

# Aboriginal Participation Bulletin No 19

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.*

## Waarkarl Woonya Bidi

Waarkarl Woonya Bidi is the journey way that shaped what is now known as Albany Highway. Stretching between the two rivers, Derbarl Yerrigan (Swan River) and Kalgan Beeliar (Kalgan River), the route is named in honour of the Waarkarl who, in the Dreaming, created the rivers and hills and valleys between them. It was travelled by Nyoongar people for thousands of years to attend meetings at Kaarta Garup (head camp) at what is now Mount Eliza in Kings Park.

It is one of the journey ways outlined in *Aboriginal Journey Ways: How ancient trails shaped our roads* co-authored by Dr Noel Nannup OAM and Dr Francesca Robertson.

Signage has been co-designed between Nani Creative, an Aboriginal-led creative agency, and Main Roads, that reflects the colours of Nyoongar Country and features the feet that represent ancient Aboriginal journey ways.

Blak Line Industries, a majority Aboriginal-owned and operated signage, print and promotional solutions company were engaged to manage the manufacture and installation of the signs at the following rest areas along Albany Highway:

- Glen Eagle rest area
- Williams rest area
- Kojonup rest area
- Mt Barker rest area

For more information head to [Aboriginal Journey Ways | Main Roads Western Australia](#)



*Raquel Todd, a proud Banyjima and Kariyarra woman and co-founder of Blak Line Industries with Dr Francesca Robertson, co-author of *Aboriginal Journey Ways: How ancient trails shaped our roads*.*

## Impact Services making a difference in the Great Southern Region

Since August 2019, Impact Services has been actively engaged in collecting roadside litter throughout the picturesque Great Southern Region. This initiative has not only contributed to keeping the area tidy but has also provided meaningful employment opportunities for local Noongar men, Daryl Williams, and Neville Loach.

From the outset, Daryl and Neville approached their duties with high enthusiasm, viewing the opportunity to work on country and maintain the region's cleanliness as an honour. Their dedication has been unwavering since they began servicing the Great Southern Road network in October 2019.

Throughout the duration of the contract, Daryl and Neville have diligently serviced the region, ensuring that litter is collected promptly, and the area remains pristine. This stability in employment has had a tangible impact on Daryl's life, enabling him to build a home for his family in Albany.



*Noongar man, Daryl Williams, values the opportunity to work on country through Impact Services*

Daryl and Neville take pride in their work, often reporting back on the emergence of native bush foods and the condition of bin sites. Their dedication goes beyond mere duty; they have truly taken ownership of this important service, ensuring the well-being of the community and the environment.

Impact Services have expressed that they are deeply grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the region's upkeep and for the trust placed in them by Main Roads. By empowering Aboriginal businesses like Impact Services and valuing their employees, we can foster positive change and create a brighter future for all.

## Native Spirit Nursery awarded Contract on the Victoria Park-Canning Level Crossing Removal

Aboriginal business Native Spirit Nursery were recently awarded a \$9 million softscape package on the METRONET [Victoria Park-Canning Level Crossing Removal project](#) for landscaping.

The business has identified and are committed to employing 10 horticultural trainees and are currently seeking two Aboriginal full time labouring roles to commence seedling planting at the Wanneroo Nursery.

## Upgrades to Manuwarra Red Dog Highway are now underway

Overlay work has now commenced on 14km of Manuwarra Red Dog Highway (MRDH) and the project team were proud to have the Yindjibarndi Nation on site in late September for a Smoking Ceremony, which welcomed the roadwork crew to the land on which the project is on.

Workers were each given part of a tree, placing it into the fire to commit to looking after country and environment. Elders Michael Woodley, Aaron Hubert, Frank Smith and Ricky Smith led the Ceremony on behalf of Yirdiya Pty Ltd, an Aboriginal joint venture of Hicks Civil and Mining, Garli Pty Ltd and Yurra Pty Ltd, engaged to deliver the work on various sections of MRDH, between Cherratta Road and Roebourne Wittenoom Road.

Also present were Yirdiya Directors Peter Hicks, Darren Lundberg and Liam Wilson, who have been instrumental in helping to get this project off the ground. The upgrade work is expected to be completed in January 2025.





