

**Minister for Infrastructure and Planning
The Honourable Stirling Hinchliffe**

Friday, September 25, 2009

World-Class Concrete Facility Drives Jobs for North Brisbane

Australia's largest infrastructure project is on time and on budget with \$1 billion dollars spent, 3.4 million hours worked and almost 2000 jobs generated, Minister for Infrastructure and Planning Stirling Hinchliffe announced today.

Mr Hinchliffe said more than 1900, engineers, tunnellers, designers, traffic controllers and other skilled employees have been hired since construction began on the Airport Link project in November 2008.

Mr Hinchliffe said a massive new pre-cast concrete facility on Brisbane's northside employs up to 150 workers alone and is creating a significant economic boost in the region.

Mr Hinchliffe said the facility, located on 115 hectares off Gympie Arterial Road in Bald Hills, is manufacturing around 21,000 concrete products for the \$4.8 billion Airport Link Project.

"The facility produces more than 110,000 cubic metres of concrete – the equivalent of 44 Olympic swimming pools, for construction of Airport Link, Northern Busway (Windsor to Kedron) and Airport Roundabout Upgrade," Mr Hinchliffe said.

"Airport Link's pre-cast facility is world-class in terms of its capacity and quality of production.

"The site is gearing up to reach full production later this month when all concrete beds on site will be operational, producing approximately 300 cubic metres of concrete each day.

"Already one quarter of the 'Super T's' (T-shaped beams) have been completed for the Airport Roundabout Upgrade, with a further 436 box girders (box-shaped beams) that weigh up to 52 tonnes under construction for the 750 metre flyover.

"Eight hundred T'roff girders (U-shaped beams) will also be produced for Airport Link, Northern Busway and Airport Roundabout bridges, along with concrete panels for noise barriers, retaining walls and decorative fascias for the tunnel."

Mr Hinchliffe said the facility will manufacture ten different types of concrete products including bridge deck units and architectural features for the Airport Link tunnel.

He said work at the pre-cast site is another sign of the tremendous progress on Airport Link.

"Australia's largest infrastructure project, incorporating Airport Link, Northern Busway (Windsor to Kedron) and Airport Roundabout Upgrade, involves the construction of 25 bridges, 15 kilometres of tunnelling including ramps and more than seven kilometres of new road," Mr Hinchliffe said.

"All three projects are progressing very well with 26% of works complete and more than \$1.1 billion worth of work delivered to date.

"The first visible works for the Airport Roundabout Upgrade are underway with piling and widening of the Gateway Motorway on-off ramps for the new overpass, and widening of the East West Arterial in preparation for construction of the flyover bridge.

"Twenty-four hour tunnelling is also continuing at the southern end of the project in Bowen Hills and to the north in Windsor and Kedron, with a total of 580 metres of road and busway tunnel excavated so far."

BrisConnections CEO, Dr Ray Wilson, said the establishment of the pre-cast facility at Bald Hills is part of the many benefits Airport Link is bringing to Queensland, not just the Brisbane north region.

"The facility is providing a boost for Queensland business with local companies Emersteel, Idec and Hymix securing the top three major contracts for the supply of mould fabricators, sheds and concrete respectively for Airport Link," Dr Wilson said.

Project Director Gordon Ralph said Thiess John Holland, builder of the Airport Link project, selected the Bald Hills site due to the large storage area available and the close proximity to major arterial roads.

"Our concrete supplier Hymix has also established a concrete plant on this site, integrating its operations with the pre-cast facility which in turn reduces the number of truck movements on the road", said Mr Ralph.

The Airport Link and Northern Busway (Windsor to Kedron) are on schedule for completion by mid-2012, with the Airport Roundabout Upgrade set to open first in 2011.

Media contact: The Office of Minister for Infrastructure and Planning Stirling Hinchliffe: 3227 8425