



Department of Transport  
Main Roads Western Australia  
Public Transport Authority

## TRANSPORT PORTFOLIO ABORIGINAL ENGAGEMENT August 2024

# Aboriginal Participation Bulletin No 18

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

*The Transport Portfolio acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their cultures; and to Elders both past and present.*

### Celebrating Aboriginal workers milestones

Kardan Construction recently celebrated milestone moments with several of their Aboriginal employees working on the Main Roads Matagarup Bridge Activities Operating Premises and Cafe Project.

Proud Ballardong Nyoongar man Elvis Pickett (far right) completed his carpentry apprenticeship in August. The Project has also enabled Proud Whadjuk Nyoongar woman Breeanna Haynes to build her skill set and transition out of the office from an administration role to onsite as Project Manager Assistant (second from right).

Kardan Construction also subcontracted Wilco Electrical with proud Yindjinbardi Yamatji man Kendall Taylor completing his Electrical Apprenticeship soon after the Matagarup Project was awarded.



### Fremantle Bridges Alliance precast facility open

A group from the Fremantle Bridges Alliance working on the Swan River Crossings - Fremantle Traffic Bridge Project, gathered at the new facility in Hazelmere for a barbecue, Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony by Noongar Elder, Neville Collard.



Neville Collard

Neville has been a big part of the project for many years as part of the project's Elder Reference Group and played an active role in informing the bridge design.

Neville burnt several local plants including the Sheoak, Tuart and Peppermint trees with these three species the inspiration for naming of the site meeting rooms.

### Fremantle Bridges Alliance supporting Aboriginal and female owned businesses

In July, the Fremantle Bridges Alliance held a very special Cultural Awareness workshop facilitated by local Aboriginal business, Jalbi Australia. Under the guidance of Walyalup Elder Freda Ogilvie, a group of team members from the Alliance learnt about connection to Country, olfactory memories and native botanical scents. Together, they created a bespoke scent for the Alliance titled 'Walyalup Together'. Inspired by their Alliance values, the Project's cultural narrative, and Australian native plants, the scent was developed with feedback from all participants. The scent developed comprises of Lemon Ironbark, Honey Myrtle and Blue Cypress. These ingredients inspire focus, health and positivity.

Jalbi Australia will now develop natural cleaning products for the Project using the scent including hand soaps, sanitiser and floor cleaners.

## Opening a door of opportunities

The Main Roads Stephenson Avenue Extension Project is celebrating trainee Rose Gallagher's completion of a Certificate III in Business Administration. Rose joined the project in July 2023, working diligently in her role within the Commercial Team while remaining dedicated to her studies. With her qualification now complete, Rose plans to return home to Wyndham and be with family.

Reflecting on her time working on the Stephenson Avenue Extension Project, Rose said:

"I've had years of experience in the Business Administration field but just never had the time to focus on studying, until I moved to Perth and joined the Stephenson Project where I received the support I needed to complete my Certificate. I'd like to thank Beth and the team at S2M for giving me that support and the opportunity, having that qualification opens a door of endless possibilities."



*Rose Gallagher (left) with line manager Beth Griffiths.*

## 'Ontrack' with a new career path

Before joining the METRONET Byford Rail Extension's Armadale Line Upgrade Alliance's (ALUA) OnTrack Employment Program, Samuel worked in casual roles while completing a degree he had lost passion for. He struggled to find employment opportunities that could potentially lead to a career path suited to him.

Samuel heard about the Ontrack program from his casual employer, and although initially did not believe his career goals aligned with the construction industry; he saw it as an opportunity to explore something different and decided to give the 6-week program a go.

**I have always been proud of my culture and heritage and the strong connection I have to my culture has helped shape me into the person I am today.**



*Samuel in his new role*

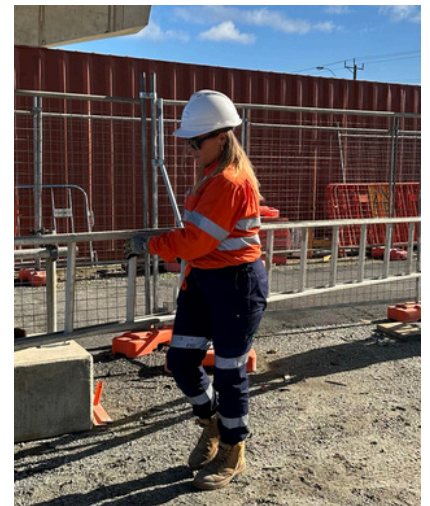
Samuel's eagerness to learn was quickly identified and it was clear his values aligned with the Project's objectives. He was presented with an opportunity to work as an office administrator on the ALUA Project and recently shared his experience with the new cohort in the program.

