

# PROJECT UPDATE

JANUARY 10 ISSUE 11



## OPR ABORIGINAL HERITAGE SURVEYS

Aboriginal heritage surveys are underway in Western Australia's mid-west, in preparation for the Oakajee port and rail project.

As part of the feasibility studies for the project, a series of Aboriginal heritage surveys have been commissioned at the proposed port site and in the rail feasibility corridor. For some areas, it will be the first time the land's Aboriginal significance has been comprehensively studied and recorded.

The Oakajee port and rail development will comprise a deepwater port 25 kilometres north of Geraldton, linked to regional mines by approximately 570 kilometres of heavy haulage rail. Presently in the feasibility studies stage, the project is tracking toward financial close and project go-ahead by early 2011.

Oakajee Port and Rail (OPR) will continue to commission heritage surveys prior to any ground disturbing work such as track clearance, drilling and test pitting.



### Avoiding Significant Sites

OPR has commissioned the surveys to accurately record places of Aboriginal significance and to avoid disturbing them wherever possible.

OPR is facilitating the surveys in an inclusive manner, and aims to reach lasting agreements with the traditional custodians of the land. In doing so, OPR will endeavour to identify and protect Aboriginal heritage sites and comply with the WA Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 and Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993.

### Traditional Owners Decide

During a survey, OPR seeks the advice of traditional owners about where OPR can conduct its ground disturbing work.

For feasibility studies to date, traditional owners assess the areas and then advise OPR on a "yes", "no", or "yes with conditions" basis. A "yes" means work can proceed; "no" means the traditional owners are not in agreement with OPR working in that area at the present time; and a "yes with conditions" means work can proceed on a basis agreed with the traditional owners.

To conduct a heritage survey, OPR will engage a group of traditional owners through their representatives, such as the Yamatji Land and Sea Council, as well as an archeologist and an anthropologist. Areas of significance are recorded during the survey and a report provided to OPR and the traditional owners.

### Heritage at the Port

The Oakajee Port area lies within the boundary of the lands of three Native Title claimants: the Amangu, Naaguja and Mullewa Wadjari. OPR has conducted heritage surveys with each group, and a further series of surveys is planned in 2010.

### Heritage in the Rail Feasibility Corridor

The proposed rail corridor lies within the boundary of five Native Title claimants: the Amangu, Naaguja, Mullewa Wadjari, Wajarri Yamatji and the Widi Mob. Surveys have been completed with each group and more are planned in 2010.

**OPR is proud of the work completed with traditional owners and looks forward to continued engagement in 2010. OPR plans to conduct approximately 60 heritage surveys during the year.**

## OPR Open Day

### Meet The Team, Share Your Views

OPR's Mid-West Community Office will host an open day on 3 February 2010.

Come along and meet and talk with members of the OPR team.

**When:** Wed, 3 February, 10am to 4pm.

**Where:** OPR Mid-West Community Office, 260 Foreshore Drive, Geraldton

**Contact:** Carleen Kelly, 9964 6798, ckelly@opandr.com



## Jobs, Growth, Prosperity.

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