

5 May, 2010

Airport Link strong safety culture and performance

Airport Link Project Director Gordon Ralph today strongly refuted recent claims by union officials of safety concerns on the \$5.6 billion project.

“The Airport Link project has an extremely strong safety culture and an excellent safety record,” Mr Ralph said.

“This is the third Thiess John Holland joint venture project and there have been no fatalities on any of them,” said Mr Ralph.

“There have been no serious injuries on the Airport Link project and our safety performance with a lost time injury frequency rate (LTIFR) of 1.29, is significantly better than that achieved by industry,” he said.

Over 7.7 million hours have been worked on the project to date with only 10 lost time injuries occurring (i.e. injuries requiring more than 1 shift off work). The LTIFR is an industry wide parameter for measuring safety performance on construction projects.

“Workplace health and safety is a priority across the Airport Link project. We take our safety responsibilities extremely seriously and have robust processes and procedures in place to identify and manage safety risks across all project worksites.

“The project’s safety systems and procedures are focussed on continual improvement, open reporting and the importance of employee involvement in developing, implementing and maintaining the safety plans which are a priority at all project worksites,” said Mr Ralph.

A significant team of project-wide and site based safety professionals support our construction teams in implementing our safety policies and procedures. This includes:

- daily pre-start meetings for each shift at each worksite to discuss the work planned
- weekly health and safety toolbox talks
- twice weekly inspections with external regulatory authorities
- weekly review meetings with senior management
- regular internal safety audits and inspections
- health and safety committees across all areas of the project with representatives elected by the workers
- independent external audits of our safety systems and procedures

“This calendar year we have done over 300 safety inspections across the project,” Mr Ralph said.

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“I refute the claims made by union representatives regarding the project’s operations and management processes. We undertake certain operations 24/7 but employees involved in this work are part of an accepted roster that provides for 7 days off in every 21 worked,” said Mr Ralph.

Union representatives may undertake site inspections under their right of entry powers. When undertaking these inspections, representatives from the unions are accompanied by project representatives to ensure that all issues are assessed and, where required, resolved expeditiously. The safety observations made by union representatives in March were addressed immediately.

“The safety of all staff and visitors to our worksites is a priority for all of us,” said Mr Ralph.

“More than 14,000 people have completed our project induction program, and we now have over 2900 people employed across nine major work sites, a number which will continue to rise as we reach peak employment in coming months.”

Thiess John Holland remains focused on the safe delivery of an intensive program of work to build Australia’s largest transport infrastructure project.

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