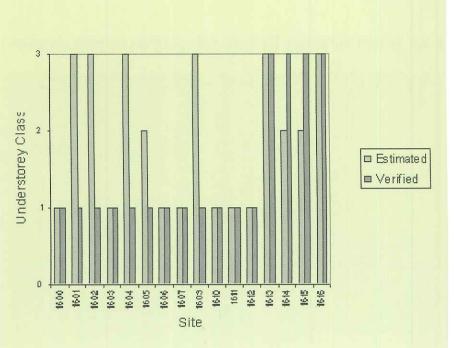
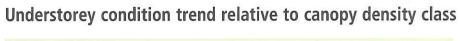
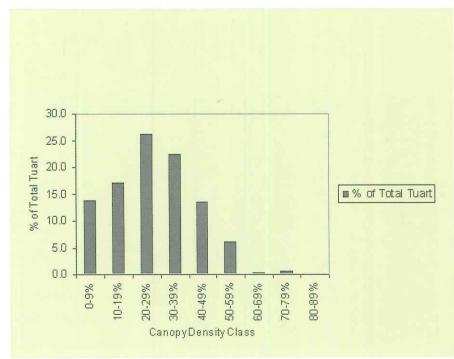


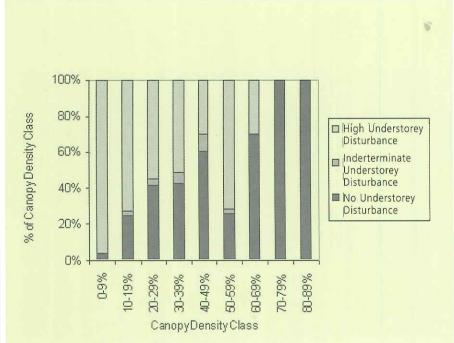
FIGURE 3

FIGURE 4

Canopy density class as a percentage of total tuart area







Extent, Density and Condition of Tuart Woodlands

Horizontal Datum: Geocentric Datum of Australia 1994 (GDA94) N-0.5

Legend

ion of Canopy density and understorey conditi Eucalyptus gomphocephala Woodlands

Canopy Density Class

%6 - 0

10 - 19%

20 - 29%

30 - 39%

40 - 49%

20 - 29%

%69 - 09

%62 - 02

%68 - 08

90 - 100%

Visible native understorey condition

No Disturbance

Uninterpretable

High Disturbance

* The level of disturbance requires further ground truthing.

MAP PROJECTION
Universal Transverse Mercator adopting the
Map Grid of Australia
Zone 50 CM 117° Datum: GDA 94











Lands managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management as provided by the CALM Act (1984)

National park

Nature reserve

Conservation park

State forest, Executive Director freehold and other reserve

Sections 5(1)(g) & 5(1)(h) reserve

Other lands managed by CALM

Unallocated Crown land

Unmanaged reserve

Other tenure

Other Crown reserve

Private property

Management boundaries and access

Local government boundary

Sealed road, two or more lanes Regional park boundary

Sealed road, one lane

Unsealed road

DATA DIRECTORY

THEME	SOURCE	DATE	CUSTODIAN
LGAs	DOLA	July 2000	DOLA
egional Parks	Regional Parks Unit	Dec. 2001	Regional Parks Unit
pography	Dept of Cons & Land Mot / DOLA	Sept. 2002	Dept of Cons & Land Mgt / DOLA
enure	Dept of Cons & Land Mot	2002 VIII.	Dept of Cons & Land Mgt

Bunbury

Busselton

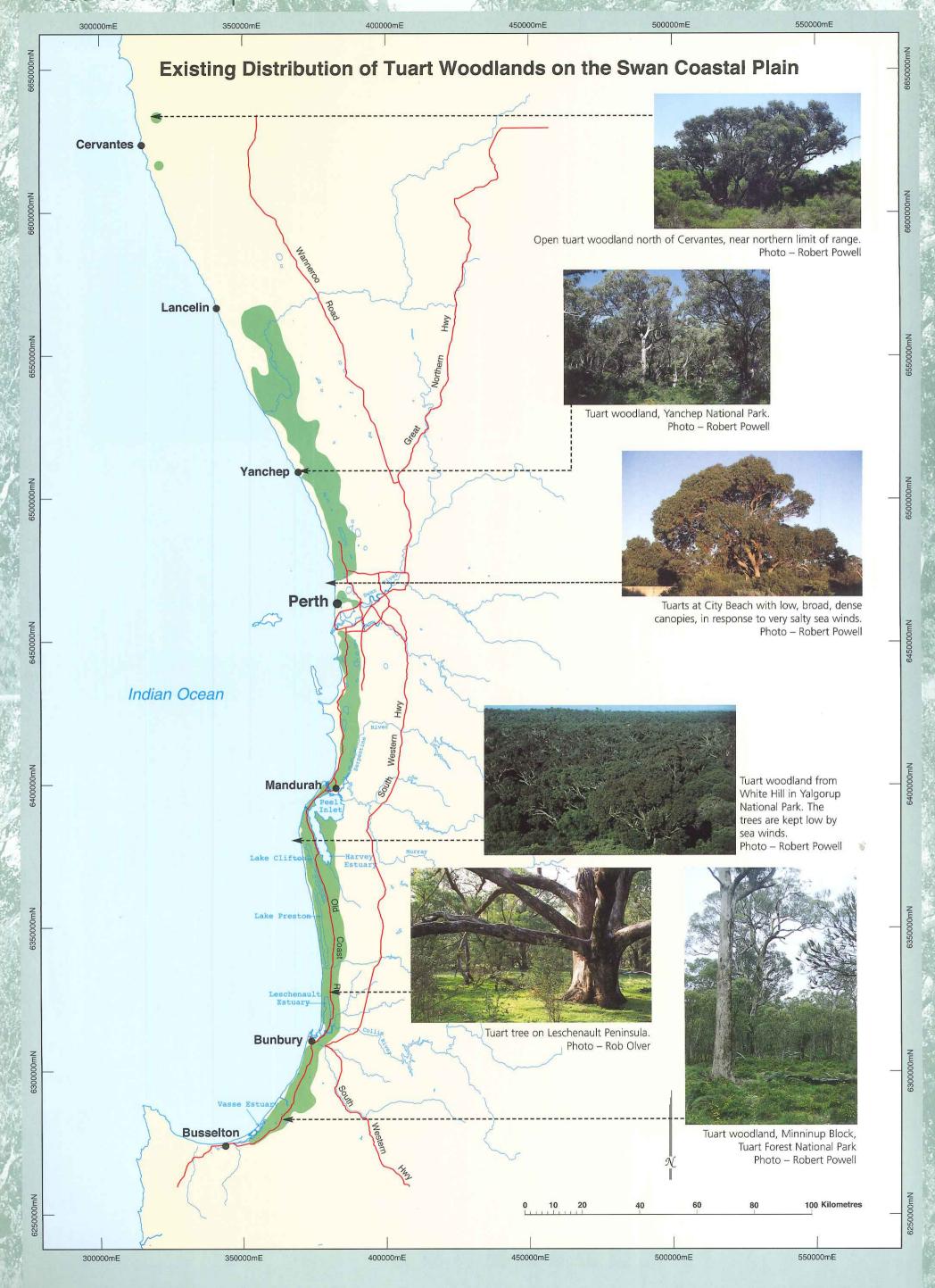
Produced by Information Management Branch under the direction of Keiran McNamara, Executive Director, Department of Conservation and Land Management for the Tuart Response Group

