

MEDIA STATEMENT

21 October 2020

More than 500 complete cultural training for Cape York Road Upgrade

The protection of cultural heritage continues to play a critical role in the Cape York Peninsula Developmental Road (PDR) upgrade.

More than 500 workers on the upgrade, which is part of the jointly funded Cape York Regional Package (CYRP) Stage 1 and Stage 2, have now completed cultural heritage awareness training.

Transport and Main Roads Director-General Neil Scales said the training was an example of how the upgrade was being delivered alongside local Indigenous people.

“A major part of the CYRP is working in partnership with Traditional Owners,” Mr Scales said.

“This includes opportunities for participation at every stage and ensuring all workers have an appreciation of the rich history and cultural value of their areas.”

Mr Scales said the training milestone was a significant program achievement.

“Cultural heritage training is one of the ways we can ensure works are undertaken in a sensitive manner, with great respect for local Indigenous communities,” he said.

“If someone finds an artefact or site of significance, they will be able to easily recognise these and put immediate protections in place.

“Having more than 500 workers complete this training demonstrates everyone, regardless of their role, has a duty of care to recognise, protect and conserve the Aboriginal cultural heritage of Cape York.”

Darryl Murgha is at the forefront of this approach to cultural heritage.

An archaeologist with 30 years of experience, he is one of the 321 Indigenous workers who have participated in the upgrade of Cape York Peninsula's major transport route, since work started in 2014.

Mr Murgha is responsible for delivering cultural heritage inductions on behalf of not-for-profit Indigenous organisation Balkanu.

“I've been involved in the CYRP since it started and I want to continue until it is finished,” Mr Murgha said.

“I feel very fortunate to be working hand in hand with Traditional Owners to share the unique history of this fascinating region.

“I call it collaborative learning – we all learn from each other up here.

“Workers learn the history of the area and importance of preserving this from local Aboriginal people.

“And local people are also learning many skills from the opportunities the road upgrade is providing.”

For more information on the Cape York Region Package, visit <https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/projects/cape-york-region-package-stage-2>.

ENDS

Media contact: TMR Media Unit, 3066 7060



TMR sub-contractors working on the Peninsula Developmental Road upgrade with Cultural Heritage trainer Darryl Murgha