

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Landmark contract signing for Airport Link construction**

A \$90 million plus contract for two massive tunnel boring machines (TBMs) to construct Brisbane's Airport Link tunnel was signed today by contractors Thiess John Holland and German company Herrenknecht.

Thiess John Holland has been contracted by ASX-listed BrisConnections to design and construct the Airport Link, Northern Busway (Windsor to Kedron) and Airport Roundabout Upgrade – Australia's largest road infrastructure project.

The landmark signing – the first major step in the lead-up to construction – was witnessed by Deputy Premier Paul Lucas and attended by Dr Martin Herrenknecht, founder and Director of the Board of Management of Herrenknecht AG, together with Trevor Rowe, Chairman of BrisConnections, David Moran, Project Director of Thiess John Holland and David Saxelby, Managing Director of Thiess.

The tunnel boring machines now on order will be the largest of their kind ever to operate in Australia – each one is about 165 metres long with a cutter head measuring 12.48 metres in diameter.

The machines will weigh about 3,000 tonnes each – the equivalent weight of approximately 75 semi-trailers.

The two state-of-the-art tunnelling machines, specially designed and manufactured in Germany for use on Airport Link, will assist in constructing a total length of 11.8km of underground ramps and tunnels from Bowen Hills through to Toombul.

The TBMs will travel 55 metres below the surface at the deepest section of tunnel, and will move at approximately 85 metres per week. Each machine requires a team of 22 expert operators at any given time.

Mr David Moran, Project Director, Thiess John Holland said the first of the two identical TBMs was set to arrive in Brisbane for assembly around the end of 2009 before being launched for operation in mid 2010.

"The machine will arrive by ship and a team of specialist engineers will travel from Germany to assist with assembly," Mr Moran said.

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Construction of Airport Link, a 6.7km mainly underground toll road, is one of the most complex road and tunnel engineering feats in Queensland's history, and the longest road tunnel in Australia.

Mr Moran said, "The Airport Link project forms part of a combined roads and busway solution, a vital addition to Brisbane's road network to cut travel times and congestion.

"Airport Link will be the first major motorway linking Brisbane city to the northern suburbs, allowing fast access to the Brisbane domestic and international airports," he said.

Thiess John Holland will be launching both TBMs from Toombul near Sandgate Road when construction commences. This is instead of launching one machine near Kedron State High School which would need to turn around at Toombul and head back to Kedron for the second tunnel, as outlined in the project's original reference design.

"By launching both machines from Toombul we will significantly reduce the duration of tunnel construction, as well as minimise noise and dust impacts for the local community," said Mr Moran.

The Airport Link project design incorporates extensive parkland and recreational upgrades to Kalinga Park and along the Schulz canal, including enhanced pedestrian and cycle connections, playground areas, boardwalks and BBQs."

Thiess John Holland, with an outstanding track record in safety and timely delivery of massive infrastructure projects, has extensive expertise using tunnel boring machines for construction of other major projects throughout Australia including the Sydney and Gold Coast Desalination Plants, Epping to Chatswood Rail Line and the City West Cable Tunnel.

Airport Link tunnels will be built using a combination of TBMs, roadheader machines and 'cut and cover' techniques.

The tunnels will be built to the stringent technical, safety and environmental standards prescribed by the Queensland Government.

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## **FAST FACTS ON CONSTRUCTION:**

- No arterial road lanes will be reduced for construction purposes during peak hour
- Surface works will mainly occur between the hours of 6:30am and 6:30pm, Monday to Saturday
- Construction site offices will be established from 1 September 2008
- The TBMs will operate 24 hours a day, six days a week
- Over a period of 12 months, excavated material (spoil) from tunnelling will be transported via an enclosed conveyor system, eliminating 80,000 spoil truck movements from local roads.

## **ABOUT THE PROJECTS:**

The Queensland Government has appointed BrisConnections to deliver the \$4.8 billion Airport Link, Northern Busway (Windsor to Kedron) and Airport Roundabout Upgrade – Australia's largest road infrastructure project. Thiess John Holland has been contracted by BrisConnections to undertake the design and construction.

Together these integrated projects will keep traffic moving and offer a faster and easier way for motorists and public transport users to travel to and from the city and airport precinct.

The projects comprise two tunnels and a new airport connection - the 6.7km mainly underground Airport Link toll road, the Windsor to Kedron section of the Northern Busway, and the 750m flyover and fast-diamond intersection replacing the airport roundabout.

Construction of the combined roads and busway solution will commence later this year, with all three projects completed by mid 2012.

Airport Link will be a vital addition to Brisbane's road network and will provide a critical new link between two of South East Queensland's most important economic centres – the airport and the city.