



Ecological thinning plan 2026

Introduction

The Forest Management Plan 2024–2033 (FMP) provides for ecological thinning as a management tool to promote forest health and resilience to conserve biodiversity across jarrah, karri, wandoo, and mining rehabilitated forests. Ecological thinning began in early 2024 and is undertaken within mapped Forest Enhancement Areas (FEAs), where stand structure, stocking density and site characteristics indicate that strategic intervention will improve the forest's ability to withstand a drying climate and recover from recent disturbance events.

Ecological thinning occurs under strict environmental assessment processes and aims to maintain and enhance biodiversity, improve structural complexity, and reduce competition for water and nutrients resulting from significant drought related, die-off events such as the one recorded over the 2023/24 summer period. Ecological thinning operations are aligned with the strategic goals of the FMP that also integrates other key forest management activities such as prescribed burning and feral animal control.

Context

Purpose and annual scope

The FMP sets an annual upper limit of 8,000 hectares for ecological thinning. The 2026 plan identifies approximately 7,800 hectares of candidate area across the Swan, South West and Warren regions. The total candidate area intentionally exceeds the likely operational area to provide flexibility should local constraints, seasonal conditions or preoperational assessments require adjustments. Final operational areas are confirmed after detailed planning and require approval under the [Disturbance Approval System \(DAS\)](#).

Planning, assessment and approvals

Each FEA undergoes a multi stage process including field reconnaissance, ecological assessment, prescription development and DAS environmental review, before any thinning can occur. Thinning will not commence unless DAS approval is granted, including any conditions required to avoid or mitigate impacts on flora, fauna, hydrology, heritage or soil values. The full planning and implementation cycle may extend beyond 12 months, so the plan includes FEAs that carry forward from 2025 alongside new FEAs identified for 2026.

Selection of areas for 2026

New and continuing FEAs have been selected based on:

- Map 13 of the FMP;
- learnings from the drought related die-off from the 2023/24 summer;
- landscape vulnerability to climate change, including historic and forecast change in annual rainfall;
- hydrology and topography;
- potential benefit to biodiversity features such as adjacent wetlands and streams, Old Growth Forest, or fauna habitat zones;
- regrowth age, density and capacity to respond to thinning;
- operational feasibility, including boundaries, accessibility and opportunities for post-thinning silvicultural burns; and
- alignment with research priorities and adaptive management trials.

In some FEAs, ecological thinning also addresses the presence of exotic tree species such as yellow stringybark (*Eucalyptus muelleriana*). Yellow stringybark is not native to Western Australian forests and is a species that suppresses the regeneration of plants in its vicinity. Removing exotic species supports the restoration of native forest biodiversity.

Relationship to the conservation reserve system

Several FEAs overlap with indicative areas for new reserves or priority areas for assessment under the FMP. Ecological thinning in these areas does not delay or replace consideration for future reservation. In some cases, one cycle of thinning may be required prior to the transition to a conservation tenure, especially where past disturbance, altered stand structure or the presence of introduced species would otherwise compromise long-term ecological outcomes. This approach supports the establishment of future reserves to a healthier, more resilient condition.

Protection of Old Growth Forest and high value features

Old Growth Forest and Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) are not subject to thinning. The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) applies strict spatial exclusions, ecological prescriptions and operational controls to protect sensitive values. Site specific assessments ensure that ecological thinning does not directly or indirectly deteriorate old growth patches, riparian features, habitat trees or other high conservation value elements.

Mining rehabilitation areas

Jarrah dominant mining rehabilitation established in the 1980s remains a priority for thinning in the early years of the FMP. These stands are typically dense and even-aged, with limited structural complexity, making them highly susceptible to drought stress. DBCA continues to work with mining companies to refine boundaries and operational requirements, recognising that thinning in these areas supports long term ecosystem development and resilience.



