

Aboriginal Participation Bulletin

This bi-monthly newsletter features stories showcasing how the Transport and Major Infrastructure Portfolio collaborates with Aboriginal communities and businesses; and embraces culture to create sustainable jobs and engagement opportunities.

The Transport and Major Infrastructure 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.

Supplier Diversity Awards Finalist

Representatives from Main Roads and the Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Engagement branch (TPAE) recently attended the Supply Nation Supplier Diversity Awards in Sydney.

TPAE and Main Roads were shortlisted together as finalists for the 'Government Member of the Year' category, which recognises exceptional commitment, engagement and leadership in supplier diversity and the driving of significant growth in the Indigenous business sector.

This achievement reflects our efforts in the growth and improvement of Aboriginal engagement and participation across the entirety of the Transport and Major Infrastructure Portfolio. Collaboratively, Main Roads and TPAE, through the Transport agencies, have worked hard to improve contracting and supply chain opportunities for Aboriginal businesses, supporting employment, developing Aboriginal business capability and building relationships with education, training and small business development providers to create pathways for sustainable economic empowerment.

Attending on behalf of Main Roads was Aniza Zarol, Principal Procurement Manager, and Tish Moloney, Aboriginal Engagement Advisor representing TPAE. In addition to the awards ceremony, they also attended the Supply Nation Knowledge Forum to hear from leading Indigenous entrepreneurs and the Indigenous Business Tradeshaw where they connected with a wide range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.



Aniza (L) and Tish (R) at the Supply Nation Indigenous Business Tradeshaw.

Tish and Aniza were pleased to see the diversity of the Aboriginal business sector during the event, with panellists ranging from footy legend Adam Goodes to pioneers in the space program.

"It was insightful and impactful, listening to the young Aboriginal panellists who are strong, confident and advocating for Aboriginal peoples and businesses."

They noticed a large presence of WA Aboriginal businesses and stakeholders at the event, and it was announced that next years' event will be hosted in Boorloo (Perth)!

Driver's licence milestone achieved after 17-year journey

After many years of challenges, Kerin finally reached a milestone that once seemed unattainable: he obtained his driver's licence.

In June 2025, Kerin enrolled in the Department of Transport and Major Infrastructure's [Driving Access and Equity Program](#) (DAEP) at the Albany Southern Aboriginal Corporation, where he completed six lessons with a driving mentor.

At 33 years old, he had been attempting to secure his licence since the age of 16, but fines and various life obstacles consistently hindered his progress.

This time, with the support of the DAEP program and a renewed sense of determination, he decided to give it another shot.

"I have been trying to get my licence for 17 years," Kerin shared. "I haven't done the right thing with getting in trouble and fines, but to have Belinda (instructor) help me with that and do lessons and pay for my test has been so much help. I felt on top of the world, like I finally achieved something in my life."

"I just needed someone to believe in me and give me a little bit of support. I feel like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders. I am going to look for a job now too."

When asked about his first destination, Kerin said he was going to visit his mother at the cemetery, honouring a promise he made after she passed away in his arms three years ago.

After successfully passing his test, Kerin picked up some flowers and drove directly to the cemetery.

During the drive, he enthusiastically shouted out the window, "Yes! Yay! I can't believe it, am I dreaming? I GOT MY LICENCE! Woohoo!" At the cemetery, Kerin stood by his mother's resting place and said, "I drove here mum, just for you."

Reid Highway Interchanges Project Aboriginal business forum

In late August, an Aboriginal Business Open House event was held for the new Main Roads [Reid Highway Interchanges Project](#).

The project will be building two new bridged interchanges on Reid Highway at Altone Road and Drumpellier Drive / Daviot Road, removing two of the remaining five signalised intersections on Reid Highway.

With works set to commence in the coming months, the event attracted strong interest from Aboriginal businesses eager to explore opportunities.

Over 70 attendees, representing 36 local Aboriginal-owned businesses attended, taking the chance to meet the project team, ask questions, network and learn more about upcoming work packages and future opportunities.



[Project leads engaging with local Aboriginal business owners.](#)

The project is committed to working closely with Aboriginal businesses, ensuring they have meaningful opportunities to contribute and providing support throughout the tender process.

