



Media Release



Co. Clare, 26th January

N18 ENNIS BYPASS OPENED BY MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT

Minister for Transport, Mr. Martin Cullen T.D., today officially opened Section 1 of the N18 Ennis Bypass in County Clare today. The Minister declared the road open in the presence of Mayor of Clare County Council, Cllr. Flan Garvey. The new section of road includes a 12km dual carriageway bypass to the east of the town and bypasses Clarecastle, Ennis and Barefield.

Commenting on this historic event for County Clare, Minister Cullen said: *“We are beginning 2007 with the opening of another significant piece of infrastructure. It gives me great pleasure to officially open the Ennis Bypass, which forms part of the Atlantic Road Corridor.”*

Minister Cullen added: *“Another eight projects are due to be completed this year under Transport 21. In 2007 six hundred and seventy three projects are being funded across the country with a Government investment of EUR1.53Bn”.*

“As we start this year I would request all road users to take greater care on our roads and have greater consideration for other drivers. To the Gardaí and to people who have altered their driving I say thank you. You have shown that lives can be saved. I am confident that there will be a marked improvement in driver behaviour this year”, the Minister concluded.

Clare County Council Mayor, Cllr Flan Garvey echoed the Minister’s comments stating, *“On behalf of the people of Ennis and County Clare and all those road users who travel through our county I welcome the opening of this new road. We can be proud of this new infrastructure, as it will greatly improve the quality of life for the residents of Ennis and of the entire county.”*

The Mayor added, *“As Mayor of Clare it is my privilege to acknowledge the major role of the Government in delivering this project and of the Department of Transport and the National Roads Authority who have funded this new bypass. I congratulate Mr. Clare County Manager Alec Fleming, the staff of Clare County Council and the Contractor, Gama Strabag Construction Ltd for their excellent work and diligence in delivering this project. Guím rath Dé ar na hoibrithe go léir agus ar ghach éinne a bhaieann úsáid as an N18.”*

According to Mr. Peter Malone, Chairman of the National Roads Authority, *“It is great to see the Ennis Bypass open to traffic. The 12km mainline section of the bypass is accessible to motorists 3 months ahead of schedule. It is another example of the ongoing success of the NRA in opening new schemes ahead of time and budget. The Authority has been working in close partnership with Clare County Council to deliver this new road.”*

Mr Malone added; *“Schemes such as the Ennis Bypass are important not just in a local context but nationally also. The bypass forms part of the Atlantic Corridor, which is a core element of the Government’s Transport 21 Plan. It will run from Donegal to Waterford and the ongoing development of this corridor will facilitate business expansion and tourism in the south-east, west and north-west of Ireland.”*

The Ennis Bypass project is funded by the Irish Government and part-financed by the European Union, under the National Development Plan 2000–2006. The scheme was co-financed at 85% by the Cohesion Fund of the European Union, which aims to reduce economic and social disparities among the citizens of the Union.