

Noongar Alignment Selection Working Group: Workshop Three Summary 18 March 2025



Current Status

On Tuesday 18 March, the third meeting of the Noongar Alignment Selection Working Group (NASWG) was held at the Pinjarra Lesser Hall.

The meeting was attended by members of the working group and representatives from Main Roads, and facilitated by Aboriginal Land Services and Aboriginal Co-design Consultancy. The meeting explained how constraints impact potential corridor alignments, and asked members to identify areas for potential corridors to be located.

New members were welcomed to the group.

A Welcome to Country was given and acknowledged the importance of working together and having a good meeting.

Review of Workshop Two Achievements

The Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct were finalised at Workshop Two, with new members also signing these documents.

Workshop Two reconfirmed that no corridor alignments were to be considered within the culturally sensitive area. The group was also introduced to constraints and considerations in corridor alignment selection.

Outcomes Discussion

All members endorsed the Outcomes Report from Workshop Two. However, they acknowledged the workshop documents were quite detailed with a lot of information to consider. Members decided to meet before each workshop for 30 minutes to discuss any changes to the previous workshop Outcomes Report. It was also agreed that ALS will contact each member after workshops to determine if they have any key concerns with the Outcomes Report.

The group asked for increased Noongar involvement in projects, with a focus on local companies, and decided to ensure they make recommendations such as this to Main Roads for the project's construction phase.

The opportunity to include Noongar naming of roads and bridges was also discussed.

Response to stakeholders and community

After each workshop, Main Roads meets with stakeholders to update them about the workshop discussion. Stakeholder questions were discussed with the group to see what we should say about the culturally sensitive area (or 'no go' zone). The following wording explains why the zone from April 2023 should not have a road going through:

There are still culturally sensitive areas in the location of the previous proposed alignment and immediately south. This includes where Noongars were hunted down and then killed. Many ended up in the river. Many Noongars, including men, women and children, were buried in this area in a way that did not reflect traditional Noongar burial ways (including families not being buried together). There are also unmarked graves of the victims across this landscape. Others fled the Massacre site.

The 'no go' zone also includes areas of concern for Main Roads and other stakeholders, including:

- *Engineering constraints for river crossing*

- *Historic Heritage – Blythewood Homestead*
- *Social constraint – Holiday Park.*

Constraints and Considerations

The group was provided with information about the range of constraints that are considered when developing an alignment for a road corridor. These included heritage, environmental, social, engineering and road network performance constraints.

A suggestion was made to consider another environmental constraint covering traditional food plants (bush foods and plants) used by Noongars, along with fragile plants.

Respecting cultural areas near the river and floodplains was a key topic of discussion, along with ensuring bridge design (ie span) considers river impacts.

Workshop Process – World Cafe

The group split into five groups of three members to look at each constraint in more detail and suggest areas for alignment corridors.

With the groups located at separate tables, the process started with the first of five 10 minute rounds of conversation, discussing areas and ideas with a project team member specialist. At the end of the 10 minutes, each group moved to the next table.

After 50 minutes, the group had reviewed all the constraints and provided some good suggestions for Main Roads to review and develop ahead of the next workshop.

Group members said the process was good, and that everyone had similar ideas, showing that they understood all of the constraints in addition to what they need to protect in terms of Noongar heritage.

Workshop Conclusion

It was agreed that Main Roads could share this information with stakeholders and the community in responding to queries. It would also be placed on the Main Roads website.