



Tanami Road upgrade progress

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The long-awaited Tanami Road from the Great Northern Highway to the Northern Territory border is turning from red gravel to bitumen black as the first seal took place in early October 2023. This is a significant milestone with credit to both the development and delivery teams including engagement with our valued community stakeholders since 2019. The Australian Government and State Government have committed a total of \$542.75 million towards sealing the 313 kms section of the Tanami Road over the next ten years. This paves the way for future works and benefits to flow to the local contractors, workers and suppliers.



The environmental focus is to reduce weed dispersal from our activities. Mobile machinery is washed down after clearing when moving from a 'red zone' to a 'yellow zone'. To secure additional cultural heritage, approvals from Jaru traditional owners, the team is working ahead of construction. In 2024 negotiations will commence with Tjurabalan traditional owners.

To date, we have constructed a total of five borrow pits and six water bores. Earthworks are moving at steady pace. A total of 330,000 tonnes of gravel was carted to site to form the embankment, sub-grade and fill in dips. Several sharp bends and crests have been smoothed involving 125,000 tonnes of rock and dirt removed from site.



A combination of 14 reinforced concrete box (RCB) culvert and 27 corrugated steel pipes (CSP) culverts have been installed. A majority of the culvert crew is mainly supplied by a 100 owned newly started Jaru

Aboriginal business. On 4 October, sealing began for 3.8 kms section of road. The second seal is now underway for the next 2.2 kms achieving a total of 6 kms to be open to traffic in mid-November.

Since April 2023, work packages were awarded to 18 local contractors of which 11 are Aboriginal businesses. Currently all hours worked on the project is 87,484 of which 42,544 hours (49 per cent) are worked by Aboriginal people. The local Aboriginal workforce makes up 50 per cent of the total Aboriginal workforce. These results are meeting or exceeding the set targets.



The Project Manager is **Nev Walters**. The on-site team includes an engineer, a graduate engineer, a quality assurance officer, three supervisors plus an Aboriginal trainee supervisor, all assisted by two business support officers. While safety, environment and heritage, and community and stakeholder staff regularly visit the site.

To ensure ongoing success of construction, the Project team welcomes feedback from other staff, contractors, workers, community and stakeholders. A delivery workshop is planned for mid-November 2023 inviting key stakeholders to discuss the current direct management delivery model and gain their input to endorse its continued implementation.



Above image: Our Tanami Road Project crew with soil technicians late last month.

The Culvert Crew

Main Roads Supervisor of the culvert crew, **George Thorburn**, has a knack for pulling everyone together. His duties are to oversee the installation of the culverts and other works on-site. He sees his role is: *"to make sure everything is ticking along. The team is good. Got a good moral. Get that going by having a laugh, keep them all involved and stir 'em up'. Once you know how they work, it's good - it's been hard work getting to this point".*

Enjoy watching George spur on the crew as they **line one of the turkey's nest dams** for the project.

Owners of Manno's Machinery, Jeremey Manning and Kenneth Martin, live locally and are both Jaru traditional owners of lands where the Tanami Road Upgrade Project begins. They saw the opportunity and they sourced the expertise by advertising Australia wide for steeling, fixing and concrete formwork. They also went locally for Aboriginal carpenters and trade assistants from Kununurra and Halls Creek.

Main Roads put forth two labourers from the remote communities (along the Tanami Road) of Balgo and Bililuna to gain experience alongside the crew. Manno's Machinery's plan is to learn from the experience brought in and develop their business. This workforce can also help Main Roads to build the region's culvert installation capacity.

Check out this **time lapse video** of the crew pouring concrete for the culvert install as part of the project.

Visit the **Tanami Road Upgrade project page** for further information.



Above image: Some of the wonderful crew working on the project.