

**Premier and Minister for the Arts
The Honourable Anna Bligh**

Wednesday, May 19, 2010

Tunnel Boring Machine's Shield Lowered into Tunnel Launch Box

The Airport Link tunnel project has reached another critical point with work now underway to lower the first Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) into a six story Tunnel Launch Box at Kalinga Park.

Premier Anna Bligh said the TBM's shield being lowered in six pieces, is expected to be fully installed by the end of the week.

"The sections each weighing between 85 tonnes and 105 tonnes, are being lowered by a massive gantry crane," she said.

"In total two 150 tonne cranes and three 40 tonne cranes are required to lower these massive machines into place.

"Later this month the 12.48 metre wide cutterhead, the biggest to ever operate in this country, will be lowered into position.

"Weighing approximately 240 tonnes it will mark the acceleration of preparations for TBM tunnelling which is scheduled for July."

Minister for Infrastructure Stirling Hinchcliffe said Airport Link's first \$45 million TBM arrived in pieces in November and has been progressively assembled by a crew of approximately 80 people.

The machines at 195-metres long, are nearly twice the length of a football field.

In late July the first of the TBMs is expected to begin its 12 month journey from Toombul to Lutwyche. These machines fit out the tunnel with its concrete lining as they move forward at about 85 metres per week.

Airport Link comprises twin 5.1 kilometre road tunnels, and the two TBMs will be used to excavate the tunnels between Clayfield and Lutwyche.

The Airport Link project is being constructed together with the Northern Busway (Windsor to Kedron), requiring a total of 15 kilometres of tunnels and their connecting ramps.

The tunnels are being excavated using a combination of techniques involving TBMs, smaller roadheader machines and cut and cover construction.

Fifteen roadheaders are now digging tunnels between Bowen Hills and Kedron. Another two roadheaders have been delivered to worksites at Lutwyche and Wooloowin and will begin work shortly. More than a quarter of the tunnels are now excavated.

On completion in 2012, constructor Thiess John Holland will reinstate the work site at Toombul and return Kalinga Park to the local community.

When it opens in 2012, Airport Link will be the first major motorway connecting

Brisbane city with the airport and northern suburbs, avoiding up to 18 sets of traffic lights.

TBM Fast Facts:

- \$45 million each
- 195 metres long
- 3 months to assemble
- can cut through rock 6-8 times harder than concrete
- 22 people to operate each TBM.

Footage available of shield lowering underway at Kalinga Park.

Media contact: (07) 32244500