

Joint Statement:

**Premier
The Honourable Anna Bligh**

**Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning
The Honourable Paul Lucas**

Thursday, November 06, 2008

WORK STARTS ON AIRPORT LINK

Premier Anna Bligh today signalled the official start to construction for Australia's largest road infrastructure project – Airport Link – with a sod turning ceremony at Kedron.

When completed in 2012 the \$3.4 Billion project will allow motorists to drive between Bowen Hills and Brisbane Airport in around six minutes, avoiding 18 sets of traffic lights along the way.

"Airport Link is a huge congestion buster, it's the missing link in Brisbane's road network," Premier Bligh said.

"This will be a mostly underground toll road linking two of South East Queensland's most important economic centres – the airport and the city.

"Together with the Northern Busway (Windsor to Kedron) and Airport Roundabout Upgrade Projects, Airport Link will free up the northern road network.

"Not only will locals find it easier to get around, we'll all find it a lot quicker travelling between the city and the airport.

"Not only will they make a real difference to our traffic, these projects will provide more than 10,000 jobs, including approximately 6,500 skilled labour, 1250 staff and a large number of supplier opportunities.

"Airport Link will strengthen Queensland's job market and allow our people to develop their careers and skills right here in Brisbane for the next four years."

Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure, Paul Lucas said the projects will provide jobs for Queenslanders in uncertain economic times.

"This is a massive project, 2.8 million cubic metres of earth will be dug out and 831,000 cubic metres of concrete will be used," said Mr Lucas.

"Two tunnel boring machines worth \$90 million dollars will be launched next year, each one is a bit longer than the field at Suncorp Stadium.

"BrisConnections expects these machines will help it complete work on all three projects by mid 2012 – six months ahead of the State Government's original plans.

"The public transport benefits will be huge, with the Northern Busway able to cater for 47,000 bus passenger trips per day by 2016 – five times higher than on the existing road network.

"More than three-and-a half hectares of new parkland will be provided for local residents upon completion of the projects, including a hill-top park at Bowen Hills which will have stunning city views.

"Over the next four years some locals will be inconvenienced by the construction but in return they will have new and larger parks and new cycle and pathways throughout the project corridor.

"One million new plants and 5,400 new trees will be planted as a result of the project and creeks throughout will be rehabilitated and their banks returned to a more natural state."

Thiess John Holland Project Director, Mr Gordon Ralph, said with South East Queensland's rapid pace of development, skilled workers remain in high demand, prompting Thiess John Holland to launch a nation-wide recruitment campaign to expand their new team.

"We are building a world-class team and drawing on local, interstate and overseas talent to design and construct these projects," Mr Ralph said.

"We currently have a 600-strong team of design and construction professionals on board ready to start construction. Within the next six months alone Thiess John Holland will create more than 750 new positions.

"Our project team has been growing at a rapid rate – twenty new staff every week since July – however, job opportunities will continue to rise for the next 18 months and throughout the life of the projects," said Mr Ralph.

He expected the extensive range of work would prove attractive to potential candidates.

"The projects encompass a wide range of civil engineering aspects that include roads, bridges, tunnels, structures and pavements."

People wanting to work on this project can register their interest on:

<http://www.brisconnections.com.au/Employment/tabid/62/Default.aspx>

The combined roads and busway solution will comprise two tunnels and a new airport connection.

The projects feature a 6.7km mainly underground road, 3km busway, 750m flyover bridge and fast-diamond intersection to fix the gridlock at the existing airport roundabout.

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