



Speech by

Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Road Infrastructure

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (10.09 am): Australia's largest road infrastructure project is now more than one-third complete. More than 5.3 million hours have been worked on the \$4.8 billion Airport Link, the Northern Busway from Windsor to Kedron, and the airport roundabout upgrade. Close to 2,400 people are currently employed at nine major sites across the northern suburbs on the projects that will generate a total of 10,000 direct and indirect jobs. That is a huge economic boost from the Bligh government on a congestion-busting project that will reduce peak-hour traffic on Lutwyche Road by up to 40 per cent, put in place 25 bridges, 15 kilometres of tunnels and seven kilometres of new roads complete with bus and transit lanes.

Construction on this scale, however, has never been seen before and there is no doubt that it is impacting on local communities, as my local colleagues, the members for Brisbane Central and Clayfield, could attest. However, the state government is doing everything it can to minimise these impacts. On Saturday I again visited a number of residents to hear their concerns and will continue to do so. Mitigation measures such as house cleaning, air conditioning and temporary relocation have been offered to residents to make their lives more comfortable. This, too, will continue. It is important to note that the alternative to the Airport Link was the northern transportation corridor—a freeway which would have wiped out entire suburbs. It was an above-ground freeway that would have seen huge numbers of homes raised. Instead, the Bligh government decided to go underground. To progress tunnelling, the first two massive tunnel-boring machines, or TBMs—the largest on any Australian project—are now being assembled. An additional 16 road headers—the largest number used on an Australian project—have tunnelled more than two kilometres from sites at Bowen Hills, Lutwyche and Kedron.

I respectfully want to thank the people of Brisbane for their ongoing patience. In addition to the 10,000 jobs, the three combined Airport Link projects will deliver more than 13 kilometres of new or improved cycleways and pathways, three hectares of new parkland and one million plants including more than 5,400 mature trees. The Airport Link project will remove 18 sets of traffic lights and slash driving times in metropolitan Brisbane, which is currently experiencing some of Australia's worst peak-hour traffic.