## METRONET Morley-Ellenbrook Line Project supports transition from traineeships to permanent career opportunities

Growing up on Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar, Katelyn Thomson is a proud Kija woman who commenced her Laing O'Rourke journey in 2022 as the Site Administrator Trainee with the Health & Safety team on the METRONET Morley-Ellenbrook Line Project, studying Certificate III in Business Administration.

As a young woman in Perth's largest infrastructure project in over 25 years, Katelyn quickly become one of the HSE team's subject matter experts of the appropriate Critical Controls and Primary Standards when undertaking safety protocols in the field. It was moments like this, she knew the role ignited a passion for health and safety in construction.

Once Katelyn completed her Certificate III, she was offered full-time employment as the project's Health & Safety Administrator and later transferred to the Swan River Crossings Project where she is about to commence her Certificate IV in Work Health and Safety.

Katelyn has described her experience at Laing O'Rourke as, "A company that truly upholds values that align with my own: care, integrity and courage. When working towards project deliverables, I found myself implementing these values towards my traineeship to drive the success of my career. The support from my colleagues at the METRONET Morley-Ellenbrook Project was nothing like I've ever experienced before, and I will forever be grateful that this is how my career started."

The project's Senior Aboriginal Participation Advisor, Terika Horwood said "Seeing Katelyn's professional and personal growth is something the project is proud to support, and we can't wait to see what the future has in store for Katelyn."



*Then: Katelyn in August 2022, when she commenced at the METRONET Morley-Ellenbrook Line Project*



*Now: Katelyn in October 2024, the project's Health Safety and Environment Advisor*

### Rail Revitalisation Program

The Public Transport Authority (PTA) is undertaking major maintenance between Kenwick and Sherwood stations on the Armadale Train Line during the line's shutdown.

The works include the renewal of 25kms of track, 25 pedestrian crossings, 10 level crossings, and improving and installing new drainage systems.

Project contractor John Holland has achieved strong outcomes in Aboriginal participation.

- 10 per cent of hours worked in September were by Aboriginal peoples.
- 8 contracts with value over \$20,000 have been awarded to Aboriginal businesses, with a recent \$2 million major drainage contract awarded to Boodja Services.

This helps build capability for future rail and maintenance works, which will continue to grow as Perth's rail network expands.



## Walk, wheel, and ride through the Noongar Seasons

In support of the Department of Transport's (DoT) Reconciliation Action Plan, DoT's Behaviour Change team produced a series of worksheets for the Your Move Schools program that highlight features of the six Noongar seasons for students to discover while walking and riding to school.

The team engaged with Kurongkurl Katitjin, Edith Cowan University's Centre for Indigenous Australian Education and Research to develop the resources. The worksheets showcase the six seasons of Noongar boodja, detailing the fauna and flora that thrives at each time of year, and encourage students to explore nature on their active journeys to school.

The interactive resource allows students to draw or attach photos of the things they saw, spotting the signs of the seasons and learning of the traditions and environmental changes that occur in the south-west region of WA.

Schools will also be able to access the newly released children's book *Djinang Bonar: Seeing Seasons on the Your Move* reward shop to help further explore this topic in classrooms.



*A student using the Your Move Kambarang season worksheet on the walk home from school*

## Final MELconnx Cultural Awareness Training

Driver training is underway on the METRONET Morley-Ellenbrook Line and like many, all good things on the project have come to an end at MELconnx as they facilitated their final Cultural Awareness Training in August 2024.

Since April 2021, Kooya Consultancy have facilitated 25 Cultural Awareness sessions to 424 staff, totalling a completion of 86.43%. These sessions included project specific significant area Bennett Brook.

Lead by 2024 West Australian of the Year and 2024 National NAIDOC Elder of the Year Winner Kim Collard and additional facilitators, daughter Sharna Collard and Tony Walley. Kooya commenced their cultural awareness training 25 years ago with corporate companies which has given them the opportunity to build their business to Kulbardi (supplying project office stationery), Kooya Fleet and giving back to community programs throughout their Bibbulmun Fund throughout Australia.

