

Tanami Road Upgrade Project Great Northern Highway to WA Border



Jointly funded by the Australian and Western Australian governments, the \$542.8 million project will see the 313-kilometre Western Australian section of Tanami Road sealed over the next 10 years.

What's happening?

Sealing of the first 41-kilometre section of Tanami Road, through the hills south of Great Northern Highway commenced in April with preconstruction activities including building of water dams and establishing gravel pits and borrow material sites.

A 60-person camp was also established 17 kilometres south of Great Northern Highway (GNH), which is now being expanded to cater for up to 100 staff.

Over 70 workers are now on site and construction is well underway. Final ground and heritage services for the first stage of work has been completed and a side-track is

being built which, together with traffic management, will provide road users with safe continued access through roadwork areas.

Work on a new embankment, and the installation of culverts and drainage has also begun, mainly along the alignment of the existing road.

It is expected that the first lot of bitumen seal will be applied on the completed pavement before the end of the year, in preparation for the upcoming wet season.

Other work being undertaken as part of the first 41-kilometre section includes:

- Construction of a side track
- Clearing and topsoil stripping
- Earthwork
- Installation of culverts, floodways and offroad drainage
- Construction a 10-metre-wide sealed pavement.

Installation of signs, safety barriers and pavement markings.

The intersection of Tanami Road and Great Northern Highway will also be upgraded, with construction of an information bay.

Design and Development

Road design work is progressing, along with environmental and heritage surveys, ahead of road work commencing.

The 313-kilometre Western Australian section of road will have a design speed of 110km/hr, be sealed to 10 metres wide, and be suitable for all types of freight vehicles. Rest areas will also be constructed at regular intervals along the road.

The new road is mostly expected to remain on the existing alignment. Some adjustments will be made to smooth out bends and level out crests and dips, to improve road user safety. Minor realignments will also be made to avoid cultural areas of significance and improve road geometry.



Some sections of Tanami Road will be realigned to improve safety and avoid areas of cultural significance.

Aboriginal Heritage

Design work to date has been on Jaru Land. Main Roads is continuing to work closely with the Jaru Aboriginal Corporation, engaging Jaru Cultural Monitors to ensure that work does not impact heritage sites.

In addition to the initial Heritage surveys conducted during the design phase, Heritage surveys are being completed prior to any clearing work commencing, and if work is near culturally sensitive areas.

With plans to start preliminary design of the southern sections of road this year, Main Roads will commence Heritage consultation with the Tjurabalan Native Title Lands Aboriginal Corporation in 2024, to ensure the proposed road design does not impact Aboriginal Heritage.

Smoking Ceremony

A smoking ceremony was conducted by Jaru traditional owners, Peter Brandy and Elder, Stuart Morten in July. Plant Operator George Lewis was touched by *"the way Stuart made the speech in language and then put it into English for us, (it) was moving and culturally significant"*.



Project workers (August 2023).

Aboriginal Participation

The Tanami Road Upgrade is being directly managed and delivered by Main Roads' Kimberley Region. This provides increased opportunities for engagement with local contractors, with a focus on local Aboriginal participation. Local Aboriginal people will see sustainable employment through the project, with business opportunities to continue over 10-year construction period, meaning the project's workers can support their families and the local community.



Widening of the road is underway.

Aboriginal Targets

As at 31 July 2023:

- payments to Aboriginal businesses totalled \$3,412,720.32 which is 28.3% of the project spend, and well above the project target of 20%.
- there were 48 people working on site, of which 33 were Aboriginal people.
- 50.75% of hours of worked on site were by Aboriginal people.

These figures indicate that the project has surpassed the required targets and is now meeting the stretch targets set by the project team to keep growing Aboriginal engagement.



Project Manager Neville Walters has thanked the Halls Creek Community, and the wider Kimberley Community for their ongoing support.

"It's been really great to have so many local Aboriginal businesses and people take advantage of the opportunities available on this project" Mr Walters said.

"The Tanami Road project will provide sustainable employment opportunities for the region over the next 10-years, helping not only the local people involved, but the community as a whole".

Jobs for Locals

To meet Federal and State Government objectives for Aboriginal employment and business engagement, Main Roads' is actively seeking support from local businesses and people living in Halls Creek and the surrounding areas.

Thirteen Aboriginal businesses are currently engaged on the project, of which 11 are based in the East Kimberley, with eight of those based in Halls Creek.

Local earthmoving contractors Guerinoni & Son, JSW and Camlismar are providing some of the plant required for the project, along with many local Aboriginal owned contractors such as MDM Contracting and Madden Earthworks.

Prior to construction commencing, Main Roads worked closely with local Aboriginal organisations and people to promote opportunities available on the project. This saw six Aboriginal businesses join the project to provide:

- Traffic management
- Work site maintenance
- Culvert installation services; and
- Provision of Plant.

Start-Up Spotlight

Site Maintenance

Business owner Paul Cox from Yiyili jumped at the opportunity to work with Main Roads again, after constructing some dams for Main Roads in 2022.

Paul took advantage of the opportunity to provide labour and a water cart, offering employment for local community members.

Paul now supervises a small crew of local Aboriginal workers who perform general site maintenance making sure the site has water in dams, and completing odd jobs like installing signs and fences.



Paul and Gilbert Cox from Yiyili (July 2023).

Traffic Management

Start-up business Bindiri Services, which is owned by a Jaru traditional owner from Halls Creek, employs a pool of traffic management workers, all of which are local Aboriginal people from the Shire of Halls Creek.

They also provide two trade assistants from the remote communities of Bililuna and Balgo.

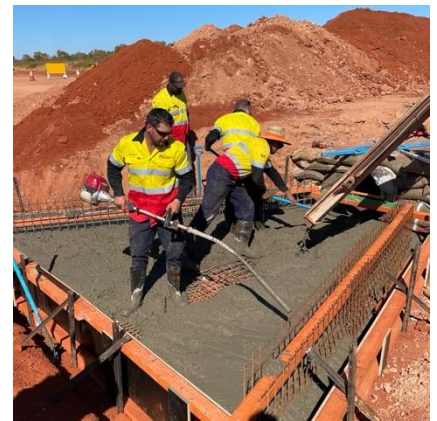


Traffic Controllers Max Lennard and Steve Taylor (April 2023).

Culvert Installation

Another Jaru traditional owner start-up Aboriginal business, Manno's Machinery, employs Aboriginal workers installing culverts.

They are learning alongside experienced team leaders to get the job done.



Manno's Machinery, culvert crew (June 2023).

Further information

Carmen Murdock
Community and Stakeholder
Manager
Phone 0488 776 301 or email
enquiries@mainroads.wa.gov.au