

## MEDIA RELEASE

18 June, 2010

### **Airport Link project team celebrates first tunnel breakthrough**

Transport Minister Rachel Nolan joined hundreds of Thiess John Holland workers today in a celebration to mark the first tunnel breakthrough in construction of Airport Link, Australia's longest road tunnel.

The breakthrough occurred in the northbound Airport Link tunnel as a 135-tonne roadheader travelling south from Windsor cut through the tunnel face at Bowen Hills, 22 metres below the surface of Lutwyche Road.

Project Director Gordon Ralph congratulated the 200-plus workers from Thiess John Holland's Truro Street and Federation Street tunnelling teams who were on site to witness the breakthrough.

"I am proud of the efforts of our tunnelling teams who are working 'round the clock at four key tunnelling sites across Brisbane's north in Bowen Hills, Windsor, Kedron and Woolloowin to construct the twin 5.1 kilometre Airport Link tunnels," said Mr Ralph.

"Today represents a milestone in our construction program since 24-hour tunnelling operations commenced in May 2009.

"The roadheader that has just broken through is one of 11 machines excavating the 1.5 kilometre distance of tunnel between Truro Street, Windsor and Federation Street, Bowen Hills," said Mr Ralph.

Construction of Airport Link is being undertaken together with the Northern Busway (Windsor to Kedron) requiring 15 kilometres of tunnelling in total, encompassing road and busway tunnels and connecting ramps.

A total of 17 roadheader machines are now carving out the Airport Link and Northern Busway tunnels – the largest number of roadheaders to be used on an Australian project.

BrisConnections Chairman, Trevor Rowe AM, said the efforts to date bring us one step closer to the operation of Airport Link, scheduled to open in the next two years.

"By mid 2012, Airport Link in conjunction with the Airport Roundabout Upgrade, will remove up to 18 sets of traffic lights for motorists travelling from the city to Brisbane Airport and Australia Trade Coast, reducing travel time by up to 50%", Mr Rowe said.

Construction of the Airport Link tunnels is being undertaken using a combination of tunnel boring machines, roadheader machines and cut and cover tunnelling.

Thiess John Holland is currently preparing for another major milestone with launch of the first tunnel boring machine from Kalinga Park, Toombul to excavate the Airport Link mainline tunnel in July 2010.



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Design and construction of Airport Link is being undertaken by Thiess John Holland. The Thiess John Holland joint venture is contracted by BrisConnections who are responsible for delivering the project together with Northern Busway (Windsor to Kedron) and Airport Roundabout Upgrade, a \$4.8 billion infrastructure investment by the State Government.

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