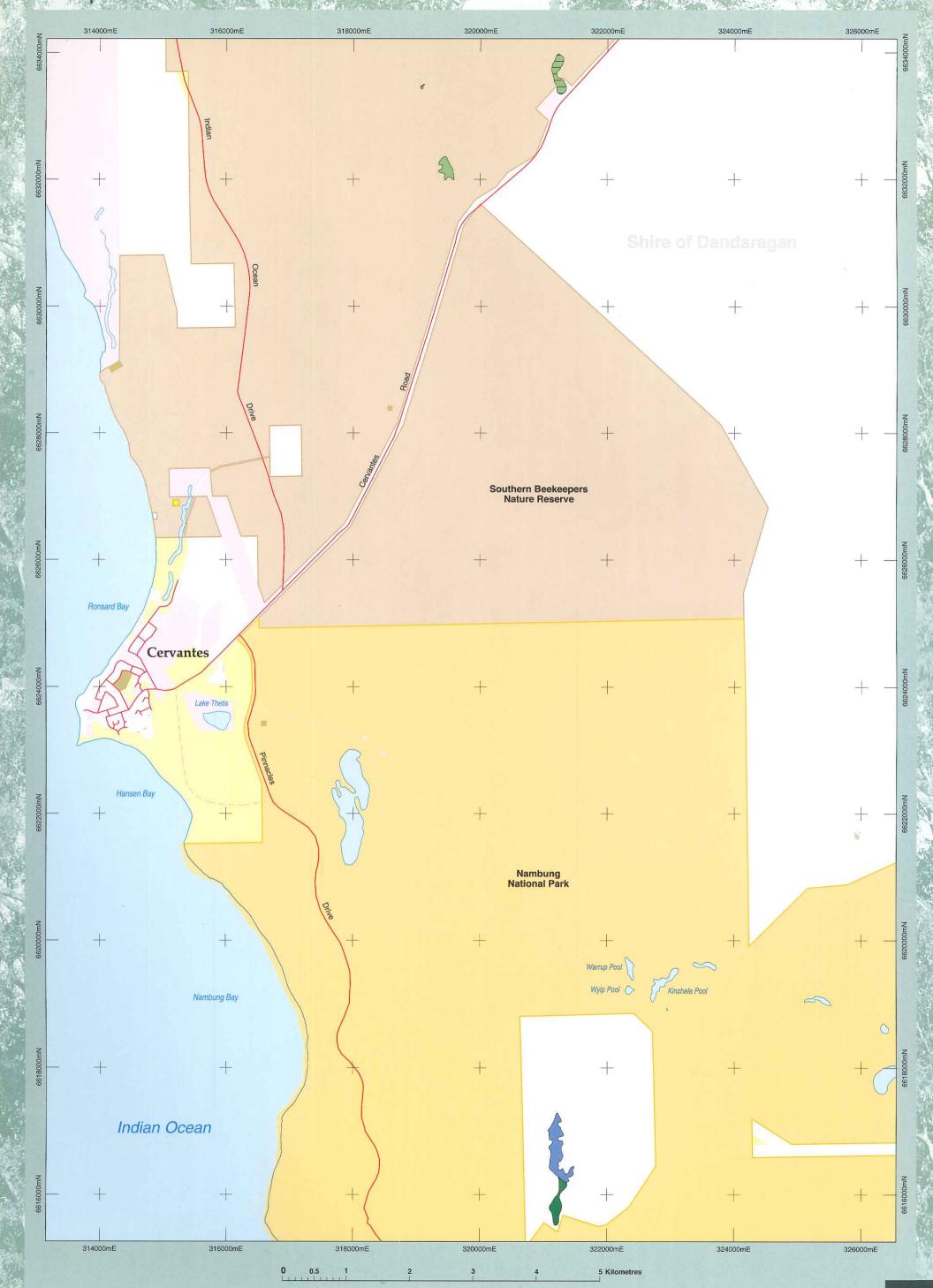
For further information contact Drew Haswell, Project Manager, Department of Conservation and Land Management; Executive Officer, Tuart Response Group ph: (08) 9334 0337 email: drewh@calm.wa.gov.au

