

Djooroot djena kooliny kendjil
WALK THIS PATH TOGETHER

Aboriginal Participation Bulletin

Aboriginal employment and the award of local Aboriginal business contracts has been a focus on a number of our recent projects around the State. Here we share some of our highlights.

Main Roads recognised for its efforts

Main Roads was awarded the 2019 Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) WA Achievement Award for Best Practice in Corporate Social Values, in particular, for the employment of the Aboriginal people and engagement of Aboriginal businesses on four key regional projects being;

- Broome Cape Leveque Road
- Bidadanga Access Road and Airstrip Sealing
- Great Northern Highway Upgrade Maggie Creek to Wyndham
- Bow River Bridge



[View award submission video.](#)

Both Broome Cape Leveque Road and Bidadanga Access Road and Airstrip Sealing were directly managed by Main Roads, which enabled the engagement of mostly local contractors.

“Our commitment to enhancing the wellbeing of Aboriginal people through increased employment opportunities has seen proactive changes to our policies, processes and working arrangements to ensure we make a difference within our industry”, said Leo Coci, Executive Director Infrastructure Delivery and Chair of Main Roads Aboriginal Employment Initiatives Taskforce.

“We have developed our new Aboriginal Employment Initiatives in close consultation with representatives from Aboriginal communities, other Government agencies and industry contractors and are set to be one of the first agencies to meet the WA Government’s requirements for a set percentage of annual contracts to be awarded to Aboriginal businesses.”

More recently, Main Roads was announced as the "Non-Aboriginal Organisation of the Year" winner at the East Kimberley Aboriginal Achievement Awards 2019. The award recognises contributions from an organisation towards the growth of Aboriginal businesses and opportunities in the East Kimberley to support the improvements in social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal people. Main Roads was nominated by Wunan, an Aboriginal employment organisation.

These well-deserved awards recognise the efforts of individuals, leadership and the commitment and support provided by management.

Broome Cape Leveque Road Upgrade

Following the success of recent Kimberley and Pilbara road projects, the \$65 million upgrade of Broome-Cape Leveque Road is being directly managed by Main Roads and achieving good results for local employment. The project is exceeding targets set for Aboriginal employment and participation, with 27 of the 58 contracts entered into so far awarded to Aboriginal businesses. Recent results also show that 64 per cent of total labour hours is attributable to Aboriginal people and 38 per cent of contract spend has gone to Aboriginal business.

The main transport link on the Dampier Peninsula, Broome-Cape Leveque Road provides access to Aboriginal communities, pastoral stations, pearling industries and tourist destinations.

The project primarily involves sealing the last remaining section of unsealed road between Broome and One Arm Point, a 90 km section of red dirt road prone to closures in wet weather. A further 13.6 kilometres of narrow sealed road between Broome Highway and Manari Road will also be reconstructed and widened.

Completing this final section will improve road safety and accessibility to essential services.

Transport Minister Rita Saffioti recently visited the project and said that the project is currently leading the way in Aboriginal employment and participation in the Transport portfolio.

[View project video.](#)



Transport Minister Rita Saffioti and party on site with Broome-Cape Leveque project team member, 'Nippy'

Bidyadanga airstrip complete

Sealing the Bidyadanga Road and Airstrip has provided vital connectivity to Western Australia's largest remote Aboriginal community and helped boost employment and training for local residents.

Developing a community-centric partnership with Kullarri Regional Communities Incorporated for this project helped create employment and training opportunities for local Aboriginal people from the Bidyadanga Community.

D'Antoine, a Derby-based Aboriginal registered business, in partnership with Gungulla Mackay provided the majority of machinery for the delivery of works. Twenty-five Aboriginal people worked on the project including 12 employees from the local community, five employees from Derby and four employees working as cultural monitors for vegetation clearing operations.

This upgrade now provides all-weather access for critical medical services including health clinic visits, access to primary care workers and medical evacuations.

[View project video.](#)



Bidyadanga Community members with Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and WA Treasurer Ben Wyatt, Transport Minister Rita Saffioti and Managing Director of Main Roads Peter Woronzow

Great Northern Highway Upgrade complete

WBHO Infrastructure Pty Ltd in partnership with Dadaru Holdings Pty Ltd on the GNH Upgrade – Maggie Creek to Wyndham project has achieved outstanding results with Aboriginal employment being 33 per cent of total hours worked, which significantly exceeds original targets.

The project provided a training ground for many Aboriginal workers to enter the road construction industry and gain valuable skills and experience including the Wyndham Work Camp re-entry program that facilitated on-the-job training for nine inmates. Five Aboriginal ex-inmates released on parole from the Camp have now secured full time employment within the road construction industry, three on the Great Northern Highway Upgrade Ord River North project that recently commenced.



(L-R) Randall Field (Project Director), Rob Murray (WBHO), Emanuel (Work Camp), Tony Frommel (WBHO), 'Shorty' (Work Camp), Leroy (Work Camp)

The upgrade project has widened 28 km of highway and reconstructed and realigned nearly 6km through the section known as 'Maggie's Jump Up' including the construction of a passing lane.

An important route for the local community and the transport industry in the east Kimberley region, this road provides the only sealed access to Wyndham and the Port and is an integral link between Kununurra and Wyndham.

[View project video.](#)

Bow River Bridge

The old single lane, low-level bridge that was built in 1965 and often closed due to flood waters has been replaced by a new two lane, high level concrete bridge. Previously closure of the bridge in the wet season cut off the only sealed access between Broome and Wyndham.

Aboriginal employment and inclusion of Aboriginal business was a focus on the Bow River Bridge project and resulted in 27 per cent of total workforce being Aboriginal people, well exceeding the minimum target.

