

Aboriginal Participation Bulletin No 17

Sharing stories on how the Transport Portfolio is embracing Aboriginal cultures, working with Aboriginal peoples and businesses to provide sustainable employment and engagement opportunities.

Beeloo and Djeran bike riding series and cultural experience

Through April and May, WestCycle hosted a series of bike riding sessions on behalf of the Department of Transport (DoT) as part of DoT's Annual Activation Program.

The Beeloo experience was facilitated by Biboolmirm Nyoongar man, Joe Collard, who took community members on bike rides along our waterways, exploring Beeloo clan culture, language and history, including places of significance between Derbarl Yerrigan (Perth waters) and Dhagarro (Canning River) areas.

Mr Collard, who facilitated a similar experience for last year's Annual Activation Program, said: "We found being on bikes was a great way to leisurely take in an area and share our Nyoongar heritage and understanding of the land and water."



A cohort on the Beeloo experience learning about Derbarl Yerrigan

"So we were back on bikes this year to give folks the chance to soak up that ancient world view, raise awareness of Aboriginal culture and ways to look after Country so the next generations can enjoy it too," Mr Collard said.

The Djeran riding series was led by Whadjuk Traditional Owner, Olman Walley. Sessions gave riders the opportunity to travel around Lake Yellagonga and our pristine coastline, all the while

delving into the heart of Nyoongar culture, music, stories and traditional knowledge.

Mr Collard and Mr Walley provided a wealth of knowledge and experience to the series. These enriching activities allowed families, new, novice and rusty riders to come together and explore the beauty of Western Australia and Nyoongar culture on two wheels, immersed in the sights, sounds, colours and aromas of our natural landscape.



The Beeloo experience under way with Joe Collard

From building bridges to crossing milestones with Kullarri Driver Training Program

Emileo Shandley, a 19-year-old participant of the Kullarri Driver Training Program, has achieved a remarkable milestone, passing his Practical Driving Assessment (PDA) on the first attempt, marking a significant triumph in his journey towards independence and employment.

The program receives grant funding from the Department of Transport's Driving Access and Equity Program.

Emileo's path to success is a testament to his determination and independence. Having completed 50 driving hours in Fitzroy Crossing while working on the construction of the [new Fitzroy River Bridge](#), Emileo seized the opportunity to enhance his driving skills further upon returning to town.

With a proactive mindset, he engaged in three driving lessons before deciding to book his PDA.

Reflecting on his decision, Emileo shared, "I wanted to make sure I was fully prepared, so I took a few lessons with Fred from Kullarri to brush up on my skills. Passing the PDA on the first try was a great feeling."



Emileo Shandley has achieved his practical driving assessment

Emileo's commitment to self-improvement extended beyond obtaining his driver's licence. With his work in Fitzroy coming to an end and uncertainty looming, Emileo sought guidance and support from the Kullarri program to explore employment opportunities in town.

Over the course of two weeks, Emileo collaborated with Fred Kullarri Driving Instructor to identify potential job openings and prepare for interviews.

"I'm grateful for the assistance I received from the Kullarri team. They helped me navigate the job market and provided valuable support every step of the way," expressed Emileo, his determination evident in his words.

Emileo's perseverance bore fruit when he secured employment, marking a new chapter in his journey. With his newfound job, Emileo looks forward to contributing to his community and building a brighter future for himself.

"It feels great to have a job lined up. I'm excited to start this new chapter and grateful for the

opportunities that have come my way. I could not have done this without the support of the Driver Training and employment team," Emileo remarked.

Emileo's story serves as an inspiration to young individuals striving to overcome challenges and pursue their goals. Through the Kullarri Driver Training Program, Emileo not only gained valuable driving skills but also received the support and guidance needed to navigate life's transitions successfully.

As Emileo embarks on this new phase of his journey, he stands as a shining example of resilience, determination, and the transformative power of grasping opportunities for personal and professional growth.

