



Infrastructure Boost Crucial to Recovery

Main Roads, along with our Portfolio colleagues, is playing a key role in the state's COVID-19 economic recovery strategy with an unprecedented level of investment in road and rail construction projects, together with procurement initiatives designed to create more opportunities for local jobs, businesses and the economy.

The State Government's current program of major road projects is worth \$2.37 billion and will create and support around 13,000 jobs. We have fast-tracked the tendering process for a number of these projects to help stimulate the economy in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

These major projects target some of our critical road corridors, including Mitchell Freeway, Roe Highway and Great Northern Highway. Construction will soon begin on Bunbury Outer Ring Road, improving journey times in the south west; taking freight off local roads and improving safety.

Successful negotiations between the State and Commonwealth Government have secured an additional \$223 million for shovel-ready projects. These include Bussell Highway widening between Capel and Busselton, replacement of a bridge on Great Eastern Highway, safety improvements on Toodyay Road and a package of road improvements near Exmouth.

This new funding package includes \$100 million for a Regional State Road Safety Improvement Program that will widen and seal more than 20 regional routes across the state, as well as installing audio-tactile line markings on them. This will improve safety, save lives and bolster the resilience of road networks in our regional areas.

As part of efforts to protect the viability of small to mid-size contractors during the COVID-19 downturn, the State Government also approved new measures to streamline the awarding of contracts for smaller road construction projects, to the value of \$20 million. A new state-wide Construction Panel Contract includes buying rules; these minimise tendering costs and maximise the spread of work for small and medium-sized contractors.

Expediting road projects through the new Construction Panel assists contractors in planning and programming of works, enables time and cost savings, and gives local businesses certainty and the ability to retain local workers. Projects with a combined value of more than \$140 million are being procured through the panel contract, ensuring jobs are retained and created, and protecting the future contracting capacity of local Western Australian businesses. Panel arrangements will be considered for future projects, as they come online.

Main Roads will continue to review procurement and contracting arrangements to ensure the best possible contribution to the WA Recovery Plan.