



Joint News Release

Wednesday 20 April 2011

JOINT FEDERAL AND NSW GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE HUNTER EXPRESSWAY

Federal Infrastructure and Transport Minister Anthony Albanese, NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell and NSW Roads Minister Duncan Gay today launched the start of major work on the 27 kilometre Western section of the Hunter Expressway.

Mr Albanese, Mr O'Farrell and Mr Gay today turned the first sod in the western section of the \$1.65 billion Hunter Expressway project. The Federal Government is providing \$1.45 billion, with the NSW Government contributing \$200 million.

Mr Albanese said the Australian and NSW Governments were working together to put in place this new piece of vital road infrastructure.

"Recommended by Infrastructure Australia and being built with funds from our Building Australia Fund, the new Expressway will cut travel times between Newcastle and Branxton by half an hour as well as take up to 30,000 vehicles a day off the New England Highway," said Mr Albanese.

"Importantly, this project is just one part of the unprecedented investment the Gillard Labor Government is making in the Hunter which also includes the most extensive upgrade of the region's rail network in generations.

"All up, we're investing \$12 billion – or a third of our \$37 billion Nation Building Program – in the State's road and rail infrastructure."

Mr O'Farrell said: "I'm pleased to be here today with the Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport to mark what is a major milestone in the delivery of the 40 kilometre Hunter Expressway.

"This project is of great significance for the people of the Hunter and when completed will provide a vital east-west connection between Newcastle and the Lower Hunter.

"The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government's key focus is delivering on roads and transport projects for the people of NSW and I look forward to working closely with the Federal Government to make sure this happens."

Mr Gay said major work in the eastern section of the project started in August last year and the entire project is scheduled to be finished and open to traffic by the end of 2013.

“The western section of the expressway will include building 27 kilometres of four lane road; four interchanges; five twin bridges; eight bridges that traverse the new expressway; heavy vehicle rest areas for eastbound and westbound heavy vehicles as well as fauna fences and underpasses,” said Mr Gay.

“Now major work has started, there will be a variety of projects in the coming months including the building of temporary roads to move traffic as well as building and upgrading access tracks within the project boundary.

“Work crews will also start early earthwork for the building of bridges, including the Old Maitland Road overbridge, Tuckers Lane overbridge, Camp Road underpass, McLeod Road overbridge and the southern bridge associated with the Kurri Kurri Interchange.

“Stormwater drainage and environmental control devices such as water quality management basins to capture water will also be installed.

“At the peak of activity we will have around 600 people working on this section of the project,” Mr Gay said.

BACKGROUND

The new \$1.7 billion Hunter Expressway is between the F3 Freeway near Seahampton and the New England Highway west of Branxton.

The key features of this \$1.7 billion project include:

- 40 kilometres of four lane freeway
- 53 bridges at 21 sites, including 840 metres of high bridges through the Sugarloaf Range
- Six grade separated interchanges located at the F3, Buchanan, Kurri Kurri, Loxford, Allandale and Branxton
- \$20 million of adjustments to utility services
- One kilometre of railway reconstruction, including a new railway bridge.

ENDS