



The Hon Barry O'Farrell MP

Premier of NSW

Minister for Western Sydney

MEDIA RELEASE

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GETTING ON WITH THE JOB: \$1.15 BILLION TUNNELLING CONTRACT AWARDED ON NORTH WEST RAIL LINK

Four huge tunnel boring machines will call Sydney's North West home from next year after the NSW Government awarded a \$1.15 billion contract to build the North West Rail Link's 15km twin tunnels, NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell and Minister for Transport Gladys Berejiklian announced today.

The Thiess John Holland Dragados joint venture has been awarded the contract, with work starting immediately to get the first tunnel boring machine (TBM) in the ground by the end of next year.

Mr O'Farrell, Ms Berejiklian and local MPs today gathered at the site of the new Bella Vista station – one of three major tunnelling work sites – to mark the official start of the tunnelling contract.

"The people of the North West have waited far too long for this historic day – now it's all hands on deck as we deliver Australia's biggest public transport infrastructure project," Mr O'Farrell said.

"The NSW Government is getting on with the job of delivering the \$8.3 billion North West Rail Link – and I'm pleased to confirm this project is on track and on schedule.

"We have now passed the point of no return, the first major contract has been awarded and the Western Sydney community can rest assured the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will deliver this critical public transport infrastructure project."

Ms Berejiklian said a lot of hard work had occurred over the past two years to get to this point.

"It's now full steam ahead on the North West Rail Link," she said.

"The awarding of this contract also heralds the beginning of a new high capacity rapid transit network for Sydney which will eventually include a new line through the CBD and beyond."

The contract involves:

- Four “double-shield, hard rock, gripper” TBMs to build the 15km twin tunnels from Bella Vista to Epping;
- Excavation and civil works for five new stations at Cherrybrook, Castle Hill, Showground, Norwest and Bella Vista;
- The first TBM will be in the ground by the end of next year, with the remainder to follow soon after; and,
- Completion of the tunnel contract expected in the first half of 2017.

It is a major task to establish the construction sites in preparation for the arrival of the TBMs and this work, including major excavation work, will begin now.

The NSW Government announced last week the North West Rail Link budget has been set at \$8.3 billion and the line will open by the end of 2019.

Once the tunnelling contract is complete in 2017, work will continue along the 36km length of the project to lay tracks, fit out stations and deliver Sydney’s new generation rapid transit trains.

Due to the massive scale of the North West Rail Link project and its unique three-contract structure, the final tunnelling contract value may vary due to ongoing fine-tuning and optimisation involving the two other major contracts, for which tenders have yet to be received.

For example, the North West Rail Link project team is finalising smaller aspects of the project which could see the scope of the tunnelling contract change to include additional elements like pedestrian underpasses at Norwest and Castle Hill stations.

Any changes would be covered in the total \$8.3 billion total budgeted cost of the project.

The tunnelling contract is the first of three major contracts on the North West Rail Link to be awarded:

- The skytrain and surface construction contract is out to tender and is expected to be awarded before the end of this year; and
- Formal tender documents have been issued to the two shortlisted consortia competing to operate the North West Rail Link, with the contract expected to be awarded before the end of 2014. This contract will be a Public Private Partnership, subject to value for money criteria being met.