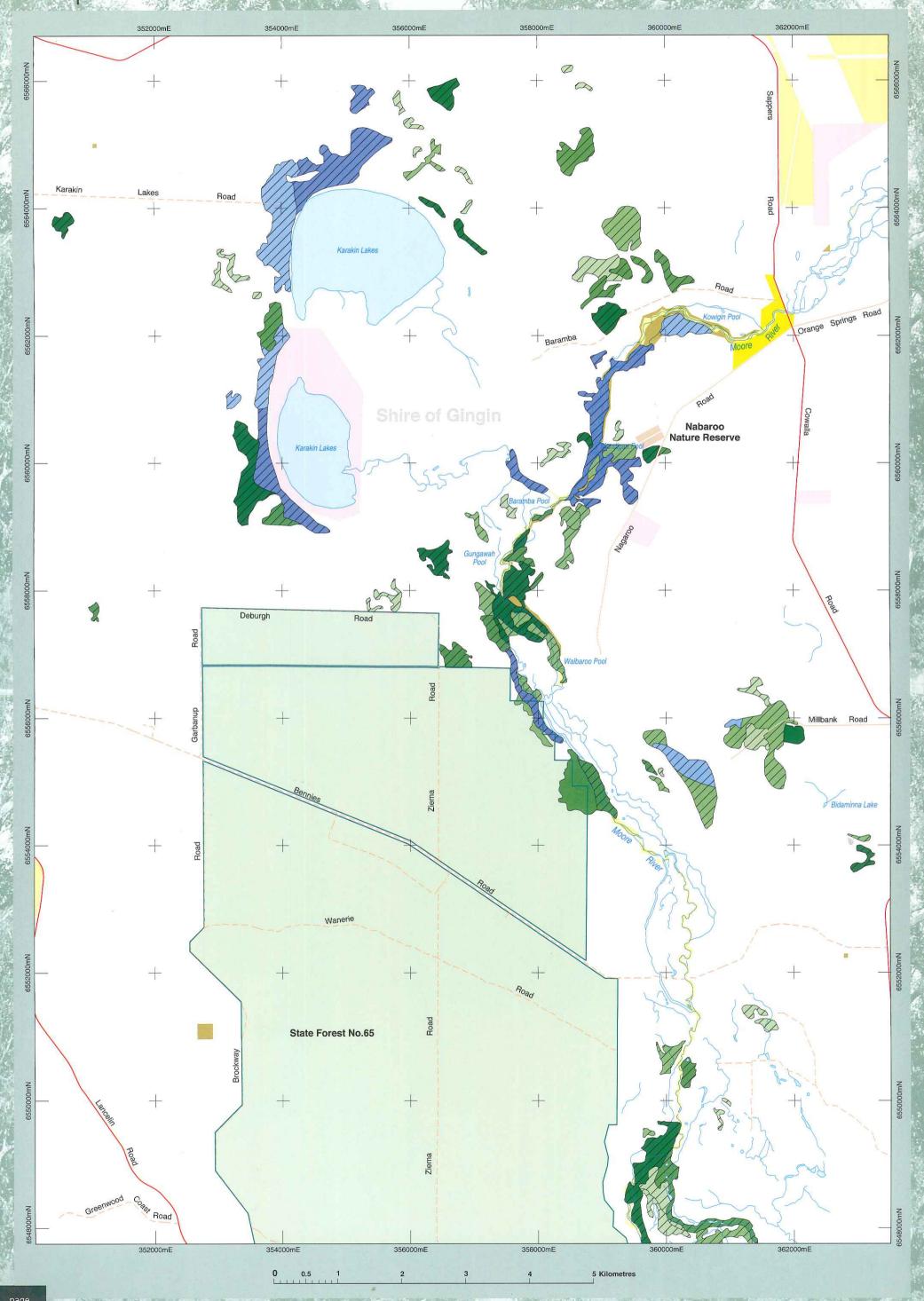
October 2003 IMB: 04011501

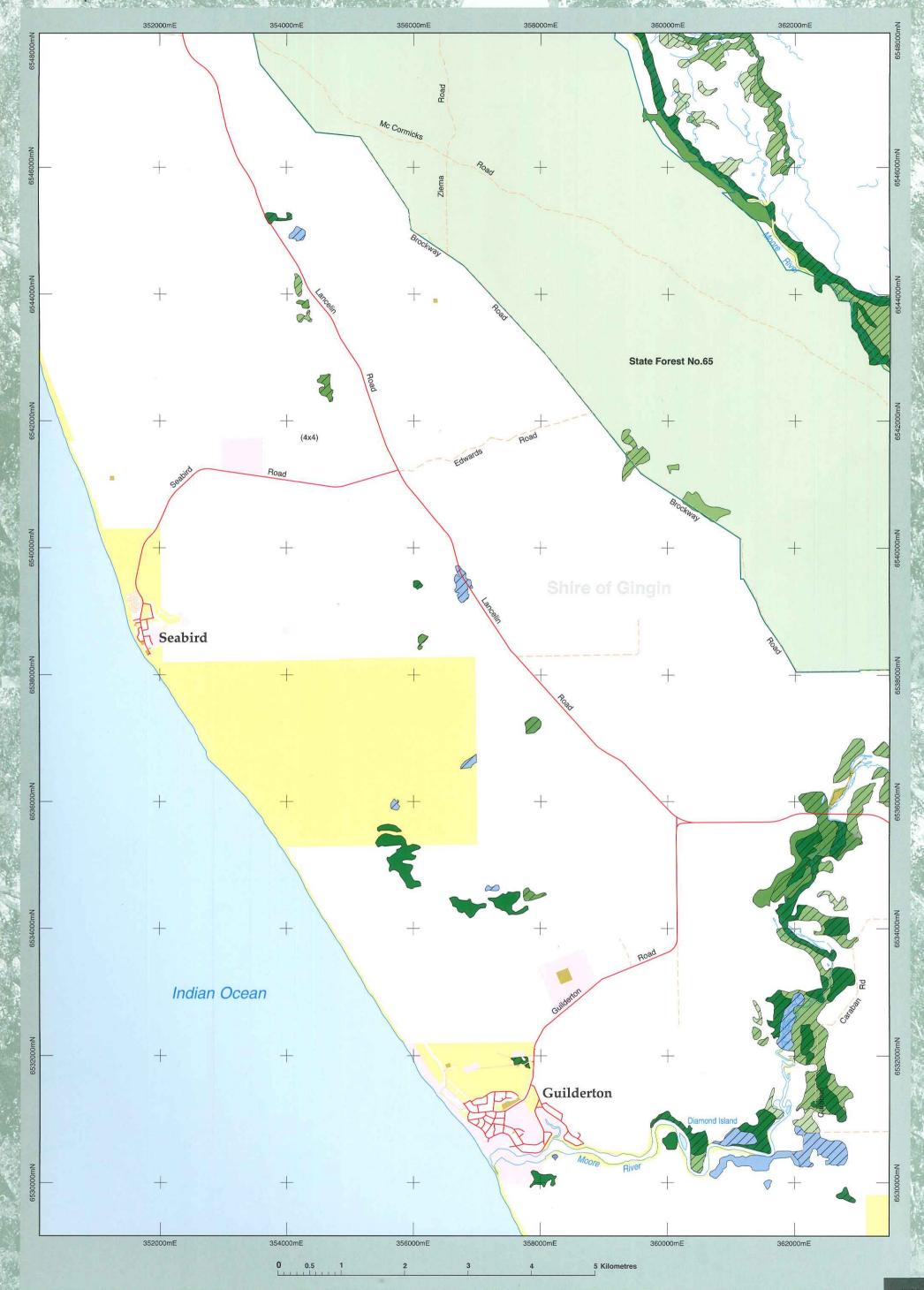
Map Index of Tuart Extent Perth Mandurah Yanchep • Indian Ocean Lancelin Cervantes 1