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Consultation

The draft of this plan was circulated to the Noongar regional corporations, Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER), Water Corporation, Forest Products Commission, WA Forest Alliance, Forestry Australia, Forest Industries Federation WA, Sustainable Forest Industries Roundtable WA, Bee Industry Council of WA, and Chamber Minerals and Energy WA. Responding to the responses received, the following adjustments were made:

- Ross 03 has been deferred until more information is available on the potential impacts of ecological thinning in drinking water catchments.
- Barton 03 and Urbrae 03 are contingent on further DWER and Water Corporation consultation and if proceeding, will be scheduled toward the end of 2026.
- Crowea 01 and 12, Jalbarragup 02, Nairn 08 and 09, Poole 06 and 07, Sutton 04 and 05, and Quilben 01 have been removed due to a higher than initially expected quantity of 'carry over' FEAs from the 2025 plan, and requirement for the total area to not exceed 8,000 hectares.

Where it was decided to not adjust the plan, reasons for those decisions have been provided directly to respondents.

Monitoring and adaptive management

DBCA is now two years into implementing ecological thinning under the current FMP. Monitoring programs are assessing biodiversity indicators such as stand structure, moisture dynamics, and other ecological responses, however at this stage, the available data is insufficient to guide adaptive changes to established forest management principles. The foundational work undertaken during these initial thinning operations is expected to support the refinement of prescriptions, the selection of future FEAs, and the development of ongoing monitoring frameworks. Adaptive management principles will be progressively applied as data becomes robust over time.

Plan revision and variations

The listed FEAs are subject to ongoing field reconnaissance and assessment and hence deferral or modifications to boundaries may arise during the detailed planning phase.

Once approved, variations to this plan are subject to individual review on a case-by-case basis and endorsement by the Executive Director, Conservation and Ecosystem Management Division, DBCA.



Forest Management Plan 2024–2033

Table 1: Candidate Forest Enhancement Areas for 2026 within the Swan Region

Jarrah regrowth or mining rehabilitation				
Forest block/compartment	Identifier	Jarrah forest - north east	Jarrah forest - north west	Mine rehabilitation - jarrah dominant
Areas from 2025				
Barton 03	PHBT030024	20	20	
Chandler 04	PHCH04MR24			120
Occidental 01	PHOC010024	100	100	
Turner 02, Urbrae 02	DTN02MN			380
Urbrae 03, Turner 02, Scott 04	PHUR03MR24			400

Table 2: Candidate Forest Enhancement Areas for 2026 within the South West Region

Jarrah regrowth		Area (hectares)			
Forest block/compartment	Identifier	Jarrah forest - north east	Jarrah forest - Blackwood Plateau	Jarrah forest - sandy basins	Jarrah forest - south
Areas from 2025					
Cornwall 02	WECW020025	140			
Gregory 04	BLGG040024				220
Hamilton 05	CHA0521			40	
Warner 07	BLWN070025	620			
Wilga 06	BLWI060025			690	
New 2026					
Canebreak 04	BLCB040026		400		
Cornwall 01	WECW010026	410			