## New skills bring new opportunities

Jessica is a 34-year-old proud Noongar woman from Perth, mother to a son and stepson. She started her course with OnTrack, an employment program run by the Armadale Line Upgrade Alliance delivering the METRONET Byford Rail Extension Project in February 2024.

Jessica had no prior experience in construction and was a stay-at-home mum, so she focused on upskilling and completed the training to obtain her white card and first aid certificate.

Not long after she graduated, she also completed her tele-handling ticket and was then employed with a permanent full-time job to work on ALUA as a Peggy. She has been working for the past 4 months and says being financially stable has increased her confidence and self-esteem.



*Jess working on site*

**I have now saved enough money to be able to apply for a bank loan towards getting my little family's own home which would mean everything to me.**



### The value in asking for advice

Aboriginal owned and operated company, Marlee Karlip, was recently approved to deliver an electrical package of works on the Main Roads Mandurah Estuary Duplication Bridge (MEDB) Project.

The Marlee Karlip team first met with Project Aboriginal Participation Coordinator (APC) Candis Smartt late last year, prior to the Project going into construction phase. Candis provided advice to the company on what requirements the company needed to meet to demonstrate their ability to deliver the work, and last month were awarded work with Georgiou on the MEDB Project.

### Industry-led training

Since May, the Fitzroy Bridge Alliance working in partnership with Main Roads to replace the Brooking Channel Bridge, has welcomed 52 Aboriginal workers who are taking part in a traineeship while working on the Project.

The traineeships are designed to meet the in-demand skills around the Kimberley region and beyond while providing participants with the opportunity to secure meaningful paid employment, learn valuable skills from industry experts and earn a formal qualification in their chosen industry.



*Some of the trainees who have been working on the New Brooking Channel Bridge Project*

There are 27 Aboriginal trainees completing the Certificate II in Civil Construction, 17 Aboriginal trainees completing the Certificate III in Hospitality and 8 Aboriginal trainees completing the Certificate II in Security.

Trainees are supported every step of the way by on-site mentors and supervisors, qualified trainers and assessors, and local organisation Gurama Yani U who provide tailored mentorship and support.

### Spotlight on K&J Civil and Drainage Solutions

Local Bunuba men Kamus and Jamal started as operators on the New Fitzroy River Bridge Project. During the Project, they formed their own business, K&J Civil and Drainage Solutions (K&J Civil).

With the support of the Project, K&J Civil secured their first contract, installing the underground services and lighting conduits for the new bridge. During the following wet season, K&J Civil completed works on several projects across the Kimberley and Pilbara.

Now back in Fitzroy Crossing, K&J Civil are providing key plant and labour as part of the New Brooking Channel Bridge Project. K&J Civil proudly employ 10 local Fitzroy Valley workers across the earthworks and bridge construction teams and are looking to continue to grow and expand their business.



*Kamus and Jamal of K&J Civil*

### Supporting a strong local industry

The New Brooking Channel Bridge Project is committed to maximising opportunities for local businesses and supporting a strong regional industry. Local businesses received dedicated support to effectively tender and deliver work. There are currently 33 Kimberley-based businesses engaged on the project, including 20 Indigenous-owned businesses.



## Balancing family and apprenticeships

Aaron Kearing and Dale Thompson are apprentices on the Smart Freeway Mitchell Southbound: Reid Highway to Vincent Street Project as part of the Intelligent Freeways Alliance and balance the demands of their trades while dedicating themselves to their families. Despite different backgrounds, they share a journey of discovery, growth, and the desire to provide for their loved ones through their work.



Aaron is presented the 'Above and Beyond Award' Aaron, an Electrical Apprentice with the ARRA Group, and Dale, a Civil Construction Apprentice with Totem, both hail from Perth. Aaron's roots connect him to the Palkyu Group in the Pilbara and Broome, while Dale's heritage bridges the UK through his father and the Yorta Yorta group on the NSW-Victoria border through his mother.

Working on the Project, both appreciate the variety and challenges their roles bring. Aaron enjoys the dynamic nature of electrical work, always discovering something new, while Dale thrives on the ever-changing tasks in civil construction.

Outside of work, both men cherish their cultural heritage and share a love for traditional foods like kangaroo stew and damper. Aaron's passion for woodwork and Dale's love for fishing and footy are their go-to hobbies when they need a break from the job.

Their shared mottoes reflect their approach to life. Aaron's "Live for each day and enjoy!" and Dale's "Work hard and save money", speak to their resilience, dedication, and the balance they've found between work and family.

