



THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP

Minister for Communications, Urban
Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts

THE HON JACINTA ALLAN MP

Victorian Minister for Transport Infrastructure

MEDIA RELEASE

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Getting on with the North East Link

A preferred bidder has been selected for the tunnelling package for the North East Link, which will fix the missing link in Melbourne's freeway network, slash travel times and free up local roads for local trips.

Victorian Minister for Transport Infrastructure, the Hon Jacinta Allan, and Federal Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, today announced Spark has been selected as the preferred bidder to deliver the tunnelling package.

Spark comprises WeBuild, GS Engineering and Construction, CPB Contractors, China Construction Oceania, Ventia, Capella Capital, John Laing Investments, DIF and Pacific Partnerships. The successful bidder will construct the twin three-lane tunnels and key interchanges.

Minister Fletcher said this was another important step for Victoria's biggest road project.

"The North East Link is a significant road project that will create thousands of local jobs, cut travel times for commuters and freight and take trucks off local roads, improving congestion and safety particularly for communities in Melbourne's northern and eastern suburbs," Mr Fletcher said.

"This project is one of many critical infrastructure projects to receive funding from the Morrison Government as part of its record \$110 billion, 10-year infrastructure investment pipeline, which is helping to drive Australia's world-leading economic recovery."

The new tunnels will protect homes and sensitive environmental areas including the Yarra River, Banyule Flats and Warringal Parklands.

The tunnelling package will be delivered as a Public Private Partnership. The Victorian Government will now work with the preferred bidder to negotiate a final contract and finalise the concept design for North East Link – ready to share details with the community before the end of the year.

Once the tunnelling package is awarded, the project will go out to market for other key elements of North East Link including a massive overhaul of the Eastern Freeway, Melbourne's first dedicated busway, the completion of the M80 Ring Road and more than 25 kilometres of new and upgraded walking and cycling paths.

Minister Allan said the North East Link is the missing piece of the puzzle for the Victorian Government's record investment in the North East.

"This is another important step for the North East Link, as we continue to build the projects Victorians in the north east need to be better connected to services, jobs and opportunities," Minister Allan said.

“Fixing the missing link will get trucks off local roads as well as providing a much-improved route for interstate, regional and metropolitan freight vehicles.”

North East Link will connect the M80 Ring Road to an upgraded Eastern Freeway, slashing travel times by up to 35 minutes, taking 15,000 trucks off local roads.

It will link key growth areas in the north and south-east, providing an efficient connection for up to 135,000 vehicles each day and allowing travel from Melbourne’s south-eastern suburbs to the airport without stopping at a single traffic light.

A big focus is on creating local jobs for local people, with more than 10,000 jobs on the project and 10 per cent of total work hours to be done by apprentices, trainees or cadets as part of the Victorian Government’s Local Jobs First Policy.

This \$15.8 billion project is jointly funded by the Australian and Victorian governments, with construction on the tunnelling package to begin after contract award later in the year.

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