METRONET program transitioning traineeships careers

Growing up in the Northern Territory, Jonathan (Johnny) wanted to provide his young family a more stable and supportive environment by moving to Perth, WA in hope of a new start.

With prior construction experience and no formal qualifications to support his professional skill set. Johnny told the Laing O'Rourke Aboriginal Engagement Team, "I wish I had started my training sooner to set myself up, but never had the right opportunities to do so."

After being recruited through [Nudge](#), Johnny joined the [Great Eastern Highway Bypass Interchanges](#) project in December 2022, commencing his Certificate II in Civil Construction.

Due to project needs, Johnny was then transitioned to the [METRONET Morley-Elleenbrook Line](#) where he commenced a Certificate III in Civil Construction.



Johnny on site building his employment capacity

This work enabled Johnny to support his family as he was entitled to parental leave whilst studying a trade certificate. During this time, he also made healthier life choices and better options to “improve himself, all round” knowing he has made those around him proud.

After successfully completing his traineeship and obtaining eight machine tickets, Johnny was provided an opportunity to remain employed with Laing O’Rourke on his third project, the [METRONET Byford Rail Extension project](#).

Johnny credits his success to his employment mentors, Terika Horwood, Senior Aboriginal Participation Advisor, Laing O’Rourke and Matt Paki, Manager of Mentoring and Business Partnerships, Nudge.

Johnny hopes that his story encourages others to step up, make a change, and commit to building a career for yourself. “Don’t give up! Work hard,” he said.

From contacts to contracts

One in four workers on the [Tanami Road Upgrade Project](#) are Aboriginal from the Shire of Halls Creek, with Yiyili community members making up almost 10% of the total workforce on an average roster.

Yiyili is a remote Aboriginal community located 110km west of Halls Creek on Gooniyandi Country. Access to the community is from the Great Northern Highway, 93km west of the Tanami Road turn-off.

When news of upcoming works to seal the Tanami Road spread to the community in August 2022, Paul Cox, Gooniyandi Elder and community leader, saw an opportunity and started conversations with Main Roads.

By late 2022 Paul was on-site as a leading hand assisting site supervisors. Main Roads encouraged Paul to bring others from the community as these jobs are needed for the life of the Project, approximately 10 years.

In 2022 Paul tendered for a water cart, and he was awarded a work package for 2023 construction season. In February 2023, Paul called a community meeting with Main Roads and keen locals to talk about work opportunities.

Paul was offered a work package for the supply of labour and a light vehicle, which allowed him to provide work for two more community members.

Fellow Yiyili resident and Jaru man Kevin Long started his own talks in 2022 with Main Roads to work on his traditional homelands.

With the support of his business advisor, Kevin’s business Longy Civil Works tendered a loader for the plant panel contract, which was successful, and he too was awarded a work package last year.

With the same goal of wanting to provide work opportunities for Yiyili residents, Kevin worked with Main Roads discussing resource requirements. Kevin broadened his tender to include padfoot rollers, which was again accepted, and he was awarded a larger work package for 2024 works.

Main Roads has been in regular discussions with both Paul and Kevin about opportunities, ensuring provision of jobs to local Aboriginals.



Centre of photo Paul Cox, Yiyili community leader and Gooniyandi Elder, February 2023.

In 2023, together they organised for the Department of Transport along with other agencies to visit the community and assist people to gain their licences, including HR licence and roller tickets. About 20 people signed up, with some gaining work on the new Fitzroy River Bridge Project and 10 gaining work on the Tanami Road Upgrade Project.

Yiyili residents along with other workers have received on-site, on-the-job-training to brush up on their existing skills and gain new ones. The Project team works with these businesses, which support a pool of about 12 workers, to provide continuity of work.

The numbers tell the story. After almost two years, two businesses, five plant items, two light vehicle, supporting 12 Aboriginal men from Yiyili community we have a real collaborative success.