Aaron and Dale are examples of how passion, hard work, and family can drive success in both personal and professional life.

## Apprentices upskill in unique electrical program

Three young Aboriginal apprentices from ARRA Group have recently benefited from a unique electrical program implemented by ITS Delivery Manager, Danny Kirov and his team working on the Intelligent Transport Systems for Smart Freeway Mitchell Southbound: Reid Highway to Vincent Street Project.

The program has been running since 29 September 2022 and has received positive feedback regarding student progression, competency, and knowledge as well as high participation from Indigenous apprentices, aligning with IFA's strategy around Indigenous engagement and industry sustainability.

"We are giving these young apprentices an opportunity that helps them both upskill and cross-skill. Without implementing this program, the apprentices would be losing the opportunity to be exposed in an electrical intensive field that goes hand in hand with civil principals they can apply concurrently," said Mr Kirov.

Focusing on collective skill-based learning through practical applications in construction and electrical competency-based training, the apprentices have been given the opportunity to upskill their current knowledge and applications in the electrical field to become job ready in the everchanging infrastructure environment.

**We are giving these young apprentices an opportunity that helps them [to] both upskill and cross-skill.**

The program has provided the chance for career progression in a number of competencies including principles of electrical installation, installation of cable and protective devices, and manufacturing techniques spanning electrical, electronic and ITS.

The program is scheduled to conclude late 2024 with the apprentices to further develop their skills in commissioning activities and operational readiness.



**Bindoon Bypass**

The Bindoon Bypass is a new 64 km section of the Great Northern Highway between Chittering Roadhouse in the south and New Norcia in the north, bypassing the town of Bindoon.



*Construction underway on the northern section*

A partnership between Aboriginal construction contractor, Garli and Main Roads’ Region Network contractor, Service Stream, saw 7km north of Calingiri Road to Seven Mile Hill completed in May 2022. The next 11km is currently underway between Seven Mile Hill and New Norcia, with construction works being undertaken solely by Garli.

Training and employment have been an important focus of the Project with some achievements highlighted below.



Over the next 12 months the remaining works for the Northern Section will be completed. Once construction works are complete, it will be the first section of highway solely completed by an Aboriginal owned company.

**Supporting the communities of Tjarubalan**

The Main Roads Tanami Road Upgrade Project is ramping up with upgrades to 41km of the road well underway. With two new positions for roller operators available for Aboriginal workers, Project Manager Neville Walters organised a site orientation in August for potential workers from the Tjarubalan Communities, including seven men from Balgo and one from Bililuna.

The group visited the site and were introduced to Aboriginal business owners and operators who shared their stories and gave advice on managing common issues faced by Aboriginal workers such as cultural obligations, jealousies, and hum bug.

Local Halls Creek man Danny Calwyn, a grader owner and operator, advised the men “have a go and stick to it” before loader operator and owner, Kevin Long encouraged them to “stay out of trouble, don’t worry about what people think, and grab the opportunity (to work)”.

“**Stay out of trouble, don’t worry about what people think, and grab the opportunity [to work]**”

Visiting the worksite gave these local men the chance to see other countrymen working, people they know which gave them confidence and made them feel wanted. Balgo local Donald Lynch said, “we weren’t treated like we didn’t belong”. The orientation proved a huge success, and there is now has a pool of potential workers to select from for the Tanami Road Project.



*L-R: Ainsley Mudgedell, Kevin Long, Brian Darkie, Darren Medgedell, Keith Njamee, Donald Lynch, Trevor Mudji, Winston Manson, Dean Brown and Rob Christophers in front*

## Indigenous Inclusion Award for Morley-Ellenbrook team

The METRONET Morley-Ellenbrook Line Project team have been recognised for their outstanding work on Aboriginal inclusion and participation, with Project contractor Laing O'Rourke awarded the Indigenous Inclusion Award at the inaugural BHP and Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA Diversity and Inclusion Awards in July.

The accolade celebrates outstanding achievements in fostering Aboriginal representation, inclusion and diversity, which the team have demonstrated by:

- providing a culturally safe workplace for nearly 300 Aboriginal employees
- supporting 12 Aboriginal trainees working towards qualifications in Civil Construction and Business Administration
- supporting Aboriginal owned/operated businesses - with more than \$53 million spent to date across the project on services provided by 52 local Aboriginal businesses
- providing culturally appropriate input into landscape design for five stations, as well as public art created by six Noongar artists
- achieving best practice compliance and facilitating heritage monitoring to protect Aboriginal culturally sensitive sites
- fostering partnerships with key business and industry stakeholders, including local Aboriginal Elder groups.

