

ABORIGINAL JOURNEY WAYS PROJECT

Statement by Minister for Transport

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport) [1.03 pm]: I rise to update the house on the Aboriginal Journey Ways initiative. Members will recall that last year I provided them with copies of the book *Aboriginal Journey Ways: How Ancient Roads Shaped Our Roads*. This 315-page publication was a collaborative initiative between Main Roads Western Australia and Kurongkurl Katitjin, the Centre for Australian Indigenous Education and Research at Edith Cowan University. It investigated and documented traditional Aboriginal trails, tracks and places that are aligned with today's Main Roads road network across Western Australia.

I am glad to announce the release of a children's edition of the book, a 44-page condensed version of the information in an easily read format. I helped launch the book on 2 August at the West Leederville Primary School as part of the school's NAIDOC celebrations, and copies have been provided to schools and libraries throughout the state. The original book was so well received it was decided to adapt the publication into a children's book so the stories of Aboriginal people and their ancient journey ways can be shared with younger readers. Led by Dr Francesca Robertson and Dr Noel Nannup, research for the original book was documented in five reports that included traditional narratives and maps aligned with modern-day roads and bridges, as well as the spiritual significance of each route and information about Aboriginal occupation.

The book explores the relationship between the ancient Aboriginal trails through WA across time, and how they shaped the modern roadways of WA. The diverse artistry represented in the book similarly reveals the rich creative and cultural diversity that exists throughout this great state of ours. The Aboriginal Journey Ways project and the publication of this book provide an opportunity to create a dialogue about Aboriginal histories and cultures, and the connections to our modern-day road network. Just as they are today, many of the documented journey ways were a vital part of everyday life, connecting people and communities in ancient times.