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**ASX RELEASE / MEDIA RELEASE**



**MACQUARIE INFRASTRUCTURE GROUP**

**M6 TOLL BIRMINGHAM OPENS TODAY AHEAD OF SCHEDULE**

Macquarie Infrastructure Group (MIG) today announced that the M6 Toll, the UK's first tolled motorway, is opening to traffic later today ahead of schedule.

The road is to be officially opened by the UK Secretary of State for Transport, Alistair Darling. The first vehicles on the M6 Toll will join the road from selected on-ramps and use any of the exit ramps. Other on-ramps will be opened to traffic over a five day phased opening process agreed between the operator of the road, Midland Expressway Ltd, police and the Highways Agency.

The staged opening has been designed to ensure a safe start for motorists on the new high-speed route. The road is expected to be fully operational by the weekend.

MIG owns 75% of Midland Expressway Ltd (MEL) and Autostrada SpA of Italy currently holds the remaining 25%. MIG has put and call options that are expected to result in MIG moving to 100% ownership of MEL by the end of 2005.

The 42km M6 Toll motorway will bypass Birmingham and connect with the existing M6 Motorway at both ends. The existing M6 through Birmingham is one of the most congested motorways in the UK, running at capacity for more than 12 continuous hours daily.

MIG Chief Executive Officer, Stephen Allen, said it was pleasing to be able to announce that the M6 Toll had been delivered on budget and ahead of time.

"After three years of construction and a total project cost of more than £900 million, UK motorists will now be able to experience the transportation and economic benefits of the M6 Toll. The road will deliver important benefits both to private motorists and to commercial and industrial traffic in this heartland region.

"The development and successful completion of the M6 Toll highlights MIG's infrastructure expertise and its position as a significant participant in the global privatised infrastructure market," he said.

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Projected benefits of the M6 Toll include:

- The M6 Toll will reduce journey times through the West Midlands by up to 45 minutes (source: Trafficmaster)
- Regional investment agency InStaffs recently estimated the road has created up to 5,000 jobs and £270 million of investment in the West Midlands area.
- Midland Expressway Limited will employ up to 150 people, and a further 200 people will be employed at the motorway services area at Norton Canes

MIG expects to release traffic numbers for the first full week of operation and monthly thereafter.

#### Example of M6 Toll advertising campaign



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Please see attached Midland Expressway Limited's announcement to the UK media, which was released today.

## **SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT TO LAUNCH PHASED OPENING OF M6 TOLL ROAD**

### **HISTORIC DAY FOR UK ROADS - M6 TOLL TO OPEN AHEAD OF SCHEDULE**

On Tuesday December 9<sup>th</sup>, the Secretary of State for Transport, Alistair Darling, is scheduled to be guest of honour at the official ceremony to mark the first phase of opening for Britain's first tolled motorway - the M6 Toll.

The first vehicles will join the M6 Toll from local side roads as part of a phased opening process agreed between Midland Expressway Limited (MEL), the Highways Agency and Central Motorway Police Group. The opening process has been designed to limit traffic at opening, with safety the major priority.

Tom Fanning, Managing Director of Midland Expressway, the company responsible for the design, construction and operation of the M6 Toll Road, commented: "We're pleased to be able to deliver an early Christmas present to motorists and business of reduced stress and shorter journeys. There will now be a free-flowing alternative to the M6 in the busy pre-Christmas period.

"The phased process begins today and we expect the road to be fully open within five days. For most of this period the road is not accessible from the M6 and remains essentially a local road, so traffic numbers will be small. With safety a priority, this is the way we've planned it. The opening process deliberately restricts traffic numbers in the first few days as it's the safest way of introducing motorists to a completely new high-speed route.

"Opening a road is very complicated and I wouldn't have put money on opening this far ahead of schedule even last week, but all parties involved in the project have shown 100% commitment to delivering the M6 Toll, and the benefits it brings to motorists, more than a month early."

Stephen Allen, Chief Executive Officer, Macquarie Infrastructure Group, the main shareholder in Midland Expressway commented: "The M6 Toll has been delivered ahead of time and on budget. We look forward to providing a free-flowing alternative to the M6, delivering time savings to motorists and businesses over the next 50 years."

## The road will open in the following phases:

### Tuesday December 9<sup>th</sup> - 10.00am – intermediate junctions open from 10am

Junctions will open in the following order for traffic heading south.

