

# BARNGARLA DETERMINATION ABORIGINAL CORPORATION ICN 8603

barngarlacontact@gmail.com

PO Box 2104  
Whyalla Norrie SA 5608



The Eyre Peninsula Link Monitoring Project is an example of a successful community-based project which has, in my opinion, brought to the region a workable solution to the future management of the protection of heritage and culture when working with first nations people.

My name is Jason Bilney. I am a proud Barnngarla Man. I am also the Chairperson of the Barnngarla Determination Aboriginal Corporation, the registered native title body corporation for the area of land on which the 270km transmission line has been constructed.

Through this project, we were able to take a holistic approach to the management and consideration of our values as traditional owners and the requirements of the contractors in improving the supply of electricity to the Eyre Peninsula.

Working with our anthropologist to define areas of significance and create buffers which protected those sites which are of importance to us, our ancestors and our descendants was a fundamental part of this process. It led to us working with ElectraNet and their contractors Downer to achieve a monitoring program which involved our community members working alongside them on country as the project was built.

On each occasion consideration was given to male/female appropriate sites and monitors were sent in teams of two (male/female) to ensure that they were protected whilst ground-breaking works were undertaken. Many Barnngarla People participated in this project with pride and joy. 86 people undertook training in white cards, TAAMS and first aid to be able to monitor with the contractors working on site.

Two camps were set up in the region, this allowed our community to come together and share time and knowledge with each other as the project progressed. Many family members who had not seen each other were reconnected through this project and able to walk their country together and learn from each other. Generations have reconnected and come together to share their stories. This project has provided a platform to strengthen our connections within family, community and on our country.

We feel valued and respected that our tangible and intangible heritage and cultural connections have been acknowledged, actioned and respected. We also feel stronger as a first nations people. Our community has gained a robust strength which has empowered our people. To our upcoming and emerging next generations, this has demonstrated that we can be in control of our country and our culture whilst ensuring the transition to a modern technological facility is undertaken.

I am proud of our work. I am proud of our Barnngarla People and the community which worked together to achieve such amazing results. This historic and educational process has been led by our elders, our knowledge keepers and our youth have learnt many things on country which they may not have had opportunity to do so, had we not been involved at the level we were afforded.

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We show our appreciation for the process that ElectraNet took to ensure that the transmission line was constructed with as little disruption to our country as possible and with our guidance and culture being respected. The open, honest, transparent and effective communication which was achieved by our team (all of us, ElectraNet and Barningarla People) has resulted in a working model for adaption with other proponents in the future. Something which will benefit both our community as Barningarla People and the Eyre Peninsula as a whole. I believe that our ancestors have been guiding us in this process and are proud of what we have achieved. They let our elders and knowledge keepers know what is important, and we ensured that this was done. Always was, always will be our traditional country. However, being able to be on country with people who respect and understand this made the project the success it is. Our community is extremely proud.

Jason Bilney  
Chairperson  
Barningarla Determination Aboriginal Corporation