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SA News

# \$985 million Northern Connector to be South Australia's first major concrete road, creating more jobs

Chief Reporter Paul Starick, The Advertiser  
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THE \$985 million Northern Connector motorway will be the state's first major road built from concrete, costing more but creating jobs and saving on maintenance.

About 13km of the 15.5km road, connecting the Northern Expressway and South Rd Superway, will be concrete, while the four interchanges will be traditional asphalt.

In a joint announcement today, federal Infrastructure Minister Paul Fletcher and his state counterpart, Stephen Mullighan, will reveal the concrete construction is expected to support 40 extra jobs and inject another \$11 million into local industry.

“The initial capital cost is marginally higher than an asphalt road but the benefits in terms of increased local participation and ongoing savings are well worth it,” Mr Fletcher said.

Asked for a cost comparison, Mr Mullighan's office said concrete would cost an extra \$300,000 but did not reveal the total.



 An artist impression of the Northern Connector, looking north.

The initial estimate of the maintenance saving is \$23.1 million over the first 30 years, after the road is completed by 2020.

Mr Mullighan said an extra 175,000 cubic metres of concrete would be required for road pavement, all of which would come from local suppliers.

“A concrete finish is expected to almost halve the ongoing maintenance costs of the road, with construction of the road pavement expected to begin in the second half of next year,” he said.

“In addition, concrete pavements provide savings for the running costs of heavy vehicles, such as fuel.”

Mr Mullighan said the road would have a “low-noise diamond grooving finish” which would be durable and safe while lowering noise and improving ride quality.



📷 An artist impression of the \$985 million Northern Connector.

About 60 per cent of the United States 73,000km interstate highway system is concrete, which was selected, in part, because of its durability.

US cement manufacturers say concrete roads last 20 to 30 years without major repair, while asphalt typically lasts 8-12 years before resurfacing or significant repair is required.

Lendlease Engineering, chosen in May to design and construct the motorway, says concrete will maximise economic benefits to South Australia while reducing ongoing maintenance costs.



Key contractor Cement, Concrete and Aggregates Australia state director Todd Hacking, whose company also supplied concrete for major portions of New South Wales' Hunter Expressway, predicted this would be the first of many concrete roads in SA as the economic, environmental and social benefits were realised.

Major Northern Connector works are expected to start within weeks, supporting 480 jobs annually during construction. At least half of all jobs will be filled by northern suburbs' residents.

Mr Mullighan said seven former Holden and automotive industry workers were among 70 people now working on the site.

Former prime minister Tony Abbott announced a \$788 million federal contribution to the motorway on the morning of September 14 last year — later that day he was deposed by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull.



📷 The state's first major road will be built from concrete.