

Halls Creek to Kununurra Bridges Project



The \$33 million Halls Creek to Kununurra Bridges project is jointly funded by the Federal (\$26.4 million) and State (\$6.6 million) Governments, to improve safety for road users and freight users who regularly traverse Great Northern Highway.

Tickalara and Frog Hollow Creek bridges beginning to take shape

Construction has reached multiple milestones since works started in early June, including:

- completion of bulk earthworks;
- completion of the piling at Tickalara Creek and Frog Hollow Creek; and
- fabrication of precast bridge beams has commenced.

Over the coming months, the bridge abutments and guide banks with rock protection will be finished, and attention will turn to the precast bridge beam lifts, due to commence in October.

Visit <https://www.mainroads.wa.gov.au/gnh-bridges/> to see the latest drone footage of the construction works.

Aboriginal business engagement at Bow River Quarry

The project is working closely with Main Roads' Kimberley Regional Office to source rock protection materials required for guidebank construction from Bow River Quarry.

Idarr Pty Ltd is an Aboriginal business based in Broome and has been engaged to carry out crushing works to prepare the rock protection material.

The rock is then transported to site and carefully placed to construct the guidebanks, which serve an important purpose in protecting the structure from flood damage.

Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony

Welcoming people to country with a smoking ceremony is an important part of local cultural protocol in the East Kimberley to wish them safe passage.

In early June, Traditional Owner and Elder of the Gija people, Shirley Purdie, was invited to perform a ceremony to welcome the project team to Gija land at the Mabel Downs' camp.

Shirley lives a short distance from the Mabel Downs' camp at the Warmun Community with her extended family, many of whom also attended the ceremony including Shirley's siblings, daughter Helen, and other family and community members.

In her traditional language, Shirley spoke to her Gija ancestors, telling them new people were in their country and asking that they not be troubled during their stay.

A fire pit was prepared using specially selected local native plant leaves, with each team member invited to be cleansed by the smoke.

A morning tea followed, providing further opportunity for the project team members to meet with local people and make new connections.



Project Manager, Peter Verbuyst, participates in the smoking ceremony, led by Elder Shirley Purdie

Traffic Controller training for locals

Providing employment and subcontracting opportunities for local people and businesses is a high priority on the project. One initiative achieving great success is the traffic controller training program.

Prior to construction commencing, the Project Manager, Stakeholder & Community Engagement Manager and Aboriginal Participation Mentor met with nearby communities to assess interest in working in various roles on the project.

As a result, eight members of the local Warmun community completed a week-long traffic controller training course hosted by the Kimberley Job Pathways training centre in Warmun. They received tickets in Basic Worksite Traffic Management (BWTM) and Traffic Control (TC).

This was followed by on-the-job training, before trainees decided whether the job was a good fit for them.

All eight trainees (pictured below) have now joined the project team.

Much of this success can be attributed to Aboriginal Participation Mentor, Keith Wynne, who helped guide the trainees through the entire process.

A local Aboriginal man himself from Wyndham, Keith is supporting Indigenous employees on the project through his appreciation and understanding of cultural protocols.

Keith has also played an important role in liaising with community members in the two communities closest to the project sites, Frog Hollow Creek and Warmun.

In addition to this, delivery contractor Fortec has engaged two local Aboriginal businesses to recruit trainees as a legacy for the project. This will enable them to be employed beyond completion of the project next year.

One of the trainees was recently enrolled in an electrical test and tag course. They will soon be qualified to complete electrical testing and tagging works around project site and can continue using this skill beyond the completion of this project.



Local community members undertaking traffic controller training at Warmun Community



Local woman Margaret Beebe demonstrates Boab carving



Project Engineers Peter Omisakin (left), and Yiyang Li (right) with Pat Farmer (centre)

Recognising NAIDOC Week

NAIDOC Week is a celebration and commemoration of the history and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander peoples. It has been held every year in various forms since 1938, taking on its current form in July since 1957.

The 2023 theme is "For our Elders".

In recognition of NAIDOC Week, delivery contractor Fortec sponsored local business, Blak Tapas, to assist the organisation at the annual Aboriginal Business Expo.

The sponsorship enabled Blak Tapas to expand on activities for the Expo. This included supporting the showcasing of local Miriwoong Elders who gave cultural demonstrations on boab carving and making traditional damper bread.

The funding also enabled them to hire a local professional Aboriginal photographer, Jackamarra, to capture the event in pictures.

A BBQ planned at the project camp with locals from the Frog Hollow and Warmun communities to celebrate NAIDOC week was cancelled due to bad weather disrupting supply lines.

The major rain event swept the Kimberley region, forcing the project team to shelter from the downpour at the camp. Despite this temporary halt to works and subsequent clean-up operation, the project team managed to bring the project back on schedule within a few weeks.

Marathon through site

Members of the project team encountered unusual traffic along the Great Northern Highway in early June.

Ultra-marathon runner and former Member of the Federal Parliament, Pat Farmer, is running 14,400km around Australia over 6 months.

When he came across the project team at Tickalara Creek, Pat took a moment to talk about why he feels so passionately about equality in Australia.

For further information

To keep up to date on traffic impacts, please visit the [Main Roads Travel Map](#).

For further information you can also subscribe for updates on the <https://www.mainroads.wa.gov.au/gnh-bridges/> or contact our [Customer Information Centre](#) on 138 138.