- T7 entry (Churchbridge – A5/A34/A460)
- T6 exit & entry (Burntwood – A5 link)
- T5 exit (Shenstone to A5148 (A38))
- T4 exit & entry (Weeford Junction – A5/A38)
- T3 exit & entry (Langley Mill South/North – A38)
- T2 exit (Belfry – A446/A4091)
- M42 Jn.8 merge and diverge (M42 south with M6 Toll south)
- Southbound merge M6/M6 Toll (coordinated rolling block from M6 Jn.4)

Later that morning, traffic heading north will also be able to access the road:

### Rolling block travelling north from Kingsbury Road:

- T1 entry (Kingsbury Road A4097)
- T3 exit & entry (Langley Mill South– A38)
- T4 exit & entry (Weeford Junction – A5/A38)
- T5 entry (Shenstone A5127)
- T6 exit (Burntwood – A5 link)
- T7 exit (Churchbridge A5/A34/A460)
- T8 exit (Middle Hill – A460)
- M6 Jn.11A merge (M6 Toll/M6)

## PHASE 2

### Northbound M42 opens from 10am

- Traffic travelling north on the M42 will be able to access the M6 Toll from Jn.8

### – Northbound M6 opens overnight

- Traffic travelling north on the M6 will be able to access the M6 Toll from Jn.4

## PHASE 3

### Southbound M6 opens overnight

- Traffic travelling south on the M6 will be able to access the M6 Toll from Jn.11A
- Peak hour traffic will be able to avoid the M6 by using the M6 Toll

## Benefits of the M6 Toll

In May, MEL announced a standard charge for car drivers of just £2 to use the 27 mile motorway. This includes a £1 discount which is available for the first 10 million vehicles on the road. Business users will be able to reclaim VAT on the road tolls, reducing the HGV charge to just £8.50 and the van price to £4.25.

Projected benefits of the M6 Toll include:

- The M6 Toll could reduce journey times through the West Midlands by up to 45 minutes (source: Trafficmaster)
- Regional investment agency InStaffs recently estimated the road has created up to 5,000 jobs and £270 million of investment in the West Midlands
- New developments attributed to the proximity of the M6 Toll include the £150m Kingwood Lakeside in Cannock; the £100m Automotive Components Park in Wednesbury; and the £15m service area at Norton Canes
- MEL will employ up to 150 people and a further 200 people will be employed at the motorway service station at Norton Canes

## **Positive Feedback From Leading Fleet Operators**

Mr Fanning announced that MEL had had positive discussions with the UK's leading hauliers. "We have recently begun face to face discussions with the top 100 hauliers that currently use the M6 and A5. These discussions have been very positive, with hundreds of tags already sold, and several of the top ten hauliers already signed up. As expected many hauliers wanted to wait for the road to open before committing to tags and we expect many to trial the road in the weeks ahead."

A major marketing campaign including radio advertisements and a giant hoarding on the Fort Dunlop site has been launched to prepare motorists for the launch of the M6 Toll. Updates on the opening will be available via the website at [www.m6toll.co.uk](http://www.m6toll.co.uk) and the information line on 0870 850 6262.

Please note that a map showing the countdown to opening is available.

Photography of the launch will be available for download at [www.vismedia.co.uk](http://www.vismedia.co.uk)

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**NOTE: FOR SAFETY AND SECURITY REASONS MEDIA ATTENDING THE OPENING  
MUST ARRIVE AT WEEFORD OPERATIONS CENTRE NO LATER THAN THE  
FOLLOWING TIMES TO ENSURE ATTENDANCE:**

**BROADCAST CREWS: 8:00AM  
PRESS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS: 9:00AM**

**Notes to editors**

**About the M6 Toll**

The route of the 27 mile long M6 Toll road arcs to the north east of Birmingham between junctions 4 and 11 of the existing M6. On completion it will provide a free-flowing alternative to the West Midlands road network. Once complete the M6 Toll will provide journey time savings and improved journey reliability and quality. Main works started in April 2001.

**About Midland Expressway Limited**

Midland Expressway Limited (MEL) is the company with overall responsibility for the financing, design, construction, operation and maintenance of the M6 Toll until 2054, when it will be handed back to the Government. MEL is jointly owned by Macquarie Infrastructure Group of Australia (75% ownership) and Autostrada SpA of Italy (25% ownership), both of which have extensive experience of owning and operating toll motorways. Put and Call options exist between MIG and Autostrada that will result in MIG moving to 100% ownership by the end of 2005. In September 2000 Midland Expressway Limited awarded the £485m contract to build the M6 Toll to CAMBBA, a consortium made up of Carillion, Alfred McAlpine, Balfour Beatty and AMEC.