

**Deputy Premier and Minister for Health
The Honourable Paul Lucas**

Thursday, September 23, 2010

ACTING PREMIER INSPECTS AIRPORT LINK PROGRESS

Acting Premier Paul Lucas today inspected progress on the \$4.8 billion Airport Link project during a visit to the Kalinga Park worksite at Clayfield.

The Acting Premier examined tunnelling works for the on-and-off ramps being excavated between Sandgate Road and the North Coast railway line.

Mr Lucas said 11 million hours had now been worked on Australia's biggest infrastructure project – which includes the Airport Link toll road between Bowen Hills and Toombul, the Northern Busway (Windsor to Kedron) and the Airport Roundabout Upgrade.

"This has been a great new story for jobs and the local economy," Mr Lucas said.

"More than 14,000 people have been directly and indirectly employed on the project since construction began in November 2008 and almost 3,500 people are currently employed.

"I'm pleased to see work is on track – roadheaders have carved out more than 5.5 kilometres of tunnel between Bowen Hills and Kedron and the Airport Flyover is scheduled to open its first lanes in just a few weeks, 13 months ahead of schedule.

"I appreciate the patience of drivers who have experienced delays during construction, but soon we'll be saying goodbye to Brisbane's worst bottleneck at the airport roundabout and motorists travelling from the CBD to the airport will avoid 18 sets of traffic lights – halving travel time."

Minister for Infrastructure and Planning Stirling Hinchliffe said the projects were part of the Bligh Government's massive \$17 billion infrastructure program designed to keep Queensland moving, creating jobs now and into the future.

"Work is well advanced at the Airport Link Kalinga Park/Toombul precinct," Mr Hinchliffe said.

"The two Tunnel Boring Machines, Rocky and Sandy, have tunnelled in about 135 metres each and are now undergoing their second stage fit out before they tunnel their way to Lutwyche, a 2.5 kilometre journey.

"Along the way they will generate more than one million tonnes of spoil which is being moved by a 2.2 kilometre long conveyor belt to a spoil shed at Nudgee Road to keep some 80,000 trucks off local roads."

Airport Link and the Northern Busway are due for completion in mid 2012, with the Airport Roundabout Upgrade on track to be fully open to traffic more than a year ahead of schedule.

When it opens in mid 2012, Airport Link will be the first major motorway connecting Brisbane city with the airport and northern suburbs.

It will improve travel times in a city currently experiencing the worst peak hour traffic

in the country providing six new lanes for drivers between Bowen Hills and Kedron and four new lanes between Kedron and Toombul.

Ends.

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