

TONKIN HIGHWAY CREATES INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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Job opportunities for the Aboriginal community living in the Armadale region will be boosted by a bold new employment strategy as part of the \$105million Tonkin Highway Extension project.

Planning and Infrastructure Minister Alannah MacTiernan said the John Holland Macmahon Joint Venture had signed an agreement with indigenous mining company Carey Mining, to supply between 10 and 20 per cent of the project's workforce with indigenous labour.

The Tonkin Highway contract included a specific clause in the contract to encourage the use of indigenous people during the course of the project works.

"The State Government is dedicated to closing the gap between the social, health and economic well being of indigenous and non-indigenous people," Ms MacTiernan said.

Earlier this year the Minister initiated a meeting between the Joint Venture and Carey Mining which led to the agreement.

"John Holland Macmahon has shown a pro-active and positive approach to developing local employment opportunities for one of society's most marginalised groups," Ms MacTiernan said.

"Unemployment figures for indigenous Western Australians are about four times higher than for the general population, and positive programs like this can offer new hope."

Carey Mining, wholly indigenous-owned and managed, will provide the expertise for direct employment of skilled and unskilled personnel, short-term labour hire for specific activities and subcontracting for packages of work on the extension.

Ms MacTiernan said preliminary work for the highway would start this month and once the project was fully under way, more than 150 people were expected to be on the job.

"This agreement is an excellent example of how Government infrastructure projects can be leveraged to provide enhanced benefits, and improved social benefits," she said.

"This creative employment initiative will have a positive impact on indigenous people and the broader community.

"The Tonkin Highway Extension is part of a larger strategy designed to revitalise the South East Corridor. It will not only help with safe movement of freight, it will open up the Forrestdale Industrial Park and provide a much-needed boost in Armadale."

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