This highlights Main Roads’ goal to increase opportunities for local Aboriginal peoples who are planning to continue to be part of the Tanami Road Upgrade Project to seal 313km of road over the next 7-8 years.



June 2024, Some of the Tanami Road Project crew - Back row L-R: Kevin Long, Paul Dean Cox Jnr, Dennis Duinker, Lindsay Dawson, Gilbert Cox, Devughn Wallaby, Lucas Long; front row l-r: Jay Long, Jason Cox,

Collaborative approach sets up success for Albany Ring Road

The recently completed [Albany Ring Road](#) Project achieved 10.49% of its workforce hours completed by Aboriginal peoples. Throughout the project, 78 Aboriginal peoples were employed directly, along with 3 Aboriginal trainees/ apprentices.

The hours worked by Aboriginal businesses was 17.9% of the total worked hours by businesses overall.

“As the contractor for the construction of the Albany Ring Road Project (Menang Drive), I am extremely proud of the outcomes that we have been able to achieve within the Aboriginal Engagement space,” Matt Thomson, Decmil’s Project Manager said.

“Achieving 10.49% Aboriginal Engagement over the life of the project is a fantastic result and we are proud of the effort that has been put in by our staff to help encourage the younger members of the Aboriginal community to be a part of the project, and to further their knowledge to allow them to move onto other employment at the conclusion of the project.”



Project members with CEO, Impact Services at the official opening

“With a collaborative approach working with local providers of Aboriginal staff and services, we have achieved a positive outcome for both the Indigenous community within the Great Southern region, and Decmil.” Matt Thomson said.

Aboriginal business capacity building

Over the past 12 months, Main Roads’ Metropolitan Region Delivery Branch has awarded 30% (\$13.9M) of its works to Aboriginal owned and operated businesses. Some of these projects include:

- Roe Highway Barrier Project to install 4.6km of shoulder widening and barriers
- Morley Road and Constance Intersection Improvement and U-turn facilities
- Ennis Avenue and Dixon Road – construction of left turn lane and signal modifications

The awarded contracts include minimum and stretch targets for Aboriginal spend and work hours.

Looking forward, the Metropolitan team anticipates \$10 million allocation in direct Aboriginal business expenditure over the coming year, underscoring the team’s ongoing dedication to fostering inclusive economic growth, supporting Aboriginal businesses and driving impactful initiatives within the community.



Morley Road and Constance intersection improvements

National Reconciliation Week at PTA

The Public Transport Authority recently marked National Reconciliation Week with an interactive bush pharmacy session, showing staff how native plants can be utilised for healing.

Whadjuk Noongar man and City of Kwinana Deputy Mayor Barry Winmar opened the event with a moving Welcome to Country, while the bush pharmacy session was presented by Belinda Cox from Djirily Dreaming.

The session showcased how banksia oil can be used to aid calm and clear thinking, how peppermint can assist with anxiety, how certain varieties of wattle can boost Vitamin C levels, along with the benefits of several other native plants.



Barry Winmar and Belinda Cox sharing knowledge

Reconciliation Week celebrated

Several events were held to acknowledge and reflect on the significance of Reconciliation Week across Main Roads and the Office of Major Transport Infrastructure Directorate (OMTID), which were live streamed across the State in all regional and project offices.

At Main Roads' Don Aitken Centre, guest speaker Gerry Matera, founder and owner of Gather Foods, Eon Protection and Indigenous Defence Services, shared some of his experiences and insights on reconciliation. A culturally inspired grazing platter was provided for those present.

At OMTID, a Welcome to Country and keynote presentation were provided by Professor Len Collard, Whadjuk Noongar Elder and researcher of Aboriginal studies who spoke of the importance of walking in solidarity with Aboriginal peoples to promote reconciliation. A morning tea followed the presentations.



Gerry Matera sharing his insights during Main Roads' event

Empowering knowledge sharing sessions

Two of Main Roads' Aboriginal Stakeholder Engagement Advisors (ASEA) held very special events in their base regions during Reconciliation Week, to share their stories and knowledge with their colleagues across all aspects of the workplace.

