

Aboriginal Participation Bulletin No 20

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.

Supporting local Aboriginal women's group

S2M Evolution Alliance team members working on the Main Roads Stephenson Avenue Extension Project in Perth recently connected with the local Wadjuk Northside Aboriginal Community Centre by supporting their weekly women's group through the donation of arts and crafts supplies.

The Dardy Yorga's Program supports the mental health and wellbeing of local Aboriginal women by offering a safe place where they can get together and yarn while participating in arts and crafts activities. The group meets every Tuesday from 10am to 1.30pm and participate in a variety of activities including painting, pottery, drawing, knitting, and jewellery making.

Program Coordinator Annette Dickie said that after a similar program she was attending ceased due to a withdrawal in funding, she approached the Wadjuk Centre to ask if she could run the program from there. She said it is important for Aboriginal women to feel empowered and have a sense of belonging. "For many of the women, the Dardy Yorga's Program is their main social activity for the week."

S2M Evolution Alliance Aboriginal Participation Manager Jade Bradford said "The Dardy Yorga's program and other programs run by the Wadjuk Centre are critical towards supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our mob. Annette has worked so hard to keep it running and there is often little to no funding available for programs such as this one. As a project, a donation of arts and crafts supplies was a small gesture we could offer to contribute towards this meaningful community initiative."



S2ME Alliance Aboriginal Participation Manager, Jade Bradford with Dardy Yorga's Program Coordinator, Annette Dickie.

Aboriginal Rangers working in the Wheatbelt

Main Roads is proud to be working with Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management to engage Aboriginal Rangers on projects across the Wheatbelt.

The team is a motivated group of young people who happily get on with revegetation site services and tree planting under the supervision of Jermaine Davis.

Main Roads' decision to engage with the Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management Ranger Team was based on the services it knew the Rangers could provide.

This was also an opportunity for Main Roads to offer young local youth the chance to learn new skills and gain work experience in an outdoor setting and team environment.

Colleen Fulford, Main Roads' Vegetation Manager Wheatbelt noted that Bomber, one of the Rangers, is very experienced in revegetation site maintenance and tree planting, and his knowledge of endemic species is very useful on site.

"Some of the services we engage the Ranger team to do includes whipper snipper slashing, litter pick up and removal, weed spray, seedling planting, minor revegetation site preparation and the removal of declared weeds and weeds of significance" Colleen said.

Artist invites community input

The Main Roads Mandurah Estuary Duplication Bridge Project hosted a community art workshop in early November, facilitated by artist Miranda (Mandy) Davis.

The workshop invited members of the public from the City of Mandurah, residents who live near the bridge construction, Bindjareb Elders, and staff from Main Roads and Georgiou to join the artist in assisting in the creation of artworks which will feature on the noise wall.

Students from Coodanup College and Clontarf Academy assisted the artist with development of the initial artwork. Workshop participants were also invited to taste some kangaroo stew, which was kindly cooked by the artist.

Long Park showcases line-wide public art trail

More than 10 Noongar and First Nations artists will create public art featuring Noongar shield designs, stories of place and themes of truth-telling and healing as part of the 7km long public art trail on the METRONET Victoria Park-Canning Level Crossing Removal Project. The artworks will be included in a collection of over 20 pieces that will welcome the community to the new stations and public open spaces on the Armadale Line.

The artworks will be themed around healing and revealing, with the aim of fostering learning, storytelling and shared experiences while reflecting the unique elements of each area along the line.



Noongar shield designs have been etched into screenings and retaining walls, while First Nations designs will be integrated into paving, shelters and seating. Each station will have graphic patterns and text embedded into surfaces, with Cannington showcasing dynamic screen art and lighting.

A statement piece at Queens Park Station will celebrate Noongar themes of truth-telling and healing. Unique graphic designs will appear on surfaces in activation zones, youth plazas and on 70 of the piers along the rail corridor to form part of the line-wide art trail.



Artist Miranda (Mandy) Davis and Georgiou Local and Indigenous Engagement Officer Candis Smartt

Heavy Rigid (HR) licences attained

Main Roads Kimberley Region, in partnership with Nirrumbuk Aboriginal Corporation, recently facilitated Heavy Rigid (HR) licence training for three workers from the Tanami Road Upgrade Project. Dylan Long, Bodeen Wilson, and Winston Manson completed their training and obtained their HR licences last week.

When asked about their experience, Bodeen and Winston shared their thoughts. Winston said, “I was a bit nervous, to be honest, because I hadn’t driven a truck in traffic before. I was worried I wouldn’t pass, but I did and got my HR licence.”