MELconnx is very fortunate to have the guidance of Kooya's rich local knowledge and guidance of the Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar. Here is some feedback of the sessions held at MELconnx throughout the 25 sessions:

- "Kim was an excellent presenter, very engaging spoke very well and really dived into the history of Aboriginal people. Great workshop and very engaging, I will definitely take all this onboard professionally and personally. Thank you."
- "Not having been born and raised in Australia, I found this awareness workshop to be informative and culturally eye opening"
- "Speaking/ speaker was very clever and helped open my eyes on the history of our land"





## Celebrating BORR milestones

The Main Roads Bunbury Outer Ring Road (BORR) project recently celebrated its official name, Wilman Wadandi Highway, and the final cohort of graduates from the Yaka Dandjoo program as the project nears completion in the coming months.

The Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport the Hon. Rita Saffioti visited the project to check out progress and unveil directional signage featuring the new name. The name honours the Wilman and Wadandi people, who have historically occupied the lands at either end of the project. Since February 2021, extensive consultation on the name has been undertaken with the project's Aboriginal Heritage Advisory Group, Local Government Authorities, the Noongar Language Centre and Landgate.

Additionally, the project celebrated the graduation of its thirteenth and final cohort from the Yaka Dandjoo Program, marking the end of a successful two-and-a-half-year initiative. The Yaka Dandjoo Program – meaning 'working together' in Noongar language – was created to offer a sustainable employment pathway for local Aboriginal people, young people, and those who were unemployed, to enter the civil construction industry through a supportive and inclusive approach.

From the outset, the project set ambitious Aboriginal employment targets, approximately five times higher than the local Aboriginal working-age population. This was achieved by partnering with local Aboriginal organisations to provide employment across various roles in the construction sector. With a strong focus on sustainable employment, the project has achieved 11.17 per cent Aboriginal participation hours worked to date. This included 19 Aboriginal trainees and apprentices, eight of whom completed a trade qualification in Mobile Plant Operations.

The project initially set a target to achieve \$30 million in spend with Aboriginal businesses. As of August 2024, the project has awarded contracts worth over \$50.6 million to 46 Aboriginal-owned businesses and suppliers, significantly exceeding the target. These contracts supported services like earthworks and landscaping in the South West, while also providing mentorship and business development support to Aboriginal organisations, enhancing their future potential and capacity in the region.

## Emerging Aboriginal business engaged for Mandurah Estuary Bridge Duplication project

In late 2023, Georgiou began actively seeking opportunities to collaborate with local Aboriginal businesses after being awarded the contract for the Main Roads Mandurah Estuary Bridge Duplication project.

At this time Mallee Karlip, led by Jay Collard and Matt Guy, was identified as a local, emerging electrical company in the early stages of development.

Recognising their potential, Georgiou encouraged the team to participate in an Open House for Indigenous Businesses in January 2024. Mallee Karlip took the initiative to refine their capability statement and presented themselves at the Open House event, making a strong impression on the project team.

They were then invited to submit a bid for the Street Lighting Electrical Package, competing alongside four other businesses, and successfully secured the contract in September 2024.

Georgiou is excited to work with Mallee Karlip on the Mandurah project and is positive that this will be the first of many successful collaborations with the electrical company for this project and beyond.



*L-R: Pietro Catalano (GG – Section Manager), Jay Collard (Mallee Karlip – General Manager), Matt Guy (Mallee Karlip – Operations Manager), Nick Kelly (GG – MEBD Project Manager.)*

## Careers Beyond BORR

In May 2024, the Delivery Manager Maintenance, Chris Hathaway and Maintenance Manager, Anthony Willetts from the South West Region were provided the opportunity to work with their Human Resources Business Partner, Kelly Horne to engage with South West Gateway Alliance and forge relationships in hopes to continue to support the Main Roads Yaka Dandjoo program 'Beyond BORR'.

There was an opportunity for Main Roads to engage employees/participants from the Yaka Dandjoo program to support the South West Region in resourcing some of the Construction and Maintenance Worker roles which remained vacant from the 'In-house Maintenance Transition' that took place in February 2024. The region was experiencing challenges in recruiting individuals for these roles.

In consultation with South West Gateway Alliance, individuals were identified who had gone through the Yaka Dandjoo program and/or completed apprenticeships on BORR. This meant they not only had relevant skills, knowledge, and experience, but they had also played a pivotal role in the construction and delivery of BORR. Being provided an opportunity in a Construction and Maintenance role in the South West Region meant they would have the opportunity to work on maintaining the BORR network and other Main Roads assets.

