

Aboriginal engagement



Workers on the Woolgoolga to Ballina project

The updated NSW Government's Aboriginal Participation in Construction (APiC)* policy introduced a requirement for 1.5 per cent of a project's spend to be directed towards Aboriginal participation. This applies to contracts awarded from July 2016 and includes the section of the Woolgoolga to Ballina upgrade between Glenugie and Ballina. The Pacific Highway upgrade has plans in place for all of its construction projects to encourage Aboriginal employment opportunities, including apprenticeship and traineeship programs. For the first six months in 2017 almost 10 per cent of people employed on the Pacific Highway upgrade projects were Aboriginal.

Aboriginal participation Initiatives

The Pacific Highway Upgrade Program has always had a strong focus on increasing the direct employment of Aboriginal workers on construction sites. A range of different options are being used on the Woolgoolga to Ballina upgrade to achieve the 1.5 per cent spend including direct employment and engaging with qualified Aboriginal businesses through NSW procurement processes, as well other biodiversity, environmental management and design initiatives.

From April to May 2017, the Aboriginal Participation Program (APP) Careers Roadshow travelled to Grafton, Maclean, Ballina, Woodburn, Yarrowarra, Casino and Lismore. The careers roadshow gave local Aboriginal people the ability to discuss employment opportunities and training options for the Woolgoolga to Ballina project. The seven sessions were a success, with 274 participants attending the roadshow.

Each session had representatives from education providers, recruitment agencies, construction contractors, and Pacific Complete available to discuss the work activities on site, types of employment available, work hours, training and support options. Experiences and knowledge of the construction industry were also shared and how to get involved were key discussion points.

Visitors were positive about the experience and many said they had been waiting for a forum where they could get the chance to ask questions in person. This was reflected in the feedback responses where 119 were received with 112 participants rating the sessions with a four + star rating (out of five) in terms of being useful.

The Woolgoolga to Ballina project team support the Aboriginal Participation in Construction initiative. Employment participation is planned to continue during 2017 and beyond.



on average
233 Aboriginal workers
on site per month

* The Aboriginal Participation in Construction (APiC) policy is an initiative from the NSW government to support greater participation by Aboriginal people in government construction projects across NSW.