

Aboriginal Participation



Sharing stories on how we are embracing Aboriginal cultures and working with Aboriginal peoples and businesses to provide increased and sustainable employment opportunities.

Image: Bilung Civil Contracting crew on site in the Goldfields Esperance Region

Building regional business capability

Bilung Civil Contracting, a local family-owned business, recently completed shoulder rehabilitation works along 60 kilometres of highway throughout the Goldfields Esperance Region. Comprised predominantly of traditional people of the Region, Bilung carries a combined 60 years experience in civil works.

Bilung are now delivering an additional shoulder rehabilitation contract across almost 1200 kilometres of road network within the Region. Main Roads' contracting has enabled the business to grow their plant and equipment, develop a track record, scale up and build professional connections.

Cross cultural awareness training held

In keeping with its Reconciliation Action Plan and Aboriginal Employment and Retention Plan, Main Roads engaged Kamarang Services to deliver Cross Cultural Awareness Training to its Human Resources team. The training, called "Walking Together in Partnership" was delivered in March 2023 to over 50 participants.

Our new graduates and trainees also participated in a similar program.

Additionally, the cohort attended the "Ancient Gateway to a Modern City" walking tour (pictured overleaf), a cultural awareness immersion with Uncle Mervyn (Nick) Abraham, the owner and lead guide at Warrang-Bridil.



Image: Main Roads graduates and trainees with Uncle Mervyn Abraham

Further training is being planned for regional, corporate executive and metropolitan employees. Main Roads' Aboriginal Employment and Diversity Advisor delivers Acknowledgement of Country to all new employees.

Recognition of outstanding achievement

The [Outback Way Project](#) recently won the Institute of Public Administration Australia WA award for [Best Practice in Corporate Social Values](#).



Image: Public Administration Australia WA Award for best practice

The award recognises the project for delivering outstanding achievements in remote regional road upgrades whilst providing employment opportunities for local Aboriginal people.

The project exceeded the employment targets and has provided sustainable career opportunities for local people.

This approach will be maintained for work on subsequent sections, with the Project team seeking to engage with local communities for employment opportunities specific to the works. Formal qualifications will be provided to participants.

The Outback Way project involves the sealing of almost 800 kilometres of the Great Central Road. The first 40 kilometre section east of Laverton was constructed by the Wongutha Way Alliance, a venture comprising Main Roads, CareyMC and Central Earthmoving Company.

Bunbury Outer Ring Road celebrates new graduates

The [Bunbury Outer Ring Road](#) (BORR) project's Yaka Dandjoo 'Sustainable Employment' program had more cohorts graduate recently. These were the eighth and ninth groups to complete the course, with a total of 38 people graduating - the largest number to date.



Image: Yaka Dandjoo graduates celebrated together

The six-week Yaka Dandjoo program is focused on building meaningful career pathways for unemployed and job-transitioning participants. This is accomplished through mentorships, training and preparing students to work on major infrastructure projects in WA. The program provides opportunities for young people, women, people over 45 years old and Aboriginal people.

The two cohorts graduated together as one group, coinciding with the peak in labour demands for the next few months of construction on the Bunbury Outer Ring Road (BORR) project.

Since the 38 participants graduated, there have been 28 employment opportunities identified in connection with the BORR project. These include apprenticeships in civil construction, roles as labourers and roller operators, in addition to finding employment with subcontractors.

A key focus for the project is continuing to support previous Yaka Dandjoo graduates through building sustainable employment opportunities in the region. This includes providing upskilling opportunities in new roles such as dump truck or water cart operations. Many of the program's previous participants have now reached or are approaching 12 months employed in their new roles.

New Fitzroy River Bridge contract awarded in record time to re-connect the Kimberley

Flooding generated by Ex-Tropical Cyclone Ellie in December 2022 and January 2023 caused significant damage to sections of Great Northern Highway including the Fitzroy Crossing Bridge.

In early January, Main Roads was tasked with fast tracking delivery of the [New Fitzroy River Bridge Project](#) in the shortest possible timeframe, condensing nine months work into eight weeks.

In March, the Fitzroy Bridge Alliance, comprising Georgiou, BMD, BG&E and Main Roads, was awarded a contract to deliver the project. The new bridge will be six times stronger and nearly 100m longer than the old bridge.



Young Nesta enjoyed his ferry ride across the Fitzroy River

Main Roads provided a temporary ferry service to facilitate community and traveller connectivity during the flood aftermath, with more than 15,000 passenger crossings undertaken. A recent passenger was very happy with his ride – Nesta has a love for construction work and was excited to use the ferry, pictured below.

The ferry service ceased operation in late April, with the re-opening of a low-level causeway crossing across the River. Construction of a second temporary low-level crossing with two lanes, approximately 150 metres upstream from the flood damaged bridge is under way and expected to be completed by the end of May.

The local people in Fitzroy Crossing are supporting the work effort and becoming actively involved in delivery of the emergency access works and bridge construction.

Archaeological digging on Heirisson Island

An Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan has been developed for the [Causeway Pedestrian and Cyclist Bridges Project](#) outlining how the project will identify, manage and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage. As part of this, archaeological digging has been undertaken at specific sites on Heirisson Island.

[Watch the video](#) to learn more on the archaeological digging, from Daniel Monks, Aboriginal Land Services and Neville Collard, Noongar Elder.

A Smoking Ceremony was held in January for the project, hosted by Whadjuk Elder Stanley Hedland.

Stanley spoke of the healing purpose of the ceremony, and intent to bring goodwill to the area, whilst inviting participants to walk through the smoke to be cleansed.



Whadjuk Elder Stanley Hedland with the Causeway Bridges team

Forum for Aboriginal business involvement in Matagarup Zip Line facility works

A forum was recently arranged by the Transport Portfolio Land and Property Services (TPLPS) team, targeting Aboriginal businesses who may be interested in tendering for the construction of a commercial operating premises and café, adjacent to the Matagarup Zip Line facility in Burswood.

The TPLPS team approached the Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Engagement (TPAE) team, who provided guidance and advice, identifying six Aboriginal businesses to attend the forum to discover more information on the scope of works.

"This approach between the two portfolio teams led to positive engagement and business interest in the project," Dennis Kickett, Director TPAAE said.

"The TPLPS and AETP teams worked collaboratively during the project's pre-tendering stage to achieve a positive outcome for Aboriginal businesses in the metropolitan area," Dennis said.



Participants at the Matagarup Zip Line business forum

Update on Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Engagement (TPAE)

Since its inception in July 2022, the Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Engagement (TPAE) team has been building its capacity to ensure it can lead the Transport Portfolio towards the State Government's target of awarding \$700 million of contracts to Aboriginal businesses; and having Aboriginal workers completing 3.5 million hours from 2021 to 2026.

Led by Dennis Kickett, the team draws on expertise across the Portfolio which comprises Main Roads, Department of Transport, Public Transport Authority,

Office of Major Transport Infrastructure Delivery, METRONET and Westport.



Image L-R: Above image (L-R): Jaime-Rose Smith, Rose Nemeth, Blayde Mager, Tara Regan, Stephen Grech, Danielle Hefferon, Dennis Kickett, Tish Moloney, Brenton Turner, Regina Glover, Andrew Boddington, Gemma Collard, Nola Kelly, Tayla Thorn, Brianna Shadforth, Bradley Smith, Maria Drysdale.

The TPAAE provides strategic advice and coordinates opportunities to embed governance and best practice across the portfolio.

Key deliverables include:

- Improve contracting opportunities for Aboriginal businesses, supporting employment and developing business capability for Aboriginal communities across Western Australia.
- Build relationships with education, training, employment and small business development providers to create pathways for Aboriginal people to gain sustainable employment.
- Provide support to agency counterparts such as training in Aboriginal Participation reporting systems, input on Aboriginal Participation Plans and driving continuous improvement on the integration of Participation initiatives.
- Enhance culturally safe working environments; provide opportunities for immersive cultural training programs; provide advice on ceremonial events, consultation and engagement activities.

How are we tracking?

The Transport Portfolio's Aboriginal participation spend to the end of April 2023 includes \$94.1M of indirect expenditure, representing 4.5% of Aboriginal business spend.

A further \$20M has been spent directly with Aboriginal businesses, with more than 637, 000 indirect hours worked to end of April 2023.