With this approach, so far, Main Roads has been able to engage four individuals from the Yaka Dandjoo program offering opportunities within Bunbury and Mandurah. Ashleigh Bell and Jaimee-Lee Trenerry commenced in Bunbury on Monday 16th September. The image below shows Jaimee-Lee (left) and Ashleigh (right) on their first day in Bunbury.



The four individuals have fitted in really well with the team, they are keen and eager to learn and not afraid to ask questions.



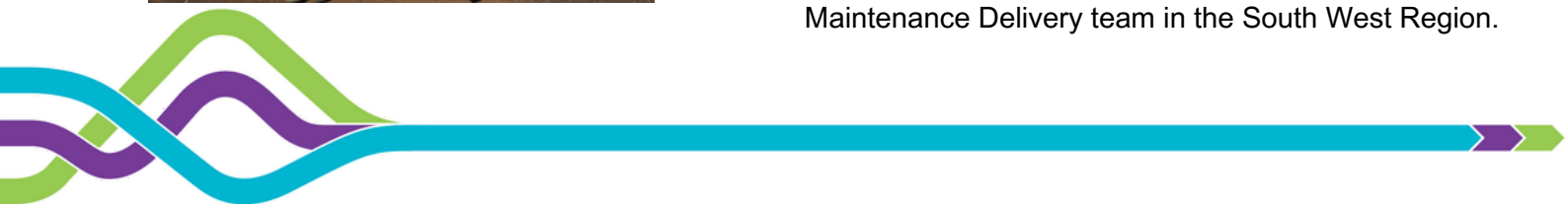
*L-R: Jack McMullin, Jamie-Lee Trenerry, Ashleigh-Marie Bell, Greg Williams*

As the Yaka Dandjoo employees embark on their careers at Main Roads, a familiar face was engaged to provide mentoring and peer support to the individuals. Tanya Gosztyla was the training co-ordinator for the South West Gateway Alliance and has worked alongside the Yaka Dandjoo employees. This initiative will provide reassurance and comfort to these employees, that will ultimately set them up for a successful and enduring career at Main Roads.



*L-R: Jack McMullin, Jamie-Lee Trenerry, Ashleigh-Marie Bell, Greg Williams and Tanya Gosztyla*

The approach to working together with South West Gateway Alliance, supporting the future of 'Beyond BORR' and the Yaka Dandjoo program has provided individuals with opportunities to establish their careers at Main Roads, enhancing diversity in the growing Maintenance Delivery team in the South West Region.





# Out and about in the community

## Briefing sessions for Panel Contract supporting Aboriginal businesses

Main Roads has established a Transport Portfolio wide Panel Contract, 'Training and Business Capability Development Services for Aboriginal Businesses and Peoples'. The Panel Contract will be used to engage external consultancy services to increase the supply of capable and qualified Aboriginal businesses and peoples to participate on Transport Portfolio related projects.

The Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Engagement (TPAE) branch in collaboration with Main Roads' Program Management Office (PMO) branch delivered briefing sessions to the Panel members as well as staff from across the Transport Portfolio, explaining the purpose of this panel contract. The Panel Contract went live 21 October.



L-R: Stephen Grech TP AE, Rashida Hassanali PMO, Micheline Ong PMO, Maria Drysdale TP AE, Thana Hongswadhi PMO

## Midland Station Project at City of Swan's NAIDOC event

The PTA New Midland Station project team held a stall at the City of Swan's Midland NAIDOC event on 2 October.

The event showcased Aboriginal businesses and support services and agencies that operate within Midland, with the Midland Junction Alliance running the stall.

The team spoke to over 260 people throughout the day, providing information on the project and works happening through the area. The New Midland Station project will replace the existing station with a new station closer to the heart of Midland.



The New Midland Station team meeting community members at City of Swan event

## Indigenous Emerging Business Forum Tradeshow

Staff from the Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Engagement branch attended the 2024 Indigenous Emerging Business Forum Tradeshow on 26 September. Over 70 businesses were showcased at the forum which allowed staff to meet with representatives from Aboriginal owned businesses and organisations. The team met with businesses already engaged across Transport Portfolio as well as other relevant businesses.



Photo credit: Indigenous Business News