

OUR STORIES

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

Bidyadanga Community lacked all-weather access via road and air, resulting in periods of inaccessibility. This meant no access for emergency and primary health workers and significant health consequences for the locals.

While the approximately 12-kilometre access road was adequate in dry conditions, it was often closed in wet weather. Four million dollars of funding was committed for the project to seal the remainder of the access road.

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.

Additionally, traffic management training was held onsite in the community providing an accessible, on-the-job experience increasing Aboriginal participation in delivery of the works. This gave the opportunity for further collaboration with Aboriginal businesses and resource provision for Kimberley projects.

During construction we worked with a number of organisations to ensure essential services continued. Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services needed to maintain medical and evacuation services, so regular communication with them meant interruption was minimised. We also worked with the Water Corporation who allowed access to water bores.

A multi-agency approach ensured ongoing maintenance of the road and airstrip during construction. Agencies included the Department of Communities, responsible for ongoing asset management of the airstrip, and the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, which arranges the road reservation.

This upgrade now provides all-weather access for critical medical services including health clinic visits, access to primary care workers and medical evacuations. Video footage of the project can be viewed on our YouTube channel.