Nola Kelly, ASEA Goldfields Esperance Region facilitated a reconciliation working group to drive this year's reconciliation activity.

Nola explained that reconciliation can only be achieved by working together, "I know what reconciliation means to me, but I cannot achieve this alone, it takes all of us to achieve reconciliation! So, it was important to involve staff in our region to take the lead." An initiative to *build a road to reconciliation* came from the working group.

Travelling 1200km to reach the depots and offices in Leonora, Kinclaven, and Esperance, the working group coordinated a series of group and individual contacts to ask "*what does reconciliation mean to you?*" and reflect on how can it be achieved, engaging staff in a very unique piece of art that showcases every individual's footprints across the region, with personalised quotes from the wider team.

"An overwhelming response to this project has come from staff members employed in our region, from management to maintenance. The messages that have been captured from their own words has given me hope that reconciliation can be achieved in Australia, if done together as Australians. This has been an empowering activity for all of us."

The final art piece will be transferred to canvas and displayed in the reception area of the Kalgoorlie Esperance Regional office during NAIDOC Week.

Sammy Wyborn, ASEA Wheatbelt, facilitated a series of art workshops, teaching staff how to paint their own story and how to interpret and paint symbols of family, journeys, destinations and nature.

Whilst staff reflected on their own journey and loved ones, Sammy shared her family's story of how her grandmother, at 10 years old, was taken from the safety of her home as part of the Stolen Generations period of our history.

With Sammy's compelling storytelling ability, staff were taken on the journey of the impact on her family, future generations and the wider community. Sammy spoke of the racial profiling she and her children endure on a regular basis when they enter retail outlets or public events, and the continual racial discrimination they face on social media.



One of Sammy's Reconciliation Art Workshops under way

Sammy explained, "The impact of reconciliation may seem minute to many, but for us, it is incredibly moving and powerful - for being acknowledged is the catalyst of belonging, as each human needs validation.

"Although we have come along way, we still have a very long way to go and it starts with educating and essentially, breaking bread together," Sammy said.

Participants in Sammy's Reconciliation Week art workshops ranged from materials lab staff, to management in both Northam and Narrogin, along with many participants joining online to simply hear the story.

Both Nola and Sammy aim to increase the level of understanding of how inequality and unconscious bias impacts the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal peoples.



One of Sammy's Reconciliation Art Workshops under way



Members of TPAE joined Sammy online to listen and learn

Advisory Group visit Armadale Line

The Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Business and Employment Advisory Group held its quarterly meeting at METRONET's Armadale Line Upgrade Alliance (ALUA) office in Victoria Park.

The project team presented on the Victoria Park-Canning Level Crossing Removal project and outlined the Aboriginal Participation outcomes they are achieving, including an insight into the OnTrack Employment Program.

The seven week Program provides training and employment opportunities to unemployed entry-level work-ready people. To date, 33 Aboriginal peoples have graduated from the OnTrack program, of which 52% have subsequently been employed on the project and an additional 9% have been employed outside of the project.

The strong commitment to employment opportunities has resulted in 144 Aboriginal peoples employed in roles such as management, supervision, administrative and operational roles.

Aboriginal peoples have worked 2.75% hours out of the overall hours completed on the project, progressing well towards its target of 4%. Additionally, 17 packages of work have been awarded to Aboriginal businesses, with current spend at \$7.5M.



Cameron Wood, Ashley Vincent, Barry McGuire, Dennis Kickett, Joanne Hill, Neville Willey, Patrick Seares, Phil D'Souza, Jeff Tyloo, Leo Coci, Tish Moloney, Judd Harris at Cannington Station

The Advisory Group visited the construction under way along the Victoria Park-Canning Level Crossing Removal project alignment. Jeff Tyloo, Construction Manager shared construction insights as the group visited the Cannington and Carlisle Stations to see firsthand the works under way.