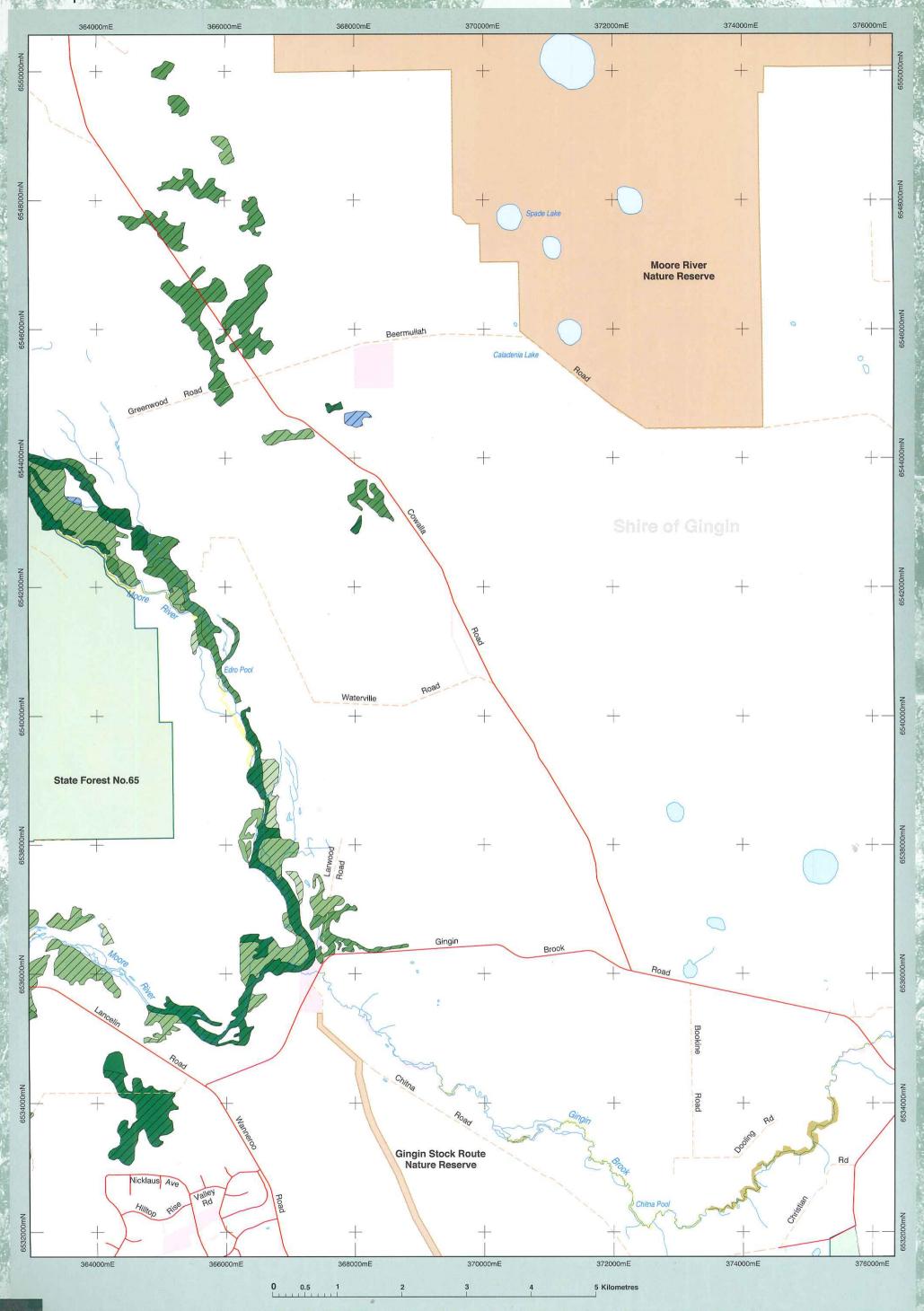
Distribution map



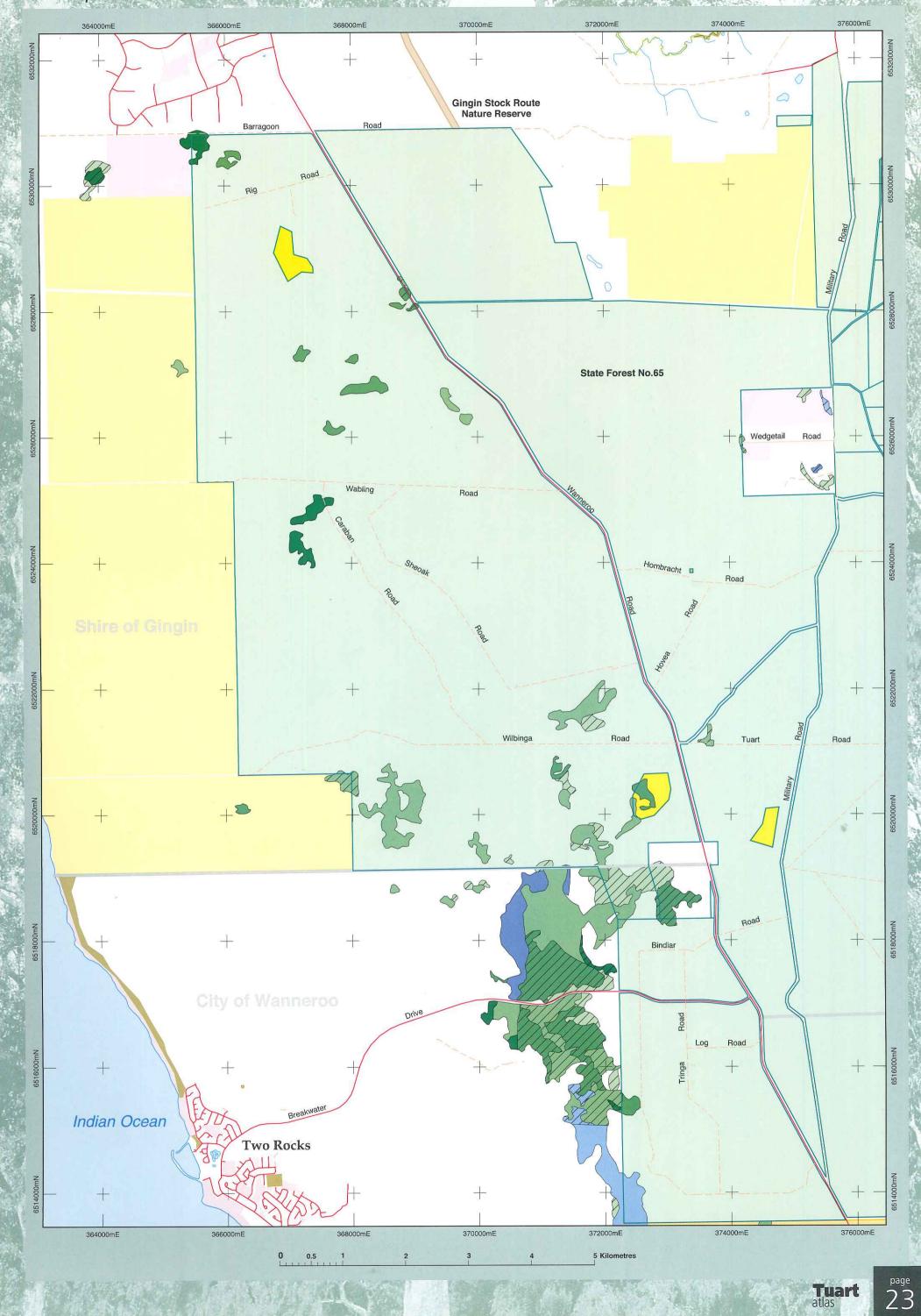


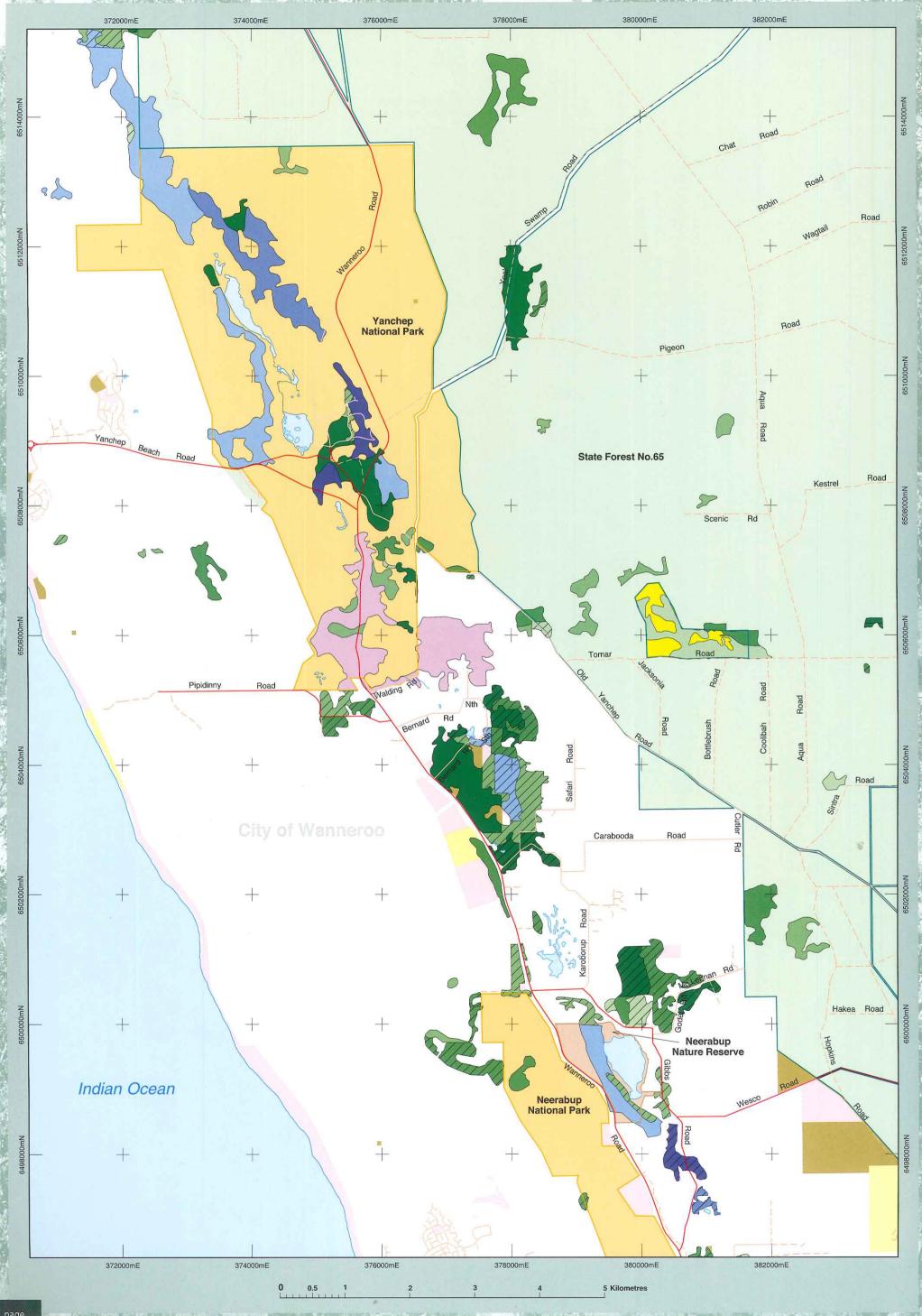


