

NORTHWEST CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

The brainchild of Gija man, Mika McLennon, NorthWest Construction Services was an opportunity to expand his existing knowledge base with over 20 years' experience in the resources sector.

Mika, who hails from the Aboriginal Community of Warmun (Turkey Creek) some 200km south of Kununurra in Western Australia, is a qualified surveyor. He joined forces with Frank Di Latte in 2012 when he identified a match between skills, work ethic, experience and values.

Led by Mika and Frank, NorthWest Construction Services (NWCS) – a proudly Aboriginal owned and operated company specialising in demolition and earthworks, surveying, external roofing and cladding, internal ceilings and linings and painting services – employs around 40 people.

It is one of the only Aboriginal construction companies operating in the Kimberley that is multi-trade.

Mika said NWCS had developed a very strong, dedicated working relationship with Pindan, highlighting that: “both companies are committed to working exclusively on as many projects as practical and this support has been fantastic”.

Frank added, “Pindan has helped NWCS enormously by providing opportunities that enable us meet our overall business growth strategy, including expanding our services by allowing us to develop and offer new trade components to our overall business model.

“Pindan have made this possible by extending opportunities to undertake new contracts.

“NPARIH is a unique program in that it stipulates the requirements of local Aboriginal employment and procurement. NWCS provides that solution – local community members are employed full-time for the length of the project.

“We are very proud of our ability to employ 20 to 30 per cent of our Aboriginal labour directly from the communities in which

we work, thereby creating an opportunity for local people to be employed within their own community, and always give everyone a fair go.”

Second nature to Mika, community engagement and cultural protocols have become a standard business practice.

For example, before embarking on a project in a new community, NWCS will follow the stipulated protocols.

In many cases this requires seeking endorsement from Councils and Elders as well as teaming up with government funded bodies responsible for supporting local people into jobs through the Community Development Programme.

Frank explains: “Organisations such as Job Pathways support us by introducing us to potential staff, interviewing them and signing contracts.

“This approach has a positive impact on local residents because the opportunity to try new trades allows them to accumulate skills in different areas and gives them a wonderful grounding to apply for future jobs.”

Mika adds: “We then provide references and referrals after a project is completed.”

When asked about the approach to deliver on the contracts, Mika noted, “We engage local people wherever we can and are proud to be Supply Nation Certified, an accreditation recognising that we are a majority owned and managed Aboriginal business.”

Tony adds, “NWCS are dedicated to engaging and training indigenous labourers from each community they work in and, with our support, have steadfastly adopted new skills as projects called for them, expanding their services to include a host of valuable trades.”

Recent projects include the Dampier Community Hub and Kununurra Renal Clinic, in addition to the Department of Housing contracts.



Frank Di Latte and Mika McLennon