

ENVIRONMENT

New road rides roughshod over biodiverse species

Safe and Scenic Toodyay Road

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A SECTION of Toodyay Road that adjoins the Salt Valley Road and Sandplain Road intersections is likely to be the next local area to be upgraded by Main Roads, probably at end of year.

This section was last on their list, but we suspect budgetary constraints may mean Main Roads need to complete this section as they may not have funds to complete all works as originally planned.

The estimated cost for this area was put at \$45 million in 2019 but has likely increased.

We have been told there was no further allocation for Toodyay Road in the recent State Budget.

Of all the sections along Toodyay Road the area around the Salt Valley and Sandplain roads is the most biodiverse, with wandoo and powder bark woodland supporting chuditch habitat, Carnaby cockatoo nesting trees and foraging habitat as well as number of priority plant species.

The area is a major wildlife corridor.

Building a four-lane highway and clearing 13 hectares of vegetation will



A Main Roads animation shows the proposed upgrade at the intersection of Salt Valley and Sandplain roads. SASTR comments inserted.

have devastating effects.

One reason for so much clearing is to accommodate the new alignment of

Toodyay Road.

Main Roads has consistently said it would not widen or improve the existing road or fix the intersections as this would cause traffic management issues and delays.

The loss of 13 hectares of biodiverse woodland is a consequence of this.

This year will be the last opportunity to view this lovely bushland before it is bulldozed.

Main Roads has indicated they will implement a fauna management plan.

We have not seen the plan, but we note the Carnaby cockatoo nesting season runs from July to December.

We hope Main Roads will not begin clearing during this time which is the main

breeding time for birds and reptiles.

Hollows in trees to be cleared need to be checked and species relocated.

Unfortunately, many small reptiles and invertebrates will still be lost.

It looks like we will also lose the stopping place on the corner of Salt Valley Road and there is no indication whether one will be re-established when work is finished.

SASTR has been continuing to send postcards to Minister for Environment Reece Whitby to pressure the State Government into reducing the clearing footprint.

Visit our website for all the information about Toodyay Road at sastr.com.au or email us at info@sastr.com.au to find out how you can help us.