The initiatives undertaken by the Project support the METRONET Gnarla Biddi Aboriginal Engagement Strategy and METRONET's long-term commitment to embed genuine engagement with the Aboriginal community across their program of works.



*Project team at the BHP and CCIWA Diversity and Inclusion Awards*

## Cultural training crosses boundaries

Members of the Intelligent Freeway Alliance (IFA) working on the Smart Freeway Mitchell Southbound Reid to Vincent Project recently participated in an Aboriginal cultural session facilitated by Katie Clarke and Danie Zappa from Indigenous Professional Services (IPS). This session provided a comprehensive overview of the rich history and cultural practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Participants learned about Smoking Ceremonies, the significance of national flags, Aboriginal tribal maps, significant sites, and dreamtime stories passed down through generations. The session highlighted the profound connection Aboriginal peoples maintain with their land, waterways, and spiritual beliefs, expressed through art and cultural practices.

The team was also educated on 'Kinship Practices' where the saying "It takes a village to raise a child" was highly relevant, as each person would not just have their biological parents but several mums, dads, aunties, uncles, siblings and cousins to help and support them in life, including financially. Sharing and caring were unwritten code inherent throughout Aboriginal history, and looking after their Elders was of paramount importance, instilled into the youth.

Overall, the cultural training provided valuable insights into Aboriginal history, culture, and contemporary issues, fostering greater understanding and appreciation among Alliance staff.

## Public art to showcase stories of place and culture

Noongar artists participated in a three-day workshop to create public art in the parks, playgrounds, landscaped areas and new stations for the METRONET Victoria Park-Canning Level Crossing Removal Project.

Elders from the METRONET Noongar Reference Group (MNRG) provided a Welcome to Country and engaged in one-on-one mentoring sessions with workshop participants, providing cultural advice and guidance to build a greater understanding of cultural protocols.



*Artist Yondée Shane Hansen*

The workshops were an important forum for artists to ask questions and receive feedback from mentors, helping to build capacity and employment opportunities.



# Out and about in the community

## Career Directions Expo 2024

Main Roads representatives attended the recent Career Directions Careers Expo 2024 facilitated by Directions Workforce Development. Held in Northam, about 450 Wheatbelt students and over 50 businesses and training organisations attended with students able to meet with different industries about potential career opportunities.

Staff were able to engage with students and discuss opportunities across the Transport Portfolio in relation to Aboriginal employment.

There were many enthusiastic students engaging with the Team as our Aboriginal Stakeholder Engagement Advisor for the Wheatbelt region, Sammy Wyborn explained. "It was fantastic to see such drive from these young ones, the Wheatbelt kids did not disappoint".



*Sammy (far right) and Tara (second from right) from Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Engagement branch speak with students in Northam*

## Polly Farmer Follow the Dream Careers Expo

Staff from across the Transport Portfolio joined over 350 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from Years 10 to 12 across Australia at the recent Polly Farmer Foundation Follow the Dream Careers Expo. The event featured more than 30 stalls, including one from the Transport Portfolio.

This event provided an opportunity for engagement with students statewide, discussing career opportunities in both metro and regional areas within the Transport Portfolio. Staff spoke with students about apprenticeship and traineeship eligibility requirements and graduate pathways.



*Transport Portfolio staff discuss career pathways and opportunities with students*

Main Roads highlighted upcoming Aboriginal Pathways recruitment and career opportunities associated with the program and met with several Follow the Dream Coordinators, providing resources about entry-level and graduate programs to help educate students.

## Black Coffee Networking Event

Connie McDonagh, Senior Advisor Aboriginal Business Engagement, and Bradley Smith, Aboriginal Stakeholder Engagement Advisor, Pilbara, recently attended the Perth Black Coffee networking event, representing Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Engagement branch. Each month, staff from TPAE attend this event.

Black Coffee is a networking event held across Australia for Aboriginal business owners to meet with other Aboriginal businesses and corporations.

Connie and Brad introduced themselves to attendees and provided information on what opportunities are available for Aboriginal businesses across the Transport Portfolio.



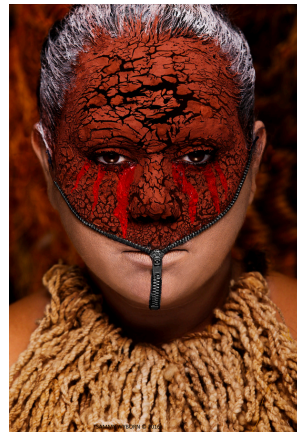
**KEEP THE FIRE BURNING!  
BLAK, LOUD AND PROUD**  
7-14 JULY 2024

## Living the NAIDOC Week values of 'Blak, Loud and Proud'

Aboriginal Stakeholder Engagement Advisor for the Wheatbelt Region, Sammy Wyborn, was invited to speak at the Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Engagement teams NAIDOC week event at the Bidi Katadjin building.

