

Media Release

Jacinta Allan MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Transport Infrastructure

Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop

Acting Minister for Public Transport



Tuesday, 13 July 2021

CONSTRUCTION AT ITS BEST IN MELBOURNE'S WEST

Commuters in Melbourne's west are the big winners as part of the Andrews Labor Government's Big Build, with new data showing dramatic reductions in travel times, and more works to come with the fast track removal of yet another dangerous and congested level crossing.

A 65-tonne piling rig and a 40-tonne excavator have begun digging nine-metre-deep foundations for a new road bridge in Ardeer, which will replace the Fitzgerald Road level crossing. The level crossing removal will help improve reliability on the Geelong and Ballarat lines, Victoria's fastest-growing and busiest regional rail corridors.

It will also reduce travel times, with boom gates currently down for up to 45 per cent of the morning peak in Ardeer, with 37 trains running through the crossing - delaying tens of thousands of cars and trucks every day.

The Fitzgerald Road level crossing removal has been fast-tracked and will be removed by 2023, along with the nearby level crossing at Robinson Rd, Deer Park. Their removal will pave way for the Mt Derrimut Road level crossing to be removed by 2024, making the Geelong and Ballarat lines level crossing-free between Deer Park and the city.

The massive undertaking of level crossing removals in the west builds on the \$1.8 billion Western Roads Upgrade, the largest-ever single investment in Melbourne's road network.

New data shows drivers on Palmers Road are saving 20 minutes during the morning peak, while upgrades to Leakes Road have shaved almost 12 minutes off the travel time for drivers, providing commuters with better access to Tarneit Station.

Congestion-busting upgrades have been completed on eight priority roads across Werribee, Point Cook, Truganina, Tarneit, Laverton North and Hoppers Crossing, as well as repair and resurfacing work on 37 roads between Footscray and Werribee.

The multi-year upgrade has given thousands of Victorians work during the coronavirus pandemic and will continue to do so over the life of a 20-year maintenance program. So far this year, an average of one road every week has been resurfaced in the west as part of the maintenance program, delivering smoother and safer journeys for all.

Work is continuing around the clock on the West Gate Tunnel Project, rebuilding ramps and bridges to make way for four extra through lanes on the West Gate Freeway. This stage of the project is more than half finished, with bridges over Kororoit Creek and Williamstown Road continuing to be upgraded and work to widen the bridge over Millers Road almost complete.

In total, more than \$20 billion is being invested in the western suburbs for essential road and rail upgrades as part of Victoria's Big Build.

For more information about Victoria's infrastructure agenda, visit bigbuild.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Transport Infrastructure Jacinta Allan

"It's great to see work starting on another level crossing removal in the west – when we're just starting to see the real time benefits of our most recent pipeline of works."

"Whether it's level crossing removals, Geelong Fast Rail, Airport Rail, suburban road upgrades or the Metro Tunnel – we're delivering the upgrades that gives locals better connections to schools, jobs and health services."

Media contact: Hayley Bester 0424 753 775 | hayley.bester@minstaff.vic.gov.au