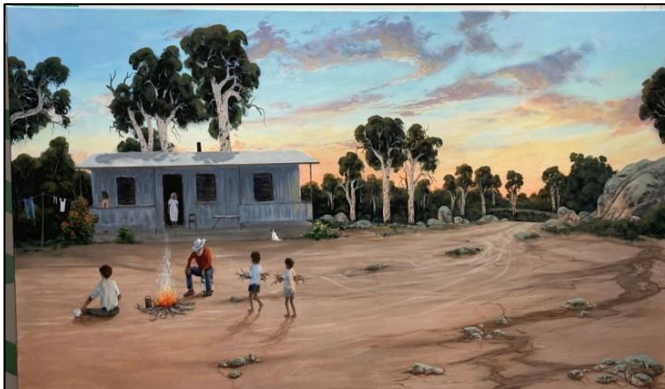
Australind train art unveiled

Recently, Alstom Transport ANZ Aboriginal Engagement lead, Ashley Garlett working on the Public Transport Authority (PTA) [WA Railcar Program](#), shared an exciting preview of the artwork selected for the new Australind diesel multiple units (DMUs), which Alstom is currently building. These designs celebrate Aboriginal culture and connection to Country.

Ashley travelled to Bunbury Regional Art Gallery with representatives from PTA, Transwa and the Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Engagement team to choose the design concept from its Noongar Country exhibition, which takes place every second year.

The selected Noongar artworks will be visually displayed in selected areas of the DMU's travelling from Whadjuk Boodja to Bindjareb-Kenang-Williman-Wardandi Boodja of the South West.

See the chosen pieces below, as well as an artists' impression showing where the artworks are to be featured.



Graham 'Swag' Taylor. *Little Helpers*. Acrylic on canvas.



Rhona Wallam. *Sunset on Country*. Acrylic on canvas.



Candy Riley. *Country Colours*. Acrylic on canvas.

Artist's statement: This piece depicts the colourful wildflower season Kamberang. The wide range of colours and shapes in the wildflowers. Visitors from far and wide travel to view this spectacle of nature. At the end of the season the seeds of the plants fall to the ground or are carried in the wind to grow in another area on country.



Dellas Bennell. *Myallup Sunset*. Acrylic on canvas.

Artist's statement: This stunning sunset was captured near Bunbury at Myallup, close to the ocean yet in natural bushlands. It is one of my favourite vistas on Noongar Country. This reminds me of the many years spent travelling through this area with my family.



Impression of artwork on trains.

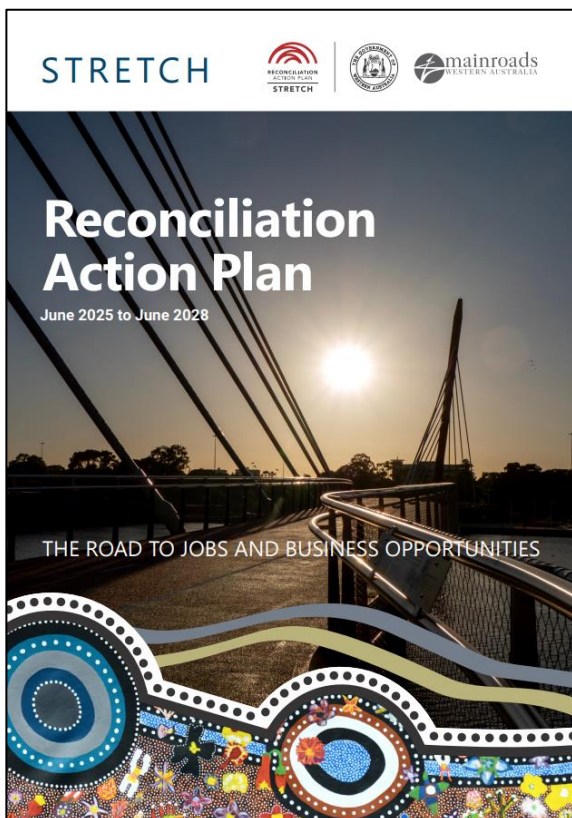
Main Roads Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan launched

Main Roads recently announced the launch of their new [Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan June 2025 to June 2028](#) (RAP) which was accredited and endorsed by Reconciliation Australia.

The Stretch RAP builds on the learnings from previous RAPs and demonstrates Main Roads' ongoing commitment to strengthening relationships through respectful engagement, growing cultural awareness and developing economic opportunities which support greater business and economic participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

A focus area directly related to Aboriginal business participation, 'Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes' includes a number of deliverables intended to increase representation of Aboriginal and Torres Islander peoples working with and alongside Main Roads.

The RAP features artwork by Mel Spillman (Woods), founder of Maarakool Art with family connections to Goreng Country; Justine Kinney, Yawaru woman and founder of Cultural Creative Agency and a collective art piece completed by Main Roads staff.



Students explore Noongar boodja

Students from Henley Brook Primary School put their best foot forward, taking part in a walking trail delivered through the Department of Transport and Major Infrastructure's Your Move Schools program.

