

MEDIA RELEASE

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First Airport Link roadheader 'Spiky' begins tunnelling at Windsor

The first of eleven roadheaders to operate on Airport Link and Northern Busway (Windsor to Kedron), will break ground today as the project signals the official start of tunnelling from the Truro Street site, Windsor.

The 15-metre long roadheader 'Spiky' is one of five that will operate from the Truro Street area – the project's mid-point tunnelling site. The roadheaders will excavate two mainline tunnels for the road and busway, along with tunnel ramps.

Travelling up to 35 metres underground at the deepest point of the Truro Street area, the first roadheader will head south towards Bowen Hills, progressing about 3-6 metres each day. Neranleigh Fernvale rock, a rock unique to the Brisbane area, will primarily be the rock excavated.

The first roadheader was named Spiky by Year 4 Windsor State School student, Isabella Morrison, who won the project's roadheader naming competition held last month with local schools Holy Rosary and Windsor Primary.

The project's roadheaders require seven operators for each shift and will excavate a total of nine kilometres for the Airport Link and Northern Busway tunnels.

The second roadheader is scheduled to begin at Truro Street by the end of June 2009. Once five machines are operating, an average of 1500 cubic metres will be excavated each week.

Construction of Australia's largest road infrastructure project will involve a combination of roadheader, tunnel boring machine and 'cut and cover' tunnelling techniques which will deliver the projects ahead of the State Government's original schedule.

Increasing the overall length of tunnelling on this project will enable less impacts to the surface traffic network and reduced impacts to the local community and the environment," he said.

An acoustic shed and noise wall will be used to reduce the potential noise impacts to neighbouring residents.

Roadheaders have been used for many infrastructure projects throughout Australia, including Melbourne's EastLink and Brisbane's Boggo Road Busway, and are chosen for their suitability for the local geology and ability to efficiently cut various tunnel shapes.

The Airport Link and Northern Busway (Windsor to Kedron), on schedule to be completed by mid 2012, will be a vital addition to Brisbane's road network, providing a critical new link between the northern suburbs and two of South East Queensland's most important economic centres – the airport and the city.

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FAST FACTS

- Eleven road headers will be used across the project alignment:
 - Truro Street, Windsor – five
 - Bowen Hills – two
 - Kedron – four
- Each machine weighs approximately 140 tonnes
- Approximately 3m-5m will be excavated each day
- Four roadheaders were purchased from Japan and seven from Austria
- Each machine is valued at \$2.5M - \$5M
- The Queensland Government appointed BrisConnections to deliver the Airport Link, Northern Busway (Windsor to Kedron) and Airport Roundabout Upgrade projects. BrisConnections has contracted Thiess John Holland to undertake design and construction.