Forest Management Plan 2024–2033

Table 3: Candidate Forest Enhancement Areas for 2026 within the Warren Region

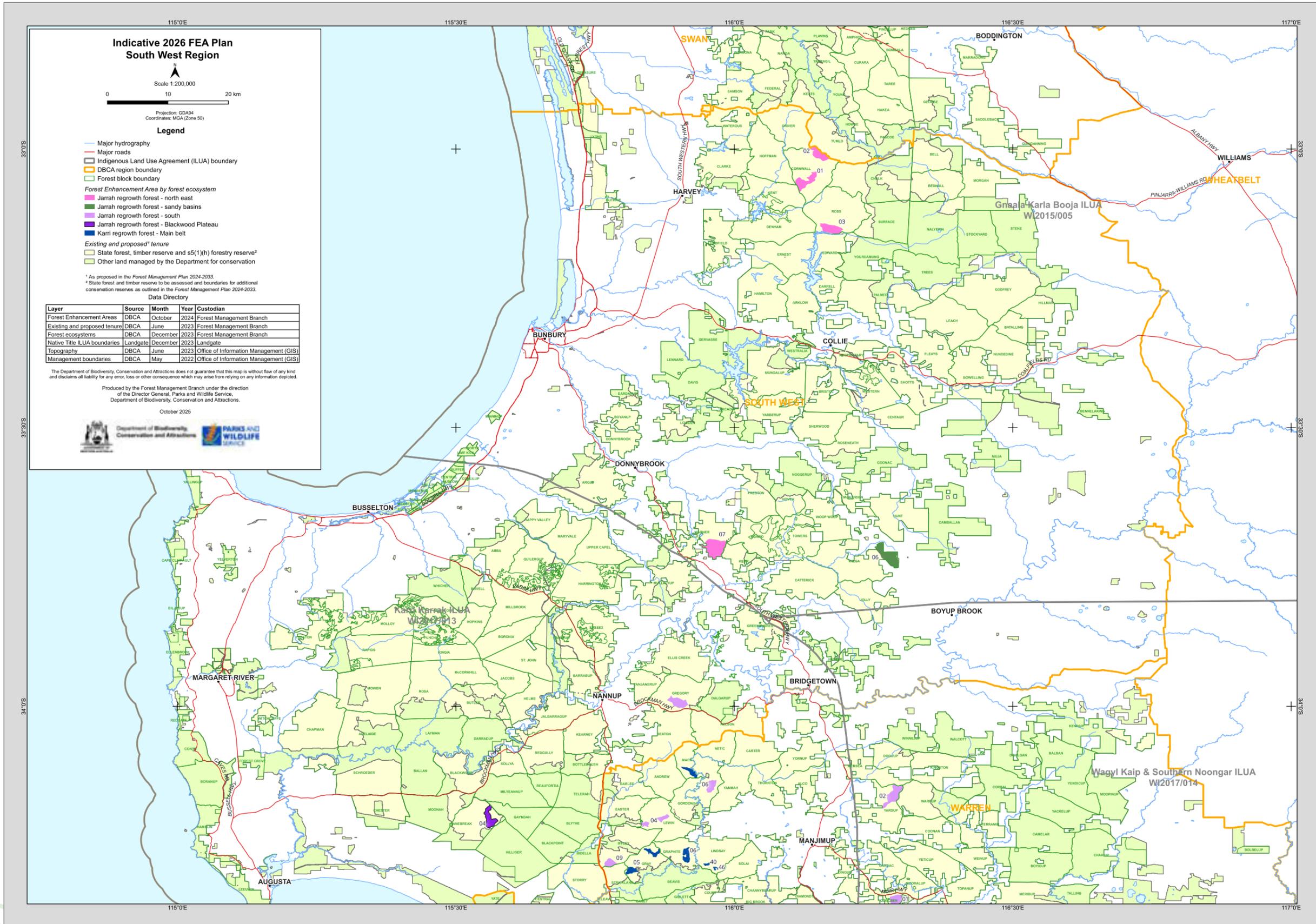
Jarrah regrowth or karri regrowth		Area (hectares)	
Forest block/compartment	Identifier	Jarrah forest - south	Karri - Main belt
Areas from 2025			
Brockman 12	DOBR120024		60
Court 01	DOCU010025		60
Crowea 04	DOCW040025	20	50
Crowea 11	DOCW110024		70
Diamond Two 13, 15	DODT131524		70
Dordagup 03	DODD030024	80	90
Fly Brook 01	DOFB010024	110	
Gordon 01	DOGO010023	10	
Gray 03/04	DOGY030424		50
Gray 05	DOGY050025		130
Iffley 03 & 06	DOIF0306224		10
Iffley 09	DOIF090025	140	
Lewin 04	DOLE040024	240	
Lindsay 27	DOLI270024		30
Lindsay 37,38,42,43	DOLI37M424		90
Mattaband 02	FRMA020025		100
Mattaband 0618	WMA0618		60
Mattaband 0620	WMA0620		80
Mattaband 11	FRMA110025		10
Mattaband 12	FRMA120025		50
Nairn 02	DONA020025		100
Nairn 03 (E)	DONA030024		70
Nairn 09	DONA090025		10
Poole 05	DOPL050024		260
Sutton 11 (E)	PSU1118		250
Sutton 14	DOSU140024		20
Wattle 12	FRWT120025		150
Wheatley 06	DOWH060025	230	
Yardup 02	DOYR020024	520	