Bodeen shared, “I was a little nervous at first, but it’s a good start to help me get on the right path.” Dylan also shared what having a HR licence means to him and said it will “take you a long way in life. You need it for heavy machinery.”

Joe Grande, CEO of Nirrumbuk secured \$100,000 funding from Department of Workforce Development for HR driver licence training after 12 months of seeking funding. Nirrumbuk provided the trainer, truck, food and transport for the participants, while the region coordinated with Nirrumbuk to identify participants, set training dates, and arranged the practical driving assessments with the Department of Transport (DoT).



(Top) Winston (L) and (bottom) Bodeen (L) both with trainer, Harry Westcott

Communication and open conversations the ‘foundation’ of successful business engagement

Karak Construction, a local, Aboriginal-owned business was recently awarded a scope of work on Main Roads’ Swan River Crossings Fremantle Project delivering the Foundations for Moulds package at the project’s pre-cast yard in Hazelmere.

Over the past couple of years Karak has been working on many local infrastructure projects within the Transport Portfolio and this package is their first direct contract with Laing O’Rourke. Karak has been a part of Laing O’Rourke’s Connect, Gather, Grow program in 2024, which is an engagement program designed to foster relationships and better connect with WA’s Aboriginal business cohort.

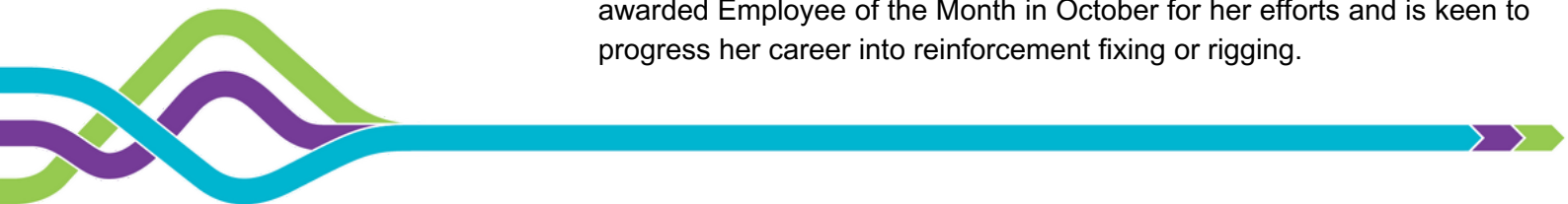


Karak Construction team members on site for the Swan River Crossings Fremantle Project

Due for completion in December 2024, this package of works has been a positive experience for all parties, with positive and open communication being the key to the team’s success.

“We have had good communication and open conversations with the Karak team throughout delivery of the scope. With good communication we have been able to collaborate and address any challenges early on. We have found the Karak team very adaptive and responsive to the project needs,” said Steve Jopson, Pre-cast Manager.

Several team members from Karak have come from neighbouring projects including Jasmine Hart and Roland Garlett who were former participants of the OnTrack Employment Program. Jasmine has been praised for her initiative on-site and willingness to learn. She was awarded Employee of the Month in October for her efforts and is keen to progress her career into reinforcement fixing or rigging.



Noongar artists' designs featured across Perth public transport stations

Public Transport Authority recently installed two artworks involving Noongar artists at the Perth Station Forecourt.

The PTA funded artworks include a sculpture by Sharyn Egan and Anne Neil called 'Balga Souvenirs' and a mural by Justin Martin, Susan Milne and Greg Stonehouse named 'Alija djinda mia: The stars will guide us home'.



'Balga Souvenirs' sculpture on display at Perth Station Forecourt

Rohin Kickett will be creating integrated artwork for Mends Street Jetty, which is near completion.

Two commissions are underway at Midland Station with Aboriginal artists. Kamsani Bin Salleh is creating the soffit artwork, and two groups from Indigo Junction (Maali Deadly Yorgas, Moorditj Mamaan) are working collaboratively on artwork for shade canopies for the new bus interchange.

Two Aboriginal artists have been engaged for the PTA's Urban Art Program 2024 with the murals to be delivered in early-2025. Emily Rose will be designing and delivering a project at Bull Creek Station, and Nathan Corunna and Darren Hutchens will design and deliver a project at Lord Street bridge in Bassendean.

Enhanced definitions to highlight Aboriginal participation

The definitions for employment and business direct and indirect engagement of Aboriginal peoples and businesses were recently endorsed across the Transport Portfolio.

These updates are in the process of being rolled out within the reporting system, and those responsible for inputting Aboriginal participation and engagement will receive notification once these enhancements are live in the reporting system.