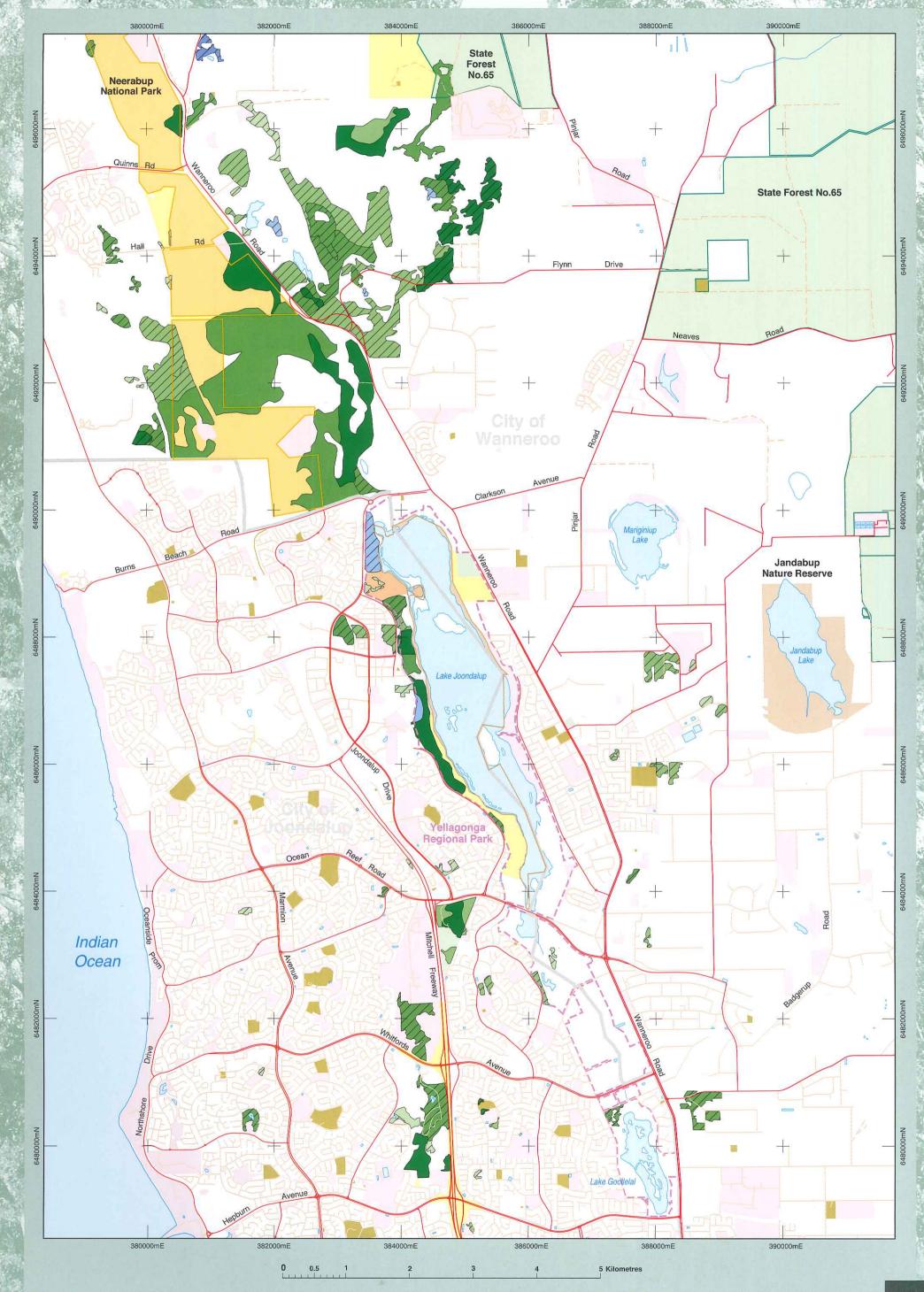


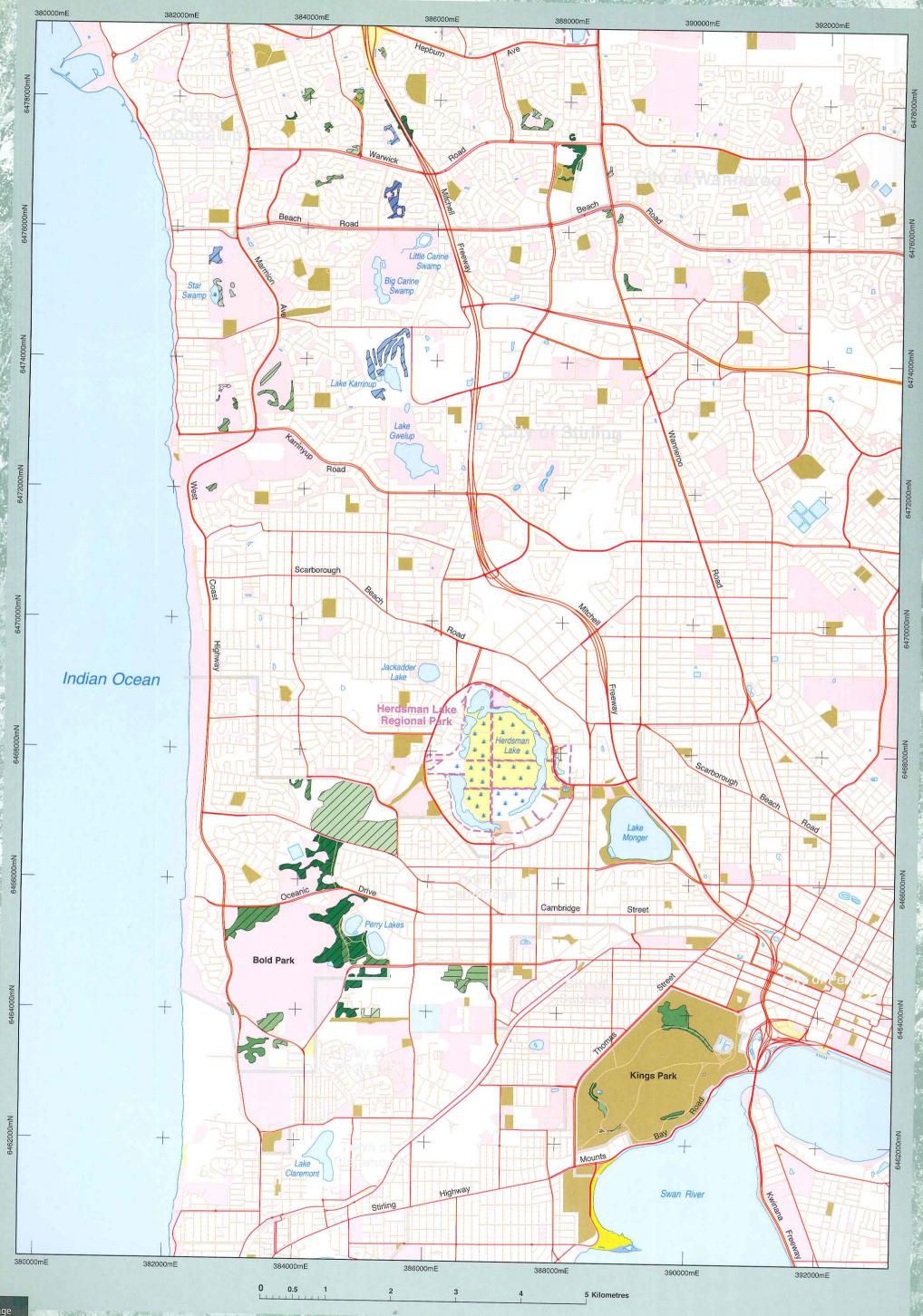


Map 5



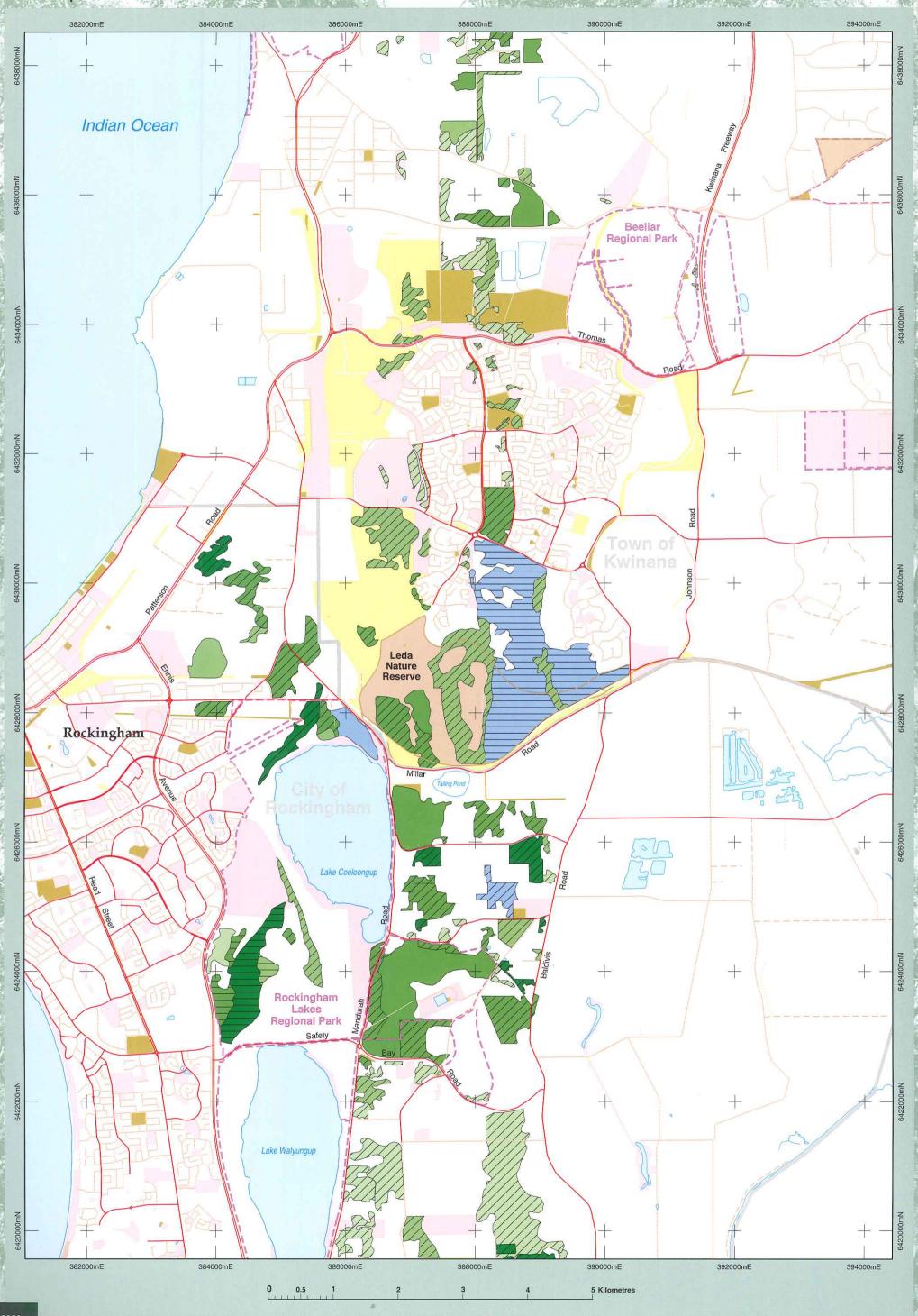


