



Outback Way (Great Central Road)

Laverton to Western Australia border



When complete, Outback Way will be Australia's third transcontinental highway. It will also provide a critical connection for the remote Aboriginal communities of Cosmo Newberry, Warburton, Mantamaru, Wanarn and Warakurna.

Outback Way – also known as ‘Australia’s Longest Shortcut’ – is a 2,700-kilometre route from Laverton in Western Australia to Winton in Queensland via Alice Springs. This includes 872 km of Great Central Road which forms the WA section of the route, including 736 km of unsealed road surface between Laverton and the WA/NT border that is to be upgraded and sealed by Main Roads.

Project status

This year we have been engaging with key stakeholders to gain access to lands so that environmental and heritage surveys can be completed.

In addition, negotiations have continued with Native Title holders to gain land use access agreements to commence road construction. Timing of the procurement phase is still under development.

Project development activities in readiness for road construction are continuing where land access is permitted. This includes road design for the last 100-kilometre section between Warakurna and the Western Australian/Northern Territory border.

Community Engagement

In late May, on-country community briefings were held in three communities. The briefings in Warburton, Warakurna and Wanarn were undertaken in conjunction with the Ngaanyatjarra Council Group.

With a focus to raise project awareness about the project to the community, we spoke to almost 200 community members to gain a deeper understanding of the aspects of the project that were of most interest or concern to community members.



Consultation with the local community in Wanarm

Key themes such as importance of heritage and cultural sites, roadside amenities and potential employment opportunities on the project were discussed.

The team enjoyed a bush cultural experience at Warrakurna under the guidance of Elders and rangers in the community. The experience further showcases the importance of land and country to the local communities.



Cultural experience at Warrakurna

We aim to continue ongoing engagement with the communities as all aspects of the project progress.

Heritage surveys

Aboriginal heritage surveys with respective Native Title groups in the project area are ongoing.

This work includes ethnographic surveys undertaken by anthropologists under the guidance of the Elders to identify spiritual and cultural heritage places

overlapping with the project area. Ceremonial and ritual areas and particular landscape features such as water sources, rock shelters and rock holes form part of the cultural landscape that is documented during these surveys.

Archaeological surveys with Traditional Owners are also conducted across the project area, looking for material remains of Aboriginal culture and landscape use, such as stone tool artefacts from hunting or camping grounds.

Taken together, these surveys help to identify areas of cultural importance and significance that need to be carefully managed during construction.

Environment

Flora and fauna surveys have recently been completed in consultation with the Traditional Owners, for approximately 100 kilometres of the route either side of Tjukayirla Roadhouse.

These surveys will identify key flora, fauna, soil and wetland values to assist with the development of Environmental Impact Assessment documentation.



Environmental surveys in progress

Main Roads recognises the importance of land and country to the local communities and will continue to work closely with Native Title holders to ensure all field investigations are completed appropriately.

Further information

For further information, please visit the Main Roads website at www.mainroads.wa.gov.au or call 138 138.

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