Sammy spoke about how she lives the NAIDOC week theme of 'Keep the fire burning! Blak, loud and proud'. She also shared a brief history of her life and detailed how important her artwork is to her as this piece is her interpretation of Indigenous Australian history. The colour of the earth is a deep red in many parts of her Country and painting her face with this represents being torn away from Country, the white part of her face represents colonisation, the zip that she took from an old pair of jeans was then glued on her face and over her lips to represent being silenced to conform to white society.

Sammy also delivered a NAIDOC art workshop for the Wheatbelt Northam Office. The painting will be available for staff to contribute over the coming months. This painting is in homage to the local Aboriginal peoples of the Wheatbelt region.



*Sammy's artwork*

## Stephenson Avenue Extension Project

In the spirit of this year's NAIDOC Week theme, 'Keep the Fire Burning! Blak, Loud and Proud', the S2M Evolution Alliance team members from the Main Roads Stephenson Avenue Extension Project came together to celebrate and commemorate the strength and resilience of Aboriginal people with an informative NAIDOC Week presentation, followed by an interactive cultural activity.

Several team members also attended the City of Stirling's NAIDOC Week event held in Mirrabooka. Attendees were given the opportunity to connect with members of the local community and learn about Aboriginal culture and histories by participating in celebrations including ceremony, entertainment, and cultural activities.



*The Stephenson Avenue Extension Project team at the City of Stirling NAIDOC Week event*

## Intelligent Freeways Alliance

Intelligent Freeways Alliance (IFA), the team working on the Main Roads Smart Freeway Mitchell Southbound project celebrated NAIDOC Week with a team lunch. Jayden Boundary, a proud Wadjak Ballardong Noongar and Badimaya Yamatji man, captivated IFA workers with his Welcome to Country and mesmerising didgeridoo performance. Founder of Ngalak Nidja, a family-operated Aboriginal business dedicated to celebrating and sharing Noongar culture, Jayden eloquently spoke on the importance of land stewardship and respect for our environment. Through rhythmic didgeridoo melodies, young dancers from Ngalak Nidja brought to life ancestral stories of the Kangaroo, Emu, Eagle, and Willy Wag-tail, embodying the spirits of our land. Their performance resonated deeply, fostering unity and cultural appreciation among the IFA team.



*Ngalak Nidja dancers captivated the IFA team*







**KEEP THE FIRE BURNING!  
BLAK, LOUD AND PROUD**  
7-14 JULY 2024

### New Uniforms for Aboriginal Liaison Officers

The Public Transport Authority (PTA) launched a new uniform as part of NAIDOC Week for Transperth's Aboriginal Liaison Officers (ALOs). The uniform featured artwork from Aboriginal artist Jorja Woods, a Noongar/Wongi woman from Whadjuk country, who is also a Department of Transport (DoT) employee.

ALOs are based at Perth Station and travel across the network as needed, playing a crucial role in fostering positive interactions with Indigenous people across the network. The uniforms will help differentiate ALOs from Transit Officers, supporting their mission of cultural sensitivity and engagement.



*PTA Aboriginal Liaison Officers in their new uniforms*

### Scooter Shed Artwork Highlights Noongar History

Aboriginal artist Justin Martin created a unique design for a piece of art to sit outside the Public Transport Centre along the scooter shed.

Beelia Boodja is a traditionally-influenced artwork that represents Noongar history and the importance of our wetlands. The circles represent waterholes and camping areas, the swamp reeds around the outside of the lakes reference the native reeds within those lake systems used for basket making and weaving. The larger circles then represent campsites, showing gathering of community and family groups.

This artwork was installed during NAIDOC Week.



*Scooter shed gets a revamp with artwork representing Noongar history and the importance of our wetlands*

### Bus Wrap

A special commission Transperth bus launched for NAIDOC Week with an artwork wrap designed by Noongar/Yuggera artist, Hayley Thompson.

The artwork, titled 'Going on Country', covers the length of the bus and depicts the six Noongar seasons combining elements of floral changes with bursts of different colours for each season and linking them to the fauna which are more prevalent.

The bus is now travelling around the network.



*Transperth bus travelling the streets of Perth featuring artwork depicting the six Noongar seasons*