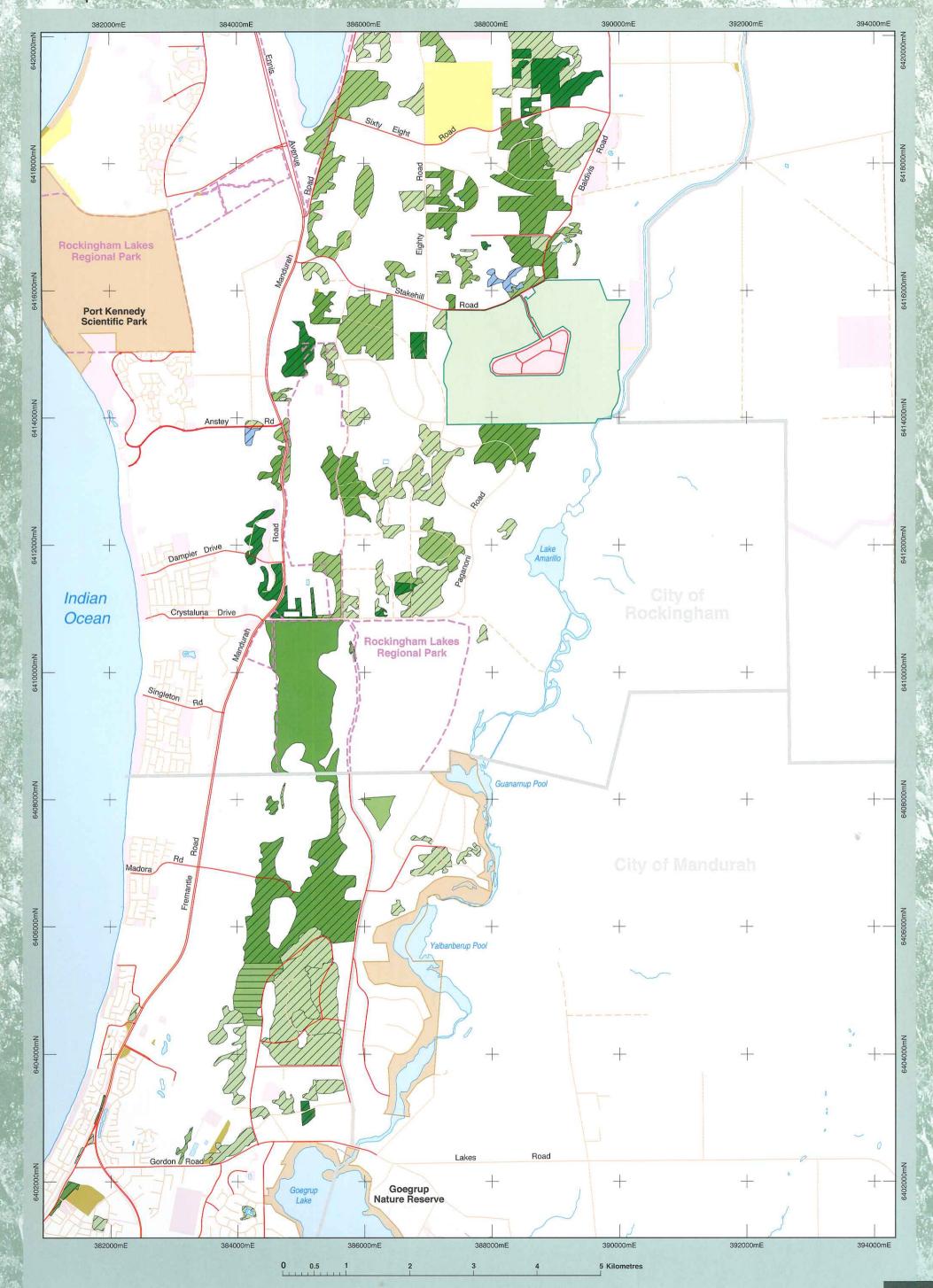




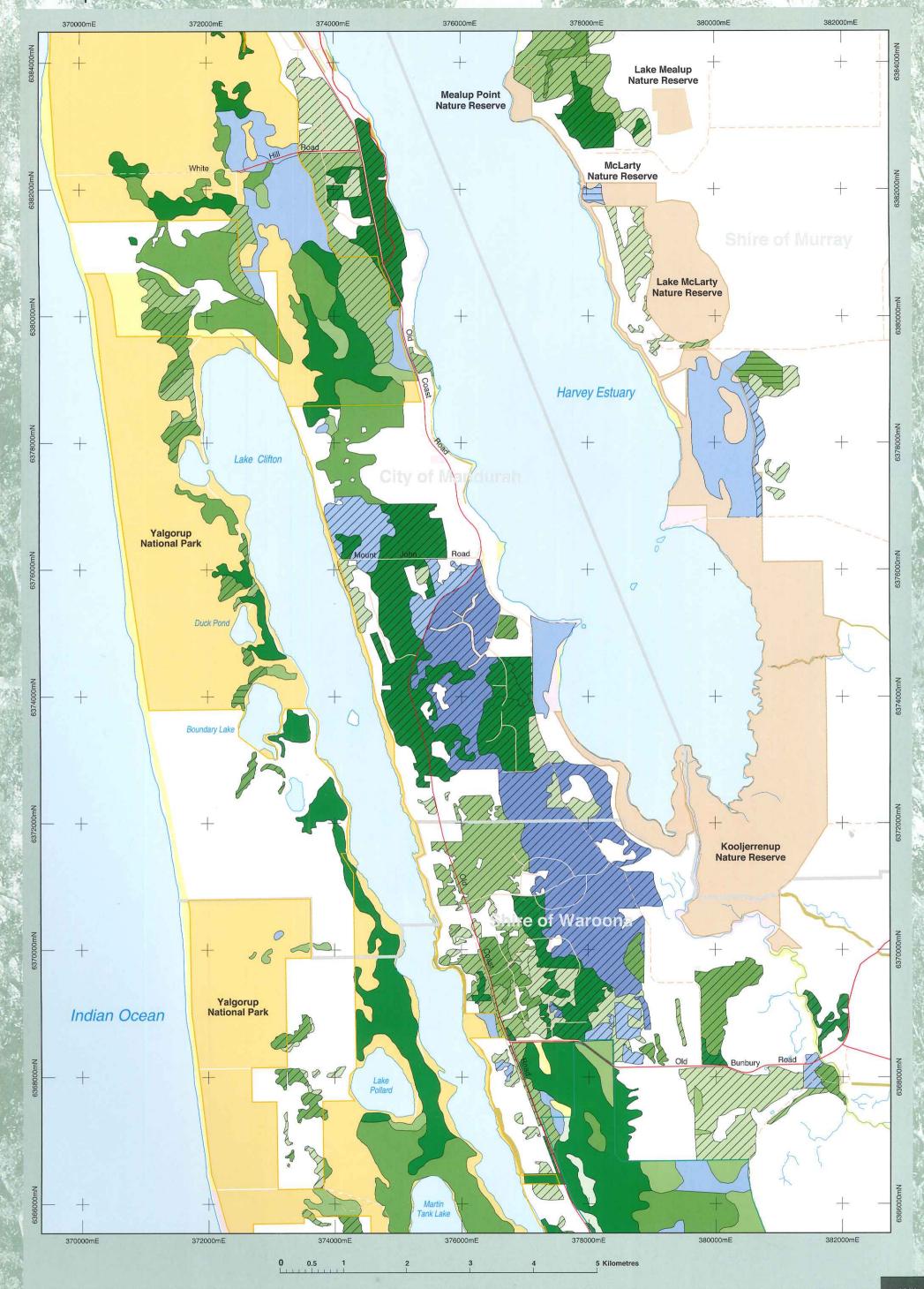
page 26

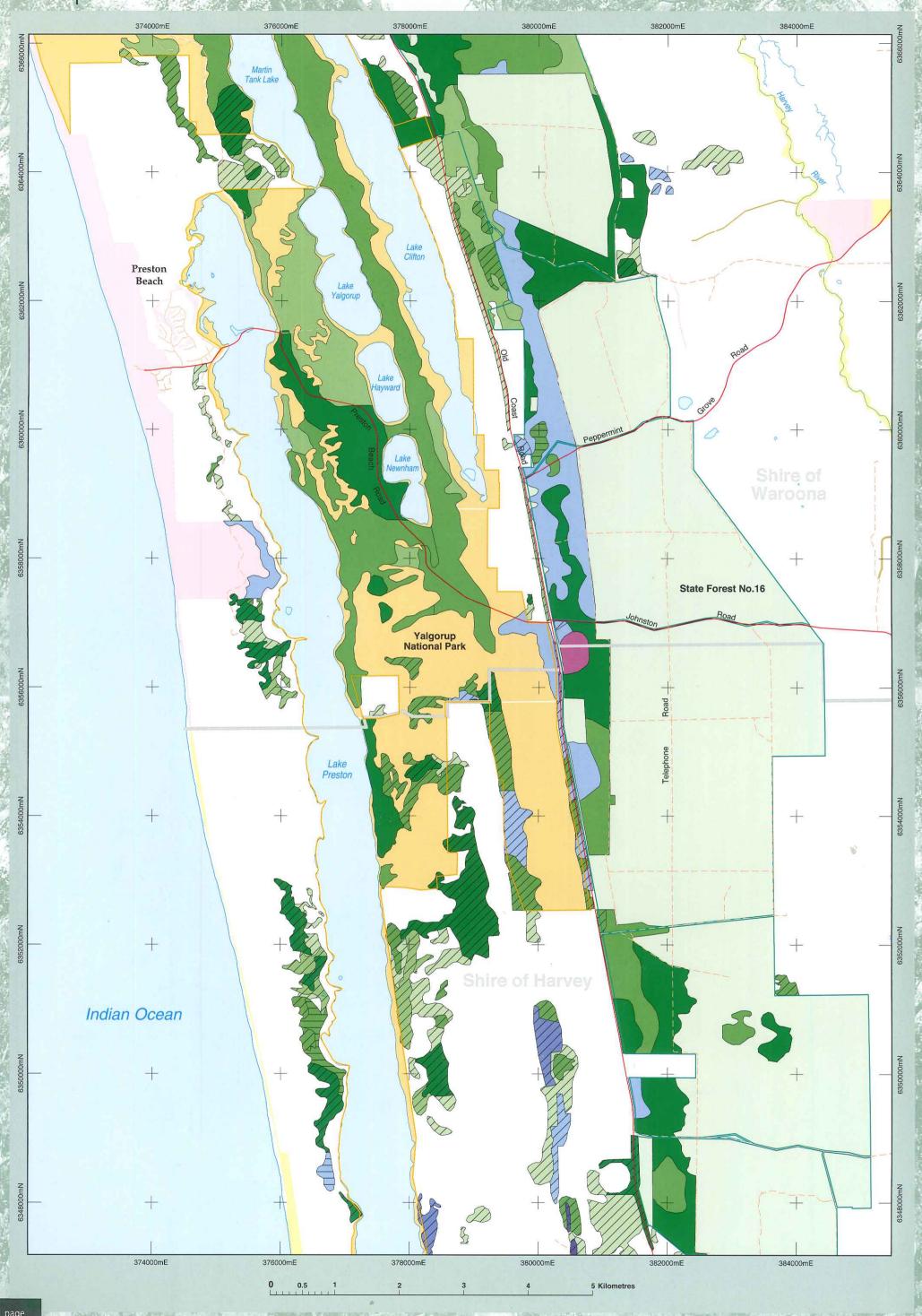