- Direct employee hours: Total worked hours by Aboriginal employees within the Transport Portfolio, including regular and overtime hours, excluding any leave (like personal or annual leave).
- Direct contractor hours: The total hours worked by Aboriginal employees hired by contractors where a Transport Portfolio entity or agency is the main client. Even though these employees are not directly employed by the Transport Portfolio, they are considered direct employees of the contractor, making these hours important for reporting purposes.
- Indirect sub-contractor hours: The total hours worked by Aboriginal employees hired by sub-contractors under a main contract with a Transport Portfolio entity or agency. These hours represent the work done by Aboriginal people through sub-contracts arranged by our primary contractors.
- Indirect business spend: Transport Portfolio has indirectly engaged an Aboriginal business through subcontracting means, where the primary contractor is a non-Aboriginal business.
- Direct business spend: Transport Portfolio has directly engaged an Aboriginal business through contractual means.



Dakota on track to career and personal success

Overcoming personal challenges, 23-year-old Dakota Ninyette says he has rediscovered both his career path and himself through the OnTrack Employment Program.

The 7-week program, delivered by the project team at the METRONET Victoria Park-Canning Level Crossing Removal Project, offers training and job opportunities to unemployed, entry-level individuals like Dakota. It aims to enhance participants' skills in areas such as financial management, cultural understanding, mental health, communication, conflict resolution and the use of small tools and equipment.



Dakota said bonding with his fellow participants and the OnTrack team gave him strength and a fresh perspective on life. "Every participant was in the same boat, so there was no room for judgement in our diverse backgrounds. The OnTrack team created a safe and supportive space for us all," he said.

Dakota was one of 17 trainees from Cohort 2 to complete the program in September last year. After graduating, Dakota secured his dream apprenticeship with one of the project's contractors, MCT Equipment.

Now one year into his mobile plant mechanic apprenticeship, Dakota has primarily worked on servicing and demobilising the gantry cranes used on the Victoria Park-Canning Level Crossing Removal Project.

"I'm looking forward to completing my trade apprenticeship and gaining more hands-on experience with MCT's field plant equipment," he said. "I've gained real independence and the financial stability to support my family – it has transformed my life."

MCT Equipment Managing Director Anthony Grosser said Dakota has shown a strong commitment to work and developing his career.



"Our organisation has loved being part of the OnTrack Program and is supportive of opportunities like this that can change lives. We look forward to seeing Dakota grow and build his future with MCT."



The OnTrack Employment Program is aligned with the project's Sustainable Employment Plan which aims to achieve four per cent of total project work hours undertaken by Aboriginal people and five percent by entry-level work-ready individuals. The Program is open to people with an Aboriginal background, female job seekers, older job seekers (45+), young people aged 16 to 24, people from diverse cultural backgrounds and former prisoners.

The METRONET Victoria Park-Canning Level Crossing Removal Project has now delivered six On Track programs with 105 participants. Of the 15 graduates from the most recent cohort, 11 have already found employment.



Out and about in the community

Elders attend Morley to Ellenbrook Line opening

Four METRONET Noongar Reference Group Elders travelled from far and wide to be at the official opening for the Morley to Ellenbrook Line on 8 December.

Lera Bennell, who travelled from Bunbury, Marion Collard, Greg Ugle and Doreen Nelson were invited to join dignitaries including Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Premier Roger Cook, and Transport Minister Rita Saffioti on the inaugural train ride.

Despite a packed schedule, Premier Roger Cook found time to have a yarn with the Elders and the Prime Minister stopped for a beautiful moment and a photo with Lera Bennell.



Elder Lera Bennell and Prime Minister Anthony Albanese



Premier Roger Cook (left) took time to have a yarn and connect with Greg Ugle, METRONET Noongar Reference Group Member (middle), and his brother Adrian Ugle (right).



METRONET Strategy Lead Aboriginal Engagement, Brenton Turner (left), accompanied Elders Marion Collard (middle) and Doreen Nelson (right) on the train ride.

Supply Nation connecting Aboriginal businesses with industry buyers

Staff from the Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Engagement (TPAE) branch recently attended the Supply Nation Indigenous Business Trade Fair at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Over 600 registered attendees made their way to the sold out event, where over 80 Aboriginal owned businesses exhibited the goods and services they provide from industries including construction, IT, consulting, training, electrical services, environmental services, and equipment hire.

TPAE staff were eager to connect with businesses already engaged on works and projects across the Transport Portfolio, and enjoyed the opportunity to connect with new and emerging businesses at the event.



L-R: Tish Moloney TP AE, Jade Evans TP AE