Jarrah regrowth or karri regrowth		Area (hectares)	
Forest block/compartment	Identifier	Jarrah forest - south	Karri - Main belt
New 2026			
Collins 05	DOCO050026		140
Dombakup 12	DODM001226		50
Fly Brook 02	DOFB020026		90
Fly Brook 03	DOFB030026		80
Gray 01	DOGY010026		150
Graphite 06	DOGP060026	110	130
Lindsay 40	DOLI400026		40
Lindsay 46	DOLI460026		30
Mack 04	DOMK040026		110
Poole 03	DOPL030026		60

* (E) – presence of *Eucalyptus muelleriana* (non-endemic)

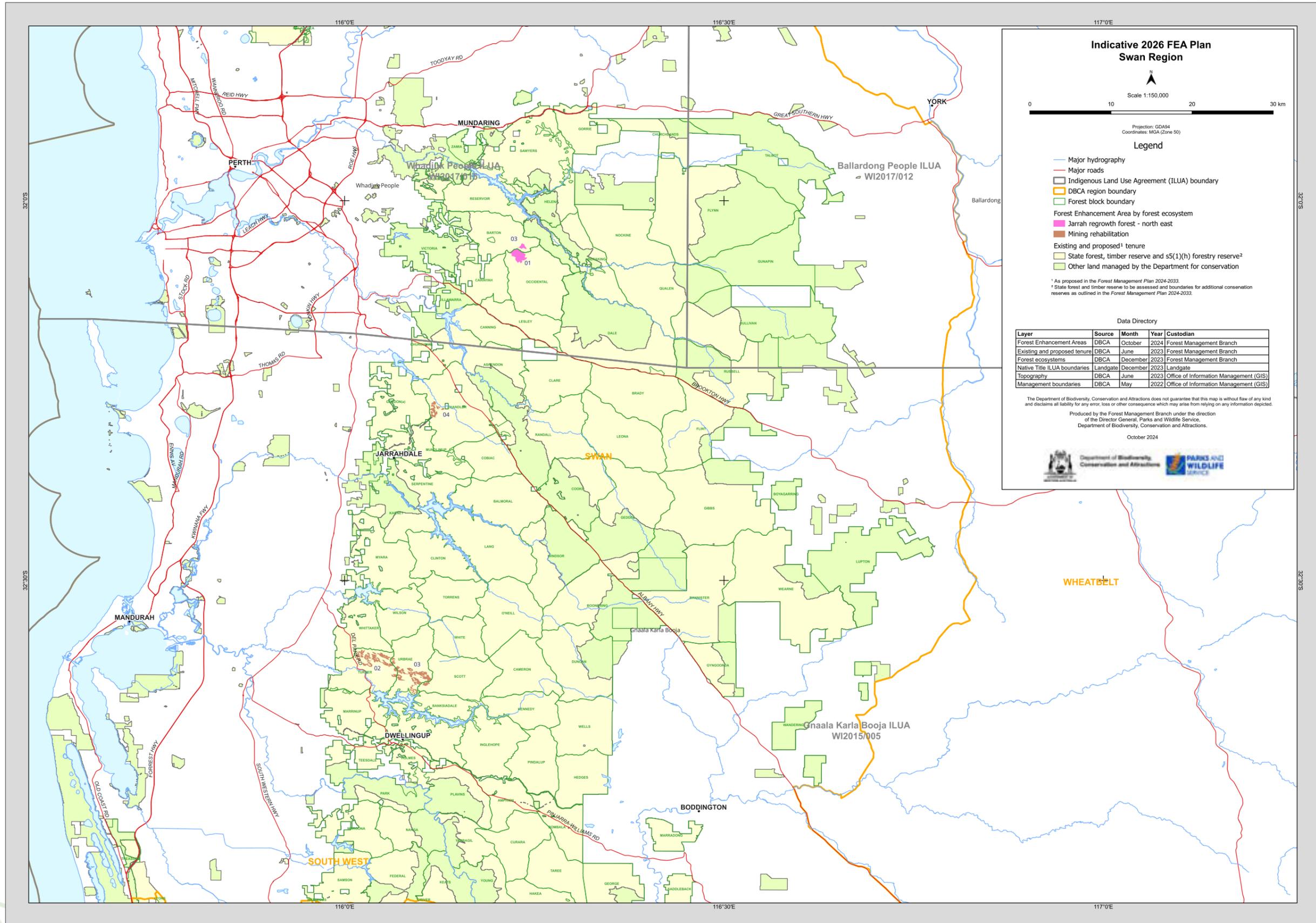


Forest Management Plan 2024–2033





Forest Management Plan 2024–2033



Indicative 2026 FEA Plan Swan Region

Scale 1:150,000

Projection: GDA94
Coordinates: MGA (Zone 50)

Legend

- Major hydrography
- Major roads
- Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) boundary
- DBCA region boundary
- Forest block boundary
- Forest Enhancement Area by forest ecosystem
 - Jarrah regrowth forest - north east
 - Mining rehabilitation
- Existing and proposed¹ tenure
 - State forest, timber reserve and s5(1)(h) forestry reserve²
 - Other land managed by the Department for conservation

¹ As proposed in the Forest Management Plan 2024-2033.
² State forest and timber reserve to be assessed and boundaries for additional conservation reserves as outlined in the Forest Management Plan 2024-2033.