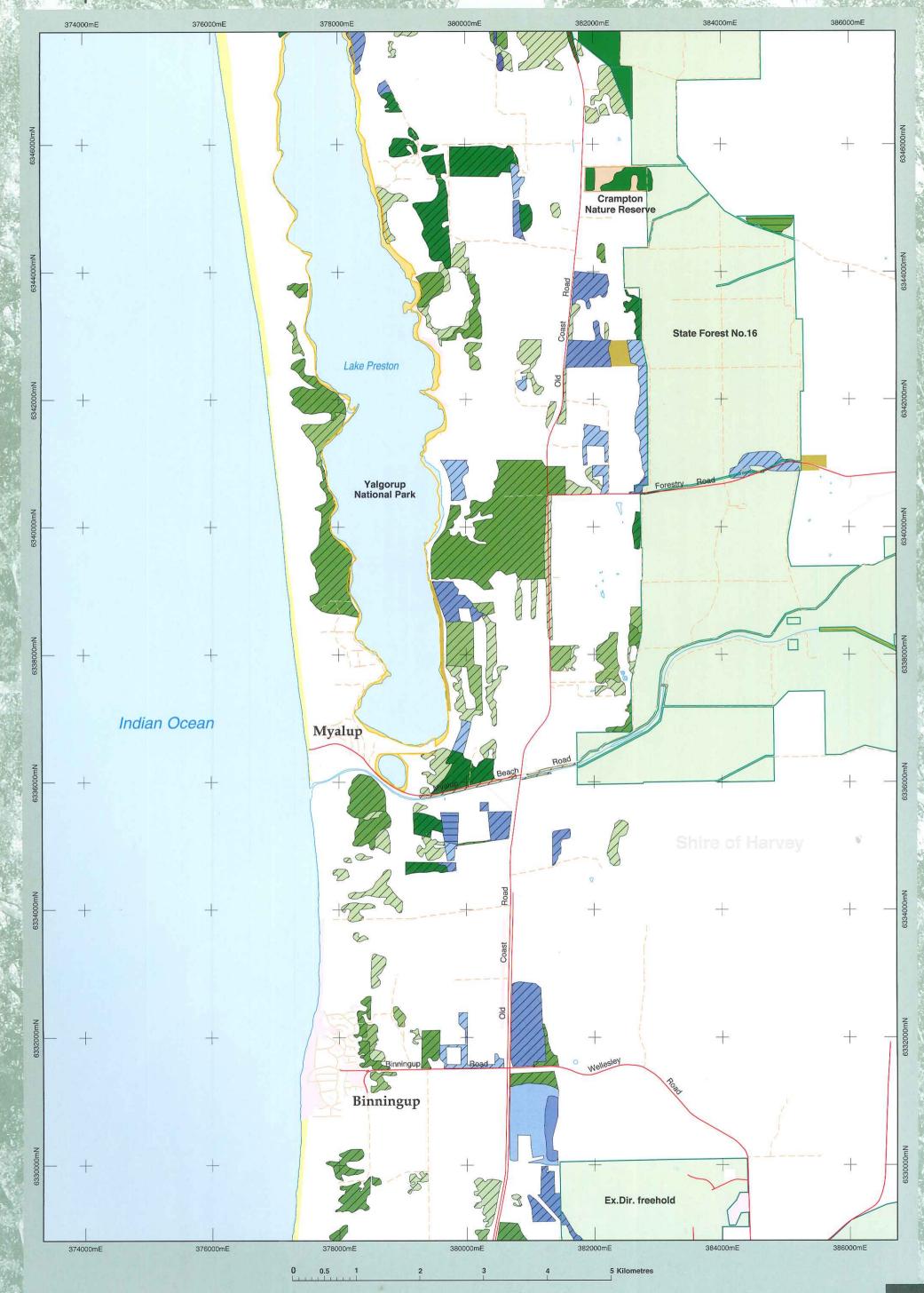


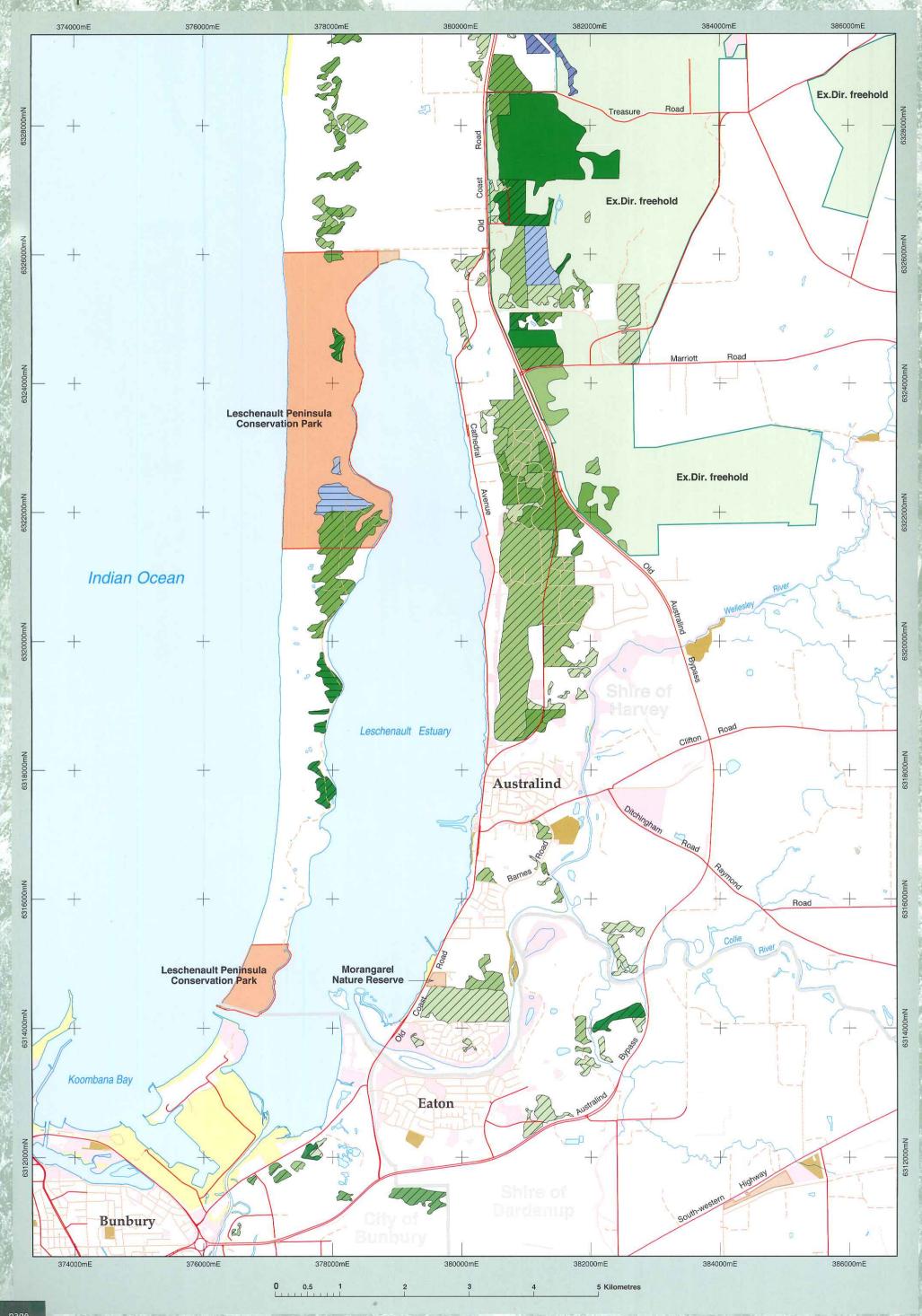






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