

# Clearing repudiates wildflower award

## Safe and Scenic Toodyay Road

TOODYAY won the Wildflower Friendly Award in May – a recognition of the lush flora that can be found along the roadsides of the Toodyay shire.

Flora Roads exist to preserve and protect roadside vegetation of high conservation value as well as allowing direct access for visitors and nature lovers. Some of these roads located in the Toodyay shire include Sandplain Road and Salt Valley Road, both of which are at risk due to road works.

Unfortunately it's not just Main Roads WA (MRWA) we need to worry about. Last month, along Sandplain Road a large amount of roadside vegetation was removed.

A shire official justified this decision based on fire safety concerns. There was no permit required, no consultation process, and the clearing was authorised based on a single decision.

Flora designated roads should be treated with much more care than usual, especially as we approach wildflower season.

Our group was established in response to excessive clearing on the Jingaling Brook section of Toodyay Road following the start of the road works.

In 2017, when MRWA sought a clearing permit, it was extremely hard for a member of the public to understand the full extent of the clearing.

MRWA's maps were of a scale that was difficult to read, notification of clearance permits and requests for public comments were hard to find, and the timeline for comments was unnecessarily short.

We also believe that the application process for the Department of Water and



*Verge clearing on Sandplain Road which is a designated Flora Road.*

Environmental Regulation is fundamentally flawed. If a permit applicant simply cites fire safety or road safety as the reason for clearing, then the permit will be automatically issued.

Applicants, who don't initially meet established clearing principles as with the Toodyay Road upgrades, are eventually approved when they take remedial steps such as land offsets and artificial bird nesting boxes.

However, the validity and effectiveness of these is far from established.

Toodyay Road has many things that

need fixing but we would like MRWA to consider less-destructive improvements such as rumble strips and the sealing of hard shoulders.

As a result, old-growth eucalypts, native orchids, priority-classified plants such as the purple Beaufortia, hollows that wildlife relies on to survive, and food sources that cannot be easily replaced will be preserved.

For more information or to sign our petition, visit our website at [sastr.com.au](http://sastr.com.au) so we can lobby the State Government for changes.