Data Directory

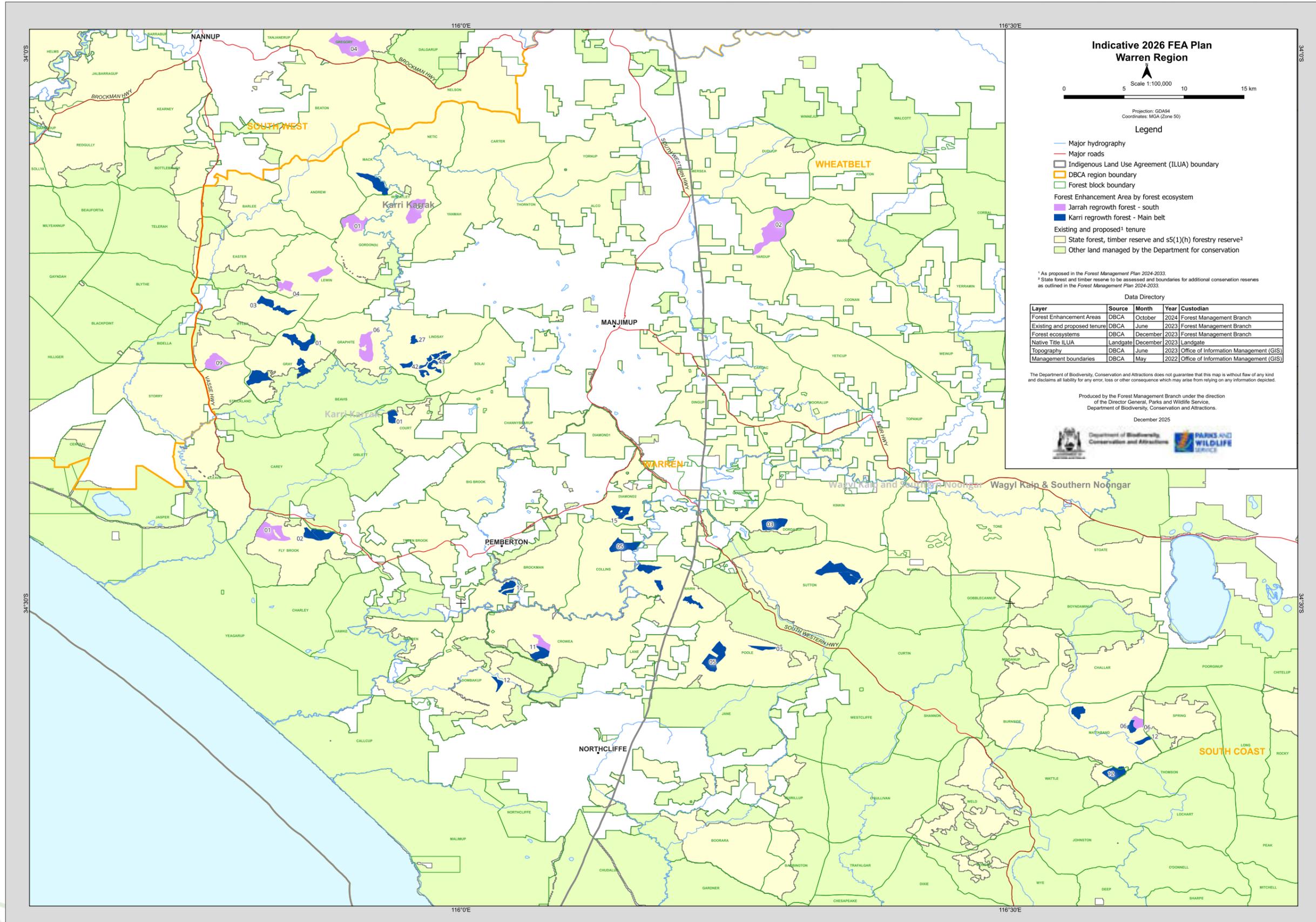
Layer	Source	Month	Year	Custodian
Forest Enhancement Areas	DBCA	October	2024	Forest Management Branch
Existing and proposed tenure	DBCA	June	2023	Forest Management Branch
Forest ecosystems	DBCA	December	2023	Forest Management Branch
Native Title ILUA boundaries	Landgate	December	2023	Landgate
Topography	DBCA	June	2023	Office of Information Management (GIS)
Management boundaries	DBCA	May	2022	Office of Information Management (GIS)

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Produced by the Forest Management Branch under the direction of the Director General, Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions.

October 2024

Forest Management Plan 2024–2033



**Indicative 2026 FEA Plan
Warren Region**

Scale 1:100,000

Projection: GDA94
Coordinates: MGA (Zone 50)

- Legend**
- Major hydrography
 - Major roads
 - Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) boundary
 - DBCA region boundary
 - Forest block boundary
 - Forest Enhancement Area by forest ecosystem
 - Jarrah regrowth forest - south
 - Karri regrowth forest - Main belt
 - Existing and proposed¹ tenure
 - State forest, timber reserve and s5(1)(h) forestry reserve²
 - Other land managed by the Department for conservation

¹ As proposed in the Forest Management Plan 2024-2033.
² State forest and timber reserve to be assessed and boundaries for additional conservation reserves as outlined in the Forest Management Plan 2024-2033.

Data Directory

Layer	Source	Month	Year	Custodian
Forest Enhancement Areas	DBCA	October	2024	Forest Management Branch
Existing and proposed tenure	DBCA	June	2023	Forest Management Branch
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December 2025