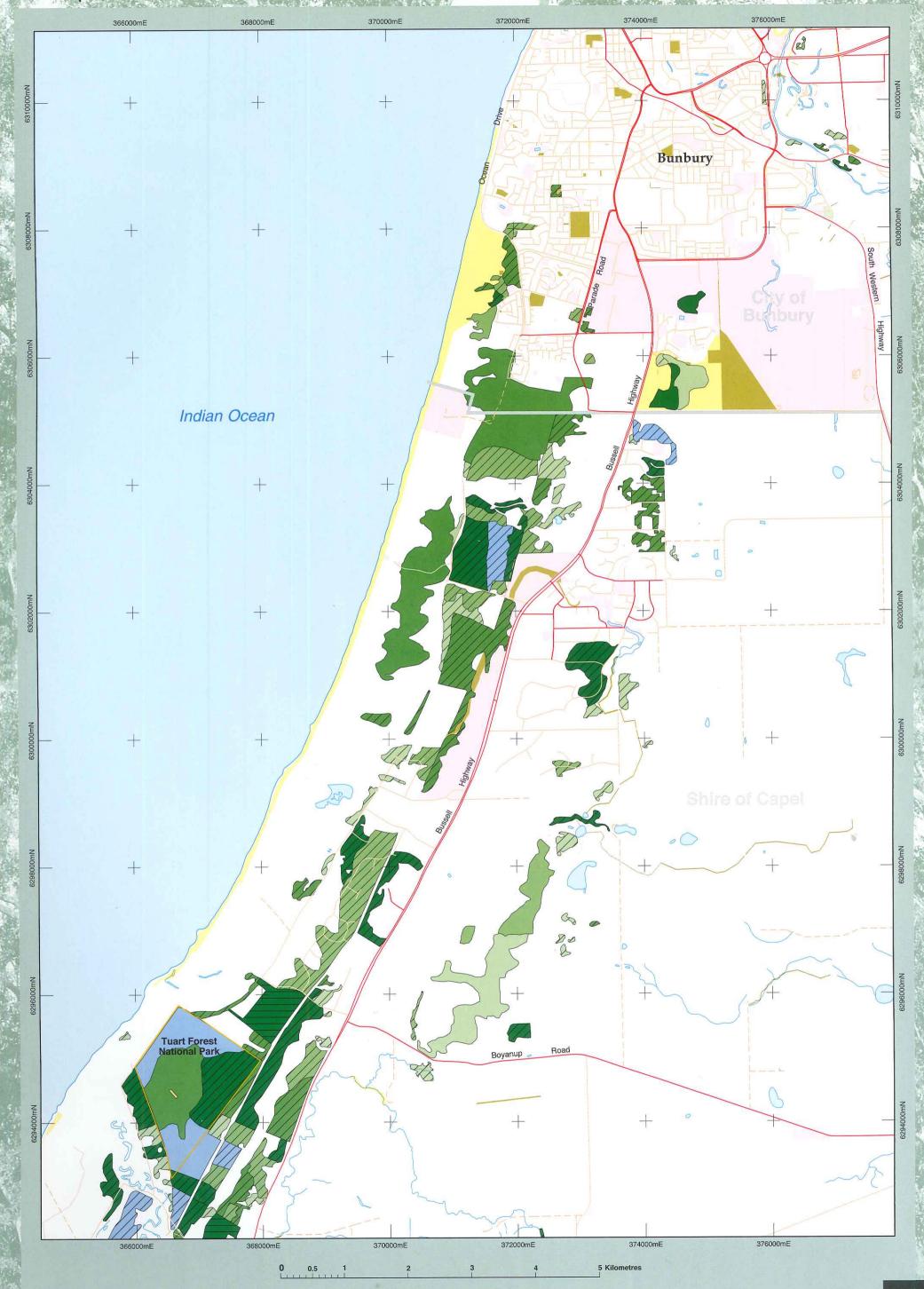


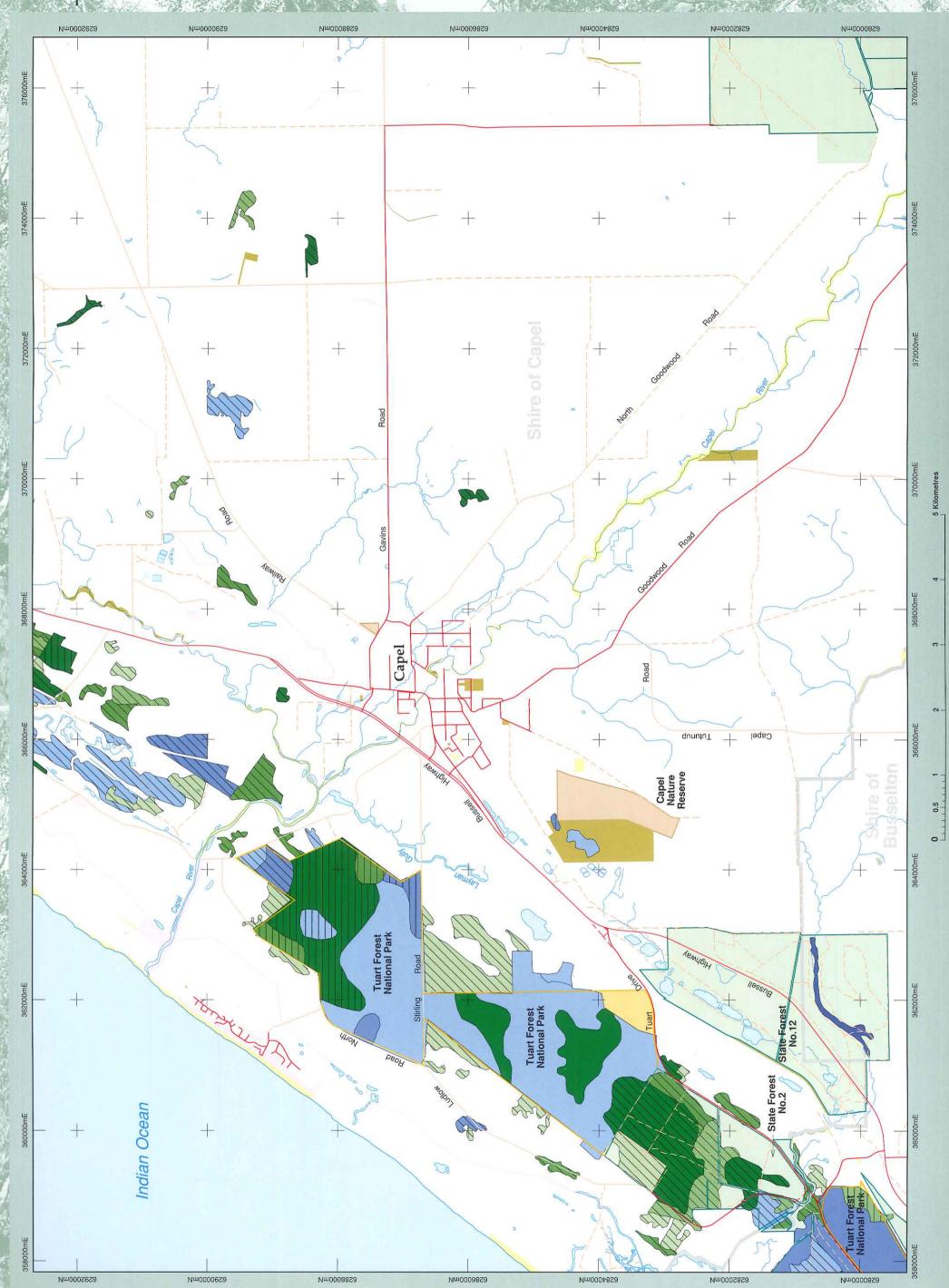


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