The walk was facilitated by Justin Martin from Djurandi Dreaming and allowed students to see, smell, hear and touch their natural local environment.

It was a great way to spark an interest in students to consider walking, wheeling or riding to school, so that they can enjoy interacting with nature during their journey. Watch a video from the walk [here](#).

"Our students were enthralled with the deep level of knowledge around the six Noongar Seasons, barna (animals), where Noongar people would have traditionally lived, plants used for food and bush medicine," said Henley Brook Primary's Your Move school champion, Jessine Bonzas.

Three other Your Move schools also participated in a similar walking trail experience, delivered by In Culture Tours.

Your Move is a free program that helps schools, organisations and the community to discover more active ways to get around with over 180 schools engaged in program. For more information or to get involved, visit the [Your Move website](#).

Polly Farmer Follow the Dream Expo

Agencies from the Transport and Major Infrastructure Portfolio were among over 40 exhibitors at the 2025 Polly Farmer Follow the Dream Careers Expo.

Held at Optus Stadium, more than 500 Follow the Dream students from across WA and interstate attended to learn more about potential career paths.

Staff from Main Roads and the Public Transport Authority spoke with students about the range of career opportunities available across the transport industry.

Kany Bidi driving change in WA infrastructure projects

Over the past six years, Aboriginal-owned business Kany Bidi has become a leader in traffic management services across Western Australia's Transport and Major Infrastructure Portfolio projects, particularly through its work with Laing O'Rourke on major recent projects including METRONET [Morley to Ellenbrook Line Project](#), METRONET [Byford Rail Extension Project](#) and the Main Roads [Swan River Crossings Fremantle Project](#).

Under the leadership of Noongar Director and former Fremantle Dockers player Michael Johnson, the company has built a reputation for operational excellence, cultural leadership, and meaningful social impact.

Kany Bidi's contributions go beyond traffic control. The company has supported the flexible training and employment of over 50 Aboriginal peoples, delivering industry-leading outcomes in Aboriginal participation and workforce inclusion.

For the past 6 years their Aboriginal employment levels are consistently over 55% on all major projects. Notably, the company has also increased female participation, with women making up 18% of the workforce on the Swan River Crossings Project.



(L-R) Aaron Robertson, Anthony Lawrence Snr, Brayden Loo, Gino Lamelza, Anthony Lawrence Jnr and Bill Quartermaine from Kany Bidi.

Staff retention between projects has been strong, with a core group of approximately 20 employees continuing their journey with Kany Bidi across multiple worksites over the past three years, demonstrating the company's commitment to employee retention and career pathways.

For a glimpse into the Kany Bidi impact on individuals, check out [this](#) employee story.

"Whilst focusing on current projects Kany Bidi are also looking at new opportunities in 2026 with a focus on growing the business in regional Western Australia," said Michael Johnson, Director, Kany Bidi.

The collaboration between Kany Bidi and Laing O'Rourke on these projects has been a model of values-driven partnership. Michael Johnson's leadership and the company's high performance have earned praise from project team members:

"Kany Bidi has been working on the Swan River Crossings project since 2024. In that time, they have demonstrated not only a high capability, but also shown the dedication and support related to genuine Indigenous employment, currently at an impressive average of 75%. Michael is a strong leader who consistently supports his team, and we are proud to support Kany Bidi's business growth and development." Jarryd Mann, Traffic Manager, Laing O'Rourke.

Boorloo Deadly Careers Expo

The Department of Major Infrastructure and Transport, Public Transport Authority and Main Roads recently joined forces to shine a spotlight on career pathways within the transport industry at the first Boorloo Deadly Careers Expo.

Hosted by the Department of Training and Workforce Development at North Metropolitan TAFE, over 1,000 people attended this culturally safe and welcoming event to understand the training and job pathways for Aboriginal peoples from communities across the state.



[PTA and Main Roads staff at the Deadly Careers Expo.](#)

Garli leading the way in accreditation and prequalification

Aboriginal owned and operated construction business, Garli, were recently upgraded to a higher classification level within the National Prequalification System for Civil (Road and Bridge) Construction Contracts, making Garli one of the first Aboriginal owned businesses in WA to achieve a full prequalification status of R2 in the roadworks category.



[Manuwarra Red Dog Highway.](#)

As a business cannot tender for most road construction contracts without prequalification, Garli embarked on gaining experience on road projects in late 2018 to prepare for the prequalification process and achieved initial prequalification of R1 (roadworks), B1 (bridgeworks) and F2 (financial) in 2021, ISO certification and accreditation under the WHS Work Health and Safety Accreditation Scheme in 2022, enabling the company to tender for Australian Government funded projects.

Garli Managing Director, Darren Lundberg, recognised the value of prequalification for not only the operational improvements but the upskilling of the workforce.

“Achieving prequalification allows Garli to tender on larger and more complex projects with Main Roads and other State road authorities,” Darren Lundberg, Garli Managing Director.

Garli is committed to local Aboriginal participation across WA by providing opportunities to deliver sustainable employment outcomes plus economic development within their business, with their strategy including implementing and growing partnerships under Joint Venture arrangements.



[Garli workers attend a Karratha Tom Price smoking ceremony for the Manuwarra Red Dog Highway Project.](#)

Garli's advice for emerging businesses considering prequalification is to plan ahead by understanding requirements of the prequalification process, seek mentorship by engaging with organisations or peers who have successfully participated in similar processes for valuable insights and to invest in compliance by allocating resources to meet the required standards for prequalification.

HazRad Australia supporting WA projects with a purpose

HazRad Australia is a proudly WA owned and operated Aboriginal business delivering comprehensive waste management and industrial services on projects including the [METRONET Byford Rail Extension Project](#) and Main Roads [Swan River Crossings Project](#).

One of HazRad's most impactful collaborations has been with Laing O'Rourke, supporting waste management across key WA infrastructure projects. Over the past five years, Laing O'Rourke has engaged services to the value of over \$10 million with HazRad, enabling the delivery of safe, compliant, and sustainable waste services on six major Transport and Major Infrastructure Portfolio projects.

On recent projects Aboriginal staff made up more than half of the workforce, with 12 team members retained between projects. This continuity not only strengthens project delivery but also builds long-term career pathways for Aboriginal workers in the growing hazardous waste and industrial services sector.

HazRad has supported three Aboriginal traineeships and currently employs ten Aboriginal staff and eight women across its operations.

“We have recently partnered with the Boronia Pre-Release Centre for Women where we engaged two women to work with us at providing them a pathway to rebuild skills and independence,” says James Sydney, HazRad Director and Kamilaroi man.

“Their daily commitment is remarkable, navigating early starts and late finishes, often requiring a journey of three buses and one train just to reach our facility. This determination reflects not only their resilience but also the genuine drive to re-establish themselves in society. We are proud to play a role in supporting that transition and their careers.” James Sydney, HazRad Director.



Some of the HazRad staff and trucks.

HazRad operates two key facilities, Bibra Lake for Hazardous waste treatment and consolidation and Wattleup due to open in 2026). Wattleup have expanded HazRad’s capabilities for product destruction, tank cleaning, and specialised waste processing. HazRad is also preparing to support major infrastructure developments such as Westport and the Western Trade Coast and is actively pursuing opportunities at Garden Island in support of Australia’s AUKUS defence commitments.

Since 2018, HazRad has become a trusted partner for major infrastructure projects, with social, environmental, and cultural commitment at its core. HazRad’s capabilities span the full lifecycle of waste, from collection and transport to treatment, recycling, and safe disposal. HazRad was the first company in WA licensed to treat PFAS-impacted wash waters, demonstrating leadership in environmental protection.

HazRad’s partnership with major transport infrastructure projects exemplifies how Aboriginal businesses are delivering high-value services while driving social impact and sustainable employment across WA’s infrastructure landscape.

Box culverts poured by local Fitzroy Crossing company

Main Roads’ Kimberley Region has been providing technical advice and support to local contractor FX Civil, a 100% locally owned Aboriginal business who are now successfully manufacturing reinforced box culverts as part of their new production program.



Workers on site during the box culvert pour.

Months of collaboration and a trial run, delivered on site in Fitzroy Crossing, led to the first major production day in mid-July, and the manufacturing of 6 reinforced box culverts. 42 culverts have since passed quality assurance testing!

“This achievement is the result of months of collaboration and expert guidance between Main Roads and FX Civil staff and contractors,” said Kimberley Region Delivery Manager, Andrew Murphy.

“It marks an important step in supporting work programs across the Region - not only for Main Roads but also for local governments and other stakeholders who can now access locally produced box culverts”.

The company has established a training program for up to 12 people to assemble reinforcement cages and they currently have an 80% Aboriginal labour workforce with 12 local employees.

They are also outsourcing supply and other contracts to 13 Aboriginal businesses - 11 from Fitzroy and 2 from the West Kimberley.

Long-term, FX Civil plans to remain in the Kimberley, and further developing their investment in local skills, jobs and economic growth for the region.