One Aboriginal team member, a proud Yarwu man engaged by contractor BMD to work on the new bridge, was also part of the crew that constructed the original bridge more than 50 years ago.

The project was not without some culturally sensitive issues that challenged time and cost. Such issues, along with competition for skilled labour, are recognised as potential risks to the successful project employment of regional Aboriginal people and therefore requires sensitivity and careful management.

Being focussed on a positive outcome and the aim of increasing Aboriginal training and employment within Main Roads' operations, project contractors BMD, Guerinoni & Son, D & H Contracting, Danny Calwyn Pty Ltd, Giga and Main Roads project team worked hard to overcome difficulties and still achieve outstanding results on the Bow River Bridge project.

Coongan Gorge

A four kilometre realignment of Marble Bar Road that passes through Coongan Gorge in the Chichester Ranges, now significantly improves road safety and travel times in the Central Pilbara Region. This project was opened to traffic in June 2019 and improves access for local Aboriginal communities and mining operations. The project consistently enabled employment of local Aboriginal people, which in addition to construction work, involved collaboration for smoking ceremonies, local advice and monitoring activities.

Public-Private collaboration provided local jobs

A 25 metre \$18.66 million bridge along Great Northern Highway over the Roy Hill Iron Ore rail, was opened in February 2019. The project, funded by Roy Hill Iron Ore, undertaken by Georgiou Pty Ltd and managed by Main Roads Pilbara Region team, provided more than 11 per cent employment to local Aboriginal people.

The structure removed the road/rail conflict, allowing free flow of traffic and associated improved safety and journey efficiency and reduces the risk of road closures due to seasonal flooding.

Installation of PV Panels creates apprentice opportunity

A contract with Aboriginal business Wilco Electrical Pty Ltd via Main Roads facility maintenance service provider, Programmed Facility Management, gave Wilco Electrical Pty Ltd sufficient confidence in its business to engage its fifth Aboriginal in-house four-year electrical apprentice.

“Without the Main Roads 98kW PV opportunity we may not yet have the business confidence to create Jared’s position”; advised Frank Mitchell, Director Wilco Electrical Pty Ltd.



Frank Mitchell (Director Wilco Electrical Pty Ltd) with new apprentice Jared Cole

New apprentice Jared Cole commenced in mid-February contributing to Wilco Electrical’s goal in reaching 20 Aboriginal electrical apprentices by end December 2020. Following a Value for Money assessment Wilco Electrical Pty Ltd was engaged to design and install a solar PV system at Main Roads Materials Engineering Branch (MEB) to further complement Main Roads’ focus on social and financial responsibility through the reduction of electricity costs as well as a reduced environmental impact. The 98kW system including 322 solar panels is located on the roof across two of the main buildings located at the MEB site in Welshpool.

Grading boosts local opportunities in Pilbara

Local Aboriginal company, Binbirri Contracting commenced maintenance grading of Marble Bar and Nanutarra-Munjina roads in February 2019 under the Rural Network Contract in the Pilbara.

Binbirri Contracting, which has already established a great working relationship with Main Roads and contractor, Ventia, employs local people who are willing to take up the challenge of maintaining main roads to a high standard.



Kevin and Noelene Eckerman with grader operator, Ishy

Kevin Eckerman from Binbirri said, *“The work that we have started with Ventia is very important to our business and our local Aboriginal people. This great opportunity will provide support and stability in all aspects within our community.”*

Binbirri has been supported by other local businesses and the regional community. In turn, Binbirri has supported other local businesses such as a local mobile maintenance fitter who was born in Nulligine and is currently based in Tom Price.

Smoking ceremonies for freeway projects

Traditional smoking ceremonies for two Freeway projects; Mitchell Freeway Southbound Widening and Smart Freeway – Kwinana Northbound, were held in January 2019 and February 2019 respectively at the commencement of works.

This ancient Aboriginal custom involves the burning of specific native plants to produce smoke to ward off bad spirits, acknowledge ancestors and pay respect to the land and sea of country.

The ceremonies were led by Aboriginal representatives, Karen and Steven Jacobs from IES Cultural Heritage. All project team members from the SmartWays Alliance; comprising BMD Constructions, Ventia, Arup and Main Roads for Smart Freeway – Kwinana Northbound and BMD Constructions staff for Mitchell Freeway Southbound Widening participated in the ceremonies.

BMD Constructions has 12 direct Aboriginal employees working on the two projects and engaged a number of Aboriginal business subcontractors. Eight of the Aboriginal employees are trainees sourced from Nudge. The trainees will complete a Certificate II in Civil Construction over the life of the projects.



Smart Freeways Smoking Ceremony

AAG Update

After many conversations and much deliberation, we have established our Aboriginal Advisory Group (AAG) and held our first meeting on Friday 16 August. The Group has broad representation from around the State and our new members bring significant knowledge of regional issues, with some also having contractual and procurement experience. We welcome our new AAG members and look forward to building more and ongoing valuable relationships. Our new members collectively bring age, gender and geographic diversity to the group.



First meeting of the AAG

Webpages

Our new Aboriginal Participation webpages are now live on the Main Roads website. They provide information to our Aboriginal stakeholders on doing business with us and are a source of other useful information.

National Indigenous Australians Agency

A new agency, the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) came into effect on 1 July 2019 to take responsibility for the Indigenous affairs policy previously managed by Prime Minister and Cabinet's Indigenous Affairs Group.

NIAA functions will include: to lead and coordinate Commonwealth policy development and program design and implementation and service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and to provide advice to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Indigenous Australians on whole-of-government priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The NIAA, which will support the Minister for Indigenous Australians, is committed to improving the lives of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Contact details

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