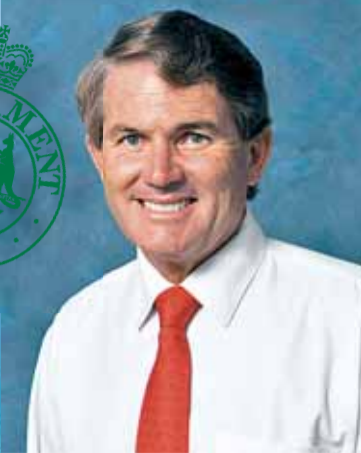


The COASTAL CONNECTION



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\$780 million for the Tintenbar to Ewingsdale Pacific Highway Upgrade

I welcome the announcement on the 29th January 2010 of planning approval and construction funding for the Tintenbar to Ewingsdale upgrade of the Pacific Highway. I especially welcome the announcement of construction money at the same time as planning approval was given, as quite often this is not the case.

Usually planning approval is given and it can be years before construction money becomes available. These delays occurred for both the Ballina Bypass and Alstonville Bypass projects.

Construction is expected to commence in the first half of 2011 after geotechnical work and property acquisitions have been completed. When the Tintenbar to Ewingsdale upgrade is completed in 2014 it will mean that from Ballina to Brisbane will all be dual carriageway. The section of the Tintenbar to Ewingsdale upgrade is 17kms of road and involves a tunnel, which will be constructed under St Helena. This upgrade will improve safety, reduce travel time, save fuel and reduce green house gas emissions. It will also open up more tourism opportunities for places like



Bob Higgins, Don Page & Minister Tony Kelly

Ballina in particular.

The announcement of \$780 million (jointly funded by the State and Federal Governments) combined with the \$640 million currently being spent on the Ballina bypass will be a huge injection of money into the local economy, providing an additional 400 jobs for the Tintenbar to Ewingsdale

section during construction.

There are 80 landholders who will be affected by the upgrade with 25 having already reached agreement with the RTA. Planning approval means that the provisions of the Just Terms (Land Acquisition) Act can now be activated to ensure compensation is paid at market price where land acquisition is required.

Unfortunately, over 400 people have been killed on the Pacific Highway over the last 15 years with thousands more injured. The upgrade of the full length of the Pacific Highway to dual carriageway needs to be expedited to ensure the remaining 402kms of the highway is a safer road.



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