



Thiess Pty Ltd
A.C.N. 010 221 486
A.B.N. 87 010 221 486

Thiess Centre
179 Grey Street
South Bank QLD 4101

Locked Bag 2009
South Brisbane QLD 4101
Australia
Telephone (07) 3002 9000
Facsimile (07) 3002 9009

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Thiess' Hunter Expressway contract finalised at \$825 million

Preliminary design and construction costing has been completed on the eastern section of the Hunter Expressway Project in NSW with the contract finalised at \$825 million.

The eastern section will be constructed by Thiess in alliance with Parsons Brinkerhoff (PB) and Hyder Consulting. The completed Expressway will cut travel times between Newcastle and the Hunter by 28 minutes.

At 13.3km long, the Alliance section will include a four-lane divided highway from the end of the Newcastle Link Road to Kurri Kurri in the Hunter Valley.

Thiess Managing Director David Saxelby said the main construction of the eastern section could now begin with the project expected to open for traffic prior to December 2013.

"The Hunter Expressway will help to meet the needs of the region's growing freight movements by providing a more direct and efficient route for freight between the Upper Hunter and the Port of Newcastle," Mr Saxelby said.

"This project will be significant for the Hunter region and its continued economic development. We are delighted that our team has been recognised as having the right vision, necessary experience, capabilities, understanding, innovative approach and commitment to work with the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority."

Traffic in the Hunter region is estimated to grow at about four percent a year. The Hunter Expressway Project will therefore be critical in relieving congestion between Newcastle and the towns of Thornton, Maitland and Rutherford with forecast reductions in traffic on the New England Highway of 15,000 to 30,000 vehicles per day according to projected traffic levels in 2031.

The Thiess team has successfully completed a number of recent major road projects for the Roads and Traffic Authority including the Five Islands Road Upgrade and Karuah Bypass. Thiess is in the final stages of completion of the \$490 million Coopernook to Herons Creek Project, which includes an upgrade of a 32.7km section of the Pacific Highway on the NSW mid-north coast. The project is the longest stretch of the Pacific Highway to be constructed as one project.

Thiess' General Manager NSW/ACT Brendan Donohue said the Hunter Expressway Project would be technically complex as the corridor includes a number of possible mine subsidence areas.

"The eastern section of the Hunter Expressway Project will include two million cubic metres of earthworks, three 840 metre long and 40 metre high viaduct bridges over the mine subsidence areas and 16 other bridges. This project requires an experienced team that will deliver," Mr Donohue said.

"The Thiess/PB Alliance has already demonstrated its success on the Coopernook to Herons Creek Project. The Hunter Expressway team has the additional strength of Hyder, building on recent experiences on the \$623 million Tulla Sydney Alliance in Victoria, which is the first contract of works for the Victorian and Australian Government's \$2.25 billion M80 Ring Road Upgrade Project to improve the Western and Metropolitan Ring Roads."

Approximately 180 construction staff, 120 design staff and a workforce of more than 700 will work on the eastern section of the Hunter Expressway Project.

ENDS



For more than 75 years, Thiess has been helping to build our nation. The Snowy Mountains Scheme, Sydney Harbour Tunnel, Melbourne's EastLink project, Brisbane's \$4.8 billion Airport Link and Victoria's \$3.5 billion Desalination Project are just a few iconic projects to bear the Thiess brand. A commitment to delivering great outcomes for clients has allowed the company to expand throughout Australia and into New Zealand, Indonesia, India and most recently the Middle East.

Thiess has an annual turnover of more than \$6.6 billion and \$17.95 billion of work in hand. With over 17,000 employees, it has become one of Australia's leading and most trusted construction, mining and services companies. Thiess is a wholly owned subsidiary of Leighton Holdings Pty Ltd.