WORTH THE WAIT

After more than two years of design and construction, the Southern Section of NorthLink WA has been completed while managing the thousands of vehicles that needed to travel along Tonkin Highway and intersecting roads each day.

Now a freeway-standard, free-flowing link with six lanes between Guildford Road and Reid Highway, the first section of the $1.02 billion state and federally funded initiative is already proving it was worth the inconvenience.

Major works included the grade separation of three major intersections and construction of a free-flowing shared path.

- The interchange at Collier Road is a Single Point Urban Interchange designed to help move large volumes of traffic safely and efficiently.
- The interchange at Morley Drive is the first of its kind in Western Australia, with Tonkin Highway passing over a large oval-shaped roundabout on Morley Drive.
- Benara Road is now a flyover over Tonkin Highway. Free of traffic lights, the flyover has already reduced congestion along Benara Road creating an efficient East-West link for local traffic.
- Around 6kms of shared path and local connections are providing a safe and environmentally friendly way for cyclists and pedestrians to travel. The four metre-wide shared path along the western side of Tonkin Highway includes underpasses that provide a safe, continuous path of travel for pedestrians and cyclists.

Another prominent feature is the colourful noise walls you see as you drive along Tonkin Highway. The colour scheme is designed to improve way-finding and enhance the travel experience for all road users.

Revegetation and landscaping will provide an attractive streetscape when fully grown, and will soften the roadside and provide additional screening for residents. Revegetation and landscaping will be undertaken this winter using local, native plant and tree species found within the Swan Coastal Plain area.

$1.02b

The combined value of NorthLink WA funded by both the Australian ($821 million) and State ($204 million) Governments.
Roundabouts keep traffic moving through construction

With more than 100,000 motorists passing through NorthLink WA works each day, keeping people on the move during construction is a top priority. Major arterials like Reid Highway, Tonkin Highway, Beechboro Road North and Gnangara Road will be affected by works until mid-2019. We’re working hard on temporary traffic solutions that allow construction to continue without stopping traffic.

In April, the Reid Highway/Beechboro Road North traffic signals were replaced with a temporary roundabout (pictured), that will remain for about a year. The roundabout has already improved the traffic network, and work is now underway to construct the new Beechboro Road North flyover without undue interruptions for motorists.

Another temporary roundabout will replace the Tonkin Highway/Reid Highway traffic lights. In mid-2018, traffic will be switched onto the new Reid Highway alignment, through the centre of WA’s first freeway-to-freeway, free-flowing interchange, that is now under construction. Motorists will then travel through a new temporary roundabout, located west of the existing traffic lights.

Roundabouts are proven to:
- Allow a constant flow of traffic where drivers don’t try and ‘beat the red light’
- Reduce the likelihood of ‘t-bone’ and head-on collisions, resulting in injury and death.

As ramps in the Tonkin Highway/Reid Highway free-flowing interchange are completed, they will progressively open to traffic through the remainder of construction.

Salvaging plants to protect Lightning Swamp

Lightning Swamp is around 70 hectares of bushland reserve located next to Reid Highway at Noranda, close to works for the NorthLink WA central section (Reid Highway to Ellenbrook).

This dense bushland, damplands and wetlands is home to a variety of flora and fauna, some of which covered the Swan Coastal Plain before urban development.

Main Roads and contractor for the central section, Great Northern Connect, have worked with Friends of Lightning Swamp (FOLS) throughout construction to help preserve and protect this important wetland.

“We recently walked the FOLS president through a section of Reid Highway where a large retaining wall was planned along a busy stretch of road,” said construction manager John Ransom.

“We recognised an opportunity to reduce the length of a retaining wall and the associated clearing by using a combination of stone pitching in place of the wall in some parts.

“With stone pitching, we can reduce the wall substantially saving 1500 square metres of clearing.”

FOLS president John Williams was delighted with the outcome and has arranged for a plant salvage activity in the area before works start on the retaining wall and stone pitching during winter.

“We are absolutely thrilled that this amount of clearing can be avoided,” John said.

“It’s a huge win for Lightning Swamp. We will get in and salvage some of the species endemic to the area and replant them within a degraded area adjacent to Lightning Swamp.”
Animal welfare top priority with WA’s first fauna bridge

We don’t mind why, but we do care how our native wildlife crosses the road when NorthLink WA is complete. There are 12 fauna underpasses planned along WA’s newest stretch of freeway, but the jewel in the crown will be our first-ever fully vegetated fauna bridge.

The bridge will be built north of Ellenbrook, connecting bushland known to house abundant wildlife. At 12 metres wide, it will provide a natural route that encourages and allows animals of all kinds to cross the freeway safely.

The bridge will be densely landscaped to mimic the natural environment, using trees, bushes, shrubs and ground covers native to the area. In-situ irrigation will ensure the ongoing prosperity of plants, encouraging fauna use as early as possible after opening.

Natural barriers such as heavy logs will be at each entrance to discourage unauthorised human access. Mounding and rockeries will be built into the design to provide habitat and cover for crossing animals.

The operation of the bridge will be monitored and maintained by leading experts, ensuring continued habitat connectivity for the long-term sustainability of our treasured wildlife.

Principal Shared Path provides travel options

Cyclists and pedestrians will have plenty of room to share on WA’s first four metre-wide principal shared path (PSP) now open along the western side of Tonkin Highway.

The new path is a significant addition to the Perth walking and cycling networks. Highlights of the route include:

- Connections to the local footpath network in Bayswater, Morley and Noranda
- Underpasses at Collier Road and Hamersley Avenue
- An interpretive signage trail highlighting heritage information along the route.
- The PSP is totally separated from road traffic providing pedestrians and cyclists with a safe, high-quality and healthy transport option which will eventually extend all the way to Muchea.

Lighting along the pathway is designed to dim during low use times late at night resulting in significant energy savings – a first for WA.
Spreading the word about NorthLink WA northern section

More than 6000 visitors from far and wide enjoyed the information displays, art and craft stalls, vintage cars, food and entertainment of the Bullsbrook Fair, organised by the Bullsbrook Residents and Ratepayers Association.

CPB Contractors has been engaged by Main Roads to deliver the 23km of highway on NorthLink WA’s northern section. Not wanting to miss out on an opportunity to engage with the local community, the team from CPB Contractors were at the fair.

“There was a great deal of interest, with people asking about road closures, new road connections around Muchea, construction schedules and more,” said Community Engagement Manager Catherine Sanders.

“Overwhelmingly the feedback was positive, with people looking forward to the benefits the completed highway will bring, especially in relation to taking heavy trucks off local roads.”

What’s happening in the North?

With final design squared away, the 23km dual-carriageway highway is taking shape from Maralla Road, Ellenbrook to Brand Highway, Muchea. Good progress is being made on culvert construction, and fill is going in at a rate of knots.

The interchanges at Stock Road and Neaves Road will feature bridges over roundabouts similar to the interchange just completed at Morley Drive. The roundabouts cater for road trains to 36.5m in length.

There will be flyovers built over Muchea South Road and the existing Brand Highway.

Another large roundabout-style interchange the size of Subiaco oval will be constructed at the northern extremity of NorthLink WA connecting with Great Northern Highway and Brand Highway via a deviation of Brand Highway to the north of Muchea.

A road train assembly area will be constructed near the new Brand Highway deviation, providing a convenient access point for freight trucks.

A 23km, four metre-wide shared path will be built along the eastern side of the alignment with access to a number of adjacent local roads, improving connectivity for cyclists and pedestrians.

It will connect up with shared paths on NorthLink WA southern and central sections, providing access